

NEXT CLUB MEETING: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22
DON'T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR 2006 CACTUS GTO CALENDARS!
7:00 pm, Denny's Restaurant

Valley of the Goats

Newsletter of Cactus GTOs Inc. • Phoenix, Arizona
www.cactusgto.com
December-January 2006

SPECIAL KRUSE EDITION!

**[If you didn't attend the Club's January 18 meeting,
it's important you know that:**

- our participation this year at Kruse will be limited to driving cars ONLY on Saturday, Jan. 28.
- all volunteers should show up at Phoenix International Raceway by 8 am to help with staging the cars for that day (there will be two lines and over 300 cars).
For more details, contact Club president Thom Mohr.

Board of Directors will be elected at this next meeting: we will vote for three of the following: Kevin Akbari, Dan Huskisson, Murray Nevin, Jim Zeivel. We will be replacing Bill McCoy who cannot be both an officer and a Board member and we will be adding two more board members for a total of seven.

Letter from the Editor

Wow...

For those of you who caught the record prices at the Scottsdale automobile auctions this past week, that's the best word to describe it. The specialty cars always draw high prices, although the 1950s era Futurliner GM specialty road vehicle's sale at \$4.1 million was a new record (Barrett-Jackson). At the same auction, the Pontiac Bonneville show car went for \$2.3 million. Both went to the same bidder, apparently a Chandler resident.

But one of the most interesting surprises: a rare 1970 Plymouth Barracuda convertible, Hemi-powered, only 14 made that year. This one, in Vitamin C orange, sold for \$2 MILLION.

Let's hope these prices don't convince Cactus GTO Club members to cover up their cars and think about their own million-dollar payoff. We are a driver's club.

We'll have more details about Pontiacs that went up on the auction block this month once we get through the Kruse auction this weekend.

See you there!

■ Mark Neumann

From the Driver's Seat...

Thom Mohr

President, Cactus GTOs

January 2006

Happy New Year to everyone - here's hoping that we all enjoy a happy, healthy and prosperous 2006. Thanks to you folks who helped me get through my first meeting on January 18 more or less unscathed ☺. Special thanks again to Scott Svenheim for offering his facilities for the meeting.

Your club officers (Bill, Scott, Elly and I) hope to accomplish a lot of good things for Cactus GTO's this year and will be seeking your input on activities and what direction you would like to see our club take in '06.

We have experienced a change already with the Kruse auction. Bill McCoy and I have been working with Kruse (with the help of other officers and the board) to establish a working relationship for this year. We will be working to get next year's effort organized so that (perhaps) we can avoid such surprises again. **Thanks in advance to all of you who have signed up to work this big event for our club!**

I hope to ask your opinions in a number of surveys and use the results to plan events and activities that will spark a bit more interest and participation. I know that the club's officers will not be able to do everything alone and we will need some people to come forward to take leadership in some areas.

Some things I would like to see Cactus GTO's accomplish this year are:

1. Get people more involved with planning and organizing club activities. Specifically, I'd like to see us have a focal point (leader) for **Charitable Giving, Speakers and Tours, Events and Cruises, Calendars and Kruse Auction.**
2. Improve communication - including your feedback! This is your club, so we need to encourage everyone to voice their opinion. We are going back to paper (snail mail) newsletters to see if this will help, starting with our next issue.
3. Try some Saturday events - last year we had some people who expressed interest in doing Saturday cruises. We took a poll and 90% of the 22 people who responded either favored Saturday or did not have a preference for either Saturday or Sunday.
4. Improve GTOAA membership - if we are to remain affiliated with the national organization, we need to have at least 30% of our members in the GTO Association of America and this has been a real struggle. The Board has decided to retain our affiliation and has voted to encourage GTOAA membership by refunding \$15 of GTOAA dues to all club members who join (or have already done so).

I am trying to get a proposed 2006 activities calendar out as soon as I possibly can and would like to have someone take on the leadership for Events and Cruises. I have started an events calendar, but it is not complete by any means. If you know of car shows, cruises or other events that we might participate in, please let me know the what-when-where details and we'll add them to our list. I'll be happy to work with whoever volunteers to take on leadership - please let me know of your interest! Don't be bashful, now - no studying your shoelaces back there in the third row... you know who you are.... C'mon, if I can plan and lead a cruise to Yarnell or Tortilla Flats, anyone can do it ☺

As for January, I think the Kruse auction is about all we can handle! February 12th will be our Kruse celebration party at Dave Campbell's house. Perhaps February 26th or 26th or early March we could do a

breakfast cruise to Tortilla Flats again? What do you think? Let me know.... thomohr@globalcrossing.net or call me at 480-991-6106.

News Notes

- *Moving toward emissions exemption:* A bill has been introduced in the state House of Representatives to begin the bureaucratic process for the long-awaited classic car emissions exemption. Last year, state Governor Janet Napolitano signed into law an exemption for vehicles to undergo yearly emissions testing if they were 25 years or older. Similar laws have been passed in other states, including California.

While the states waits for EPA clearance to put the new law in place, House bill 2017 would provide for a \$16 one-time registration fee for vehicles 25 years old or older. The bill also provides for a \$50 one-time license plate fee and a one-time \$34 vehicle license tax for these vehicles.

The bill will go before the House Transportation Committee soon. Call Committee chairman Andy Biggs @ 602.926.4371. More information is available at the Arizona Automobile Hobbyist Council website at www.azautohobbyist.com

- *Support the AAHC:* You help show your support for the AAHC and their work in helping to protect the classic car hobby, sign up for their annual car show, taking place Sunday, Feb. 26, at Sanderson Ford (5300 NW Grand Avenue, Glendale). The show runs from 10 am – 3 pm, and the \$15 pre-show registration fee gets you a tee shirt and dash plaque. For more information, go to the AAHC website or call Joan Beyer @ 623.937.1171. Entry forms are available on the website.

- *More legislative news...* if you are used to working on your car in your driveway – and the HOA hasn't told you what to do – living in Pima County may make things difficult for you. The county's Planning and Zoning Committee has released a draft regulation that would in essence disallow you from working on your car unless it was in a garage (must be enclosed). County manager Chuck Huckleberry is reportedly the one pushing the idea. The nine-member board was expected to meet again on Jan. 25 to discuss the idea. Send your comments on the proposal to Marc Fink, 520.740.6800 or Marc.Fink@dcd.pima.gov.

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 <http://www.infocusdesigns.com/clients/CactusGTO/join.php> to download a membership form.

If you helped out at the Kruse auction...
COME TO THE KRUSE THANK-YOU PARTY!

Sunday, Feb. 12, Dave and Brooke Campbell's home. The club will cater the affair. Plan on a great time and bring your favorite Kruse stories!

Stay tuned to the website (www.cactusgto.com) for directions, time of event.

Plus: Julio G's All Pontiac Car Show, Feb. 18. Details on the website!

Pontiacs in the News

Bill McCoy

The Solstice: It Really Does Exist!

Solstice: Astronomy. *Either of two times of the year when the sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator. The Summer Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere occurs about June 21, when the sun is in the zenith at the tropic of Cancer; the winter Solstice occurs Dec. 21st when the sun is over the Tropic of Capricorn. 2. The highest point or culmination.*

Thanks to James Braden a really nice salesman at Henry Brown Pontiac in Mesa I received an invitation to drive a new Solstice at Bondurant Racing next to the Firebird Raceway Thursday night October 6th. The invitation allowed one other person so I asked Dave Salerno. He seemed to be the most anxious person in the club to see a new Solstice having thoughts of buying one. Fortunately, he could meet at the track at 5:30. Upon arriving we found out that Pontiac had four Solsti or Soltices? for about 50 people to take turns driving a short blacktop lot course with cones. They had another 4 or 5 Solstices for the crowd to get in and out of, look over the engine, try the manual top and check out anything else that came to mind. Everyone there seemed impressed with how beautiful the cars looked. Not one person was disappointed with the styling, it lives up to all the press about it and looks as good in person as it does in pictures or on TV. They are truly COOL cars to look at. The fit and finish of the cars seemed to be all anyone could expect especially from GM.

There are a few minor things about the Solstice that is a little out of the ordinary. It comes with no spare tire. They provide a can of compressed air and a tire sealant in case you have a flat. When I asked what do you do if you shred a tire. James Braden at the dealership told me you call Pontiac Road Service for a tow. OOOOKay! Just don't hit any sharp objects. The manual top can be put up with one hand, a very easy operation. If you want to go grocery shopping you better have the top up if you plan to bring many bags home, otherwise there is hardly any room in the trunk. It does look like a small golf bag might fit behind the top when it is down. One of those big golf bags with the wheels etc. looked like it probably would be a very tight fit.

The body panels are made of a new special extruded metal molding process instead of the normal stamped metal procedure. Whichever way GM made them they look great. The car has plenty of headroom even for tall people with the top up with a good six inches over my head. However, the big mistake for me is not enough knee room to be able to drive the car and shift it. Shifting the five-speed became a problem with my shin pressed against the lower half of the dash. If they had designed the dash to slope away at an angle I might have been able to fit. The metal panels separating the trunk from the front seat are directly behind the seats leaving no room for the seat to recline or be angled.

Pontiac had several new GTOs, Grand Prixs, a Torrent, a Vive maybe a Bonneville on display around the

Bondurant buildings. It was very nicely done. They also had a sandwich bar for those that did not get dinner before arriving. The open bar served only soft drinks, water and juices. It was probably a good idea that there was no alcohol served considering they don't have many Solstices they can afford to mess up. After Dave and I had a bite to eat we went out to watch a little drifting. (Not the kind they have in Minnesota in January.)

....*continued on pg. 5*

.... *Solstice, cont'd from pg 4*

Before we got to drive the cars they had promised to do a GTO drifting demonstration on the same skid pad where we would be driving the Solstice. Bob Bondurant himself drove one of the GTOs and one of the young instructors from his driving school drove the other one. They drew names of people in the crowd to ride in each of the cars. Bob took the first shot at turning rubber into smoke doing several doughnuts on the blacktop creating clouds of rubberized smoke. It reminded me of how we learned to drive on ice and snow in the mid-west by finding a large empty parking lot right after a big snowstorm. We just kicked up lots of snow not chunks of rubber. The younger instructor did a screaming wide circle curve at 60 mph as the rear of the GTO started to go sideways. It looked very impressive. As he came around the turn one of the ladies in the crowd let out a small scream thinking he was out of control and the he would run into the crowd. (It wasn't even close.)

The course instructors showed us several times how to run through the cones on the course. Dave was the closest to the first car so he jumped in to show everyone how to do it. Dave made it through the first curve but then go lost on the course missing the second hairpin curve. At that time it was still daylight too! The instructors said uh oh we have someone lost on the course. Fortunately, the next car onto the track was spaced far enough away so we did not have a head on Solstice crash. Everyone there had their chance to drive at least once. I suggested to Dave that I ride as navigator for him on the next run. On the straight away leaving the starting block I think Dave got rubber in second! That's not easy to do with a 4 cylinder. I tried my best to get him to stay on course for the hairpin turn. But Dave doesn't do hairpins well. We still missed two cones but then got back on course making it safely back to the starting block. By 8:00 PM everyone had their chance with the cars. It was scheduled to run until 9:00. Thanks to Pontiac it was a fun and memorable night. I had a chance to meet a couple of the factory zone managers from Pontiac and talked to one of the managers with Bondurant about doing the Western Regional GTO show there in 2007. There seems to be an interest on both parties part to work together on such an event.

Driving the Solstice was fun even though the tight fit did remind me of trying to drive one of those ill-fitting Ferrari's we have (get) to drive at the Kruse Auctions. The transmission seemed to work smoothly without any difficulty even though we couldn't shift any higher than from first to second gears because of the shortness of the track setup. The car handled tightly going into the curves with no noticeable body lean. The steering was smooth and easy but seemed to still give the driver a good feel for the road.

It's a fun car to drive but is still just a 4 cylinder 5 speed. Pontiac is promising a coupe for 06 or 07 and a turbo version should have about 230 hp. Motor Trend says they have made room for a V8 to fit into the Solstice. Now you are talking! If they did that I might have to have my legs surgically shorted so I could fit into one. We may have to wait until there is more power before it will live up to the second definition of Solstice: The highest point or culmination.

After the event I was able to get permission to take my 99 Trans Am around the cones for a couple laps. Now

that was a BLAST! 330 hp is a little more fun than 177.

Here is a short comparison of my TA just for fun to the new Solstice. Notice that the gas mileage is very similar. GM should be offering a high mileage version of the Solstice that gets at least 38 mpg on the highway. Just another missed opportunity.

.....*Solstice, continued on pg. 6*

....*Solstice, continued from pg. 5*

Mileage:

99 Trans Am: 19-mpg city 28-mpg hwy. (Right off the window sticker)

06 Solstice: 22-mpg city 28-mpg hwy.

Both require premium fuel (hard to believe this little 4 has to run on premium, so much for saving at the gas pump)

Weight:

Solstice: 2860 lbs.

Trans Am: 3500 lbs.

Engine:

Solstice: 2.4 liter, Ecotec 177 Hp torque: 166 lb.ft.

Trans Am: 5.7 liter LS-1 330 Hp torque: 410 lb.ft.

Wheels:

Solstice: 18" wheels

Trans Am: 17" wheels

Transmission:

Solstice: 5 spd. manual

Trans Am: 6 spd. manual

Okay my Trans Am may not go around a tight slalom course as fast but there is nothing like lots of horsepower and torque to have a fun ride. I'll keep my TA it's still more fun to drive than a little 4 banger and I can fit into it and still don't give up much for gas mileage.

Until next time...

The Real Bill McCoy

What's It Worth?

Bob Paris

This is the fifth and last in a series of articles covering GTO values in the market place. Data is gathered from

several sources (magazines, auctions, price guides, etc.) and reported in this column. There are so many variables when determining value that we can't get too specific and at best we might be able to have an idea of the value range. Please note the data from these sources are a lagging indicator of average prices.

January is car auction month in Scottsdale and surrounding areas, classic car prices will be reflected in Mar & Apr 2006 publications. This month covers 1972, 1973 & 1974 GTOs.

Worth? Continued on page 7.....

Worth? Continued from pg. 6.....

Auctions

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|--------|
| 1972 Conv | Barrett-Jackson | \$39,800 | Jan 05 |
| 1972 HT | Kruse-Ft Lauderdale | \$15,700 | Jan 05 |
| 1973 HT | Kruse-Dayton | \$17,700 | Feb 05 |
| 1974 HT | Mecum-Kansas | \$17,200 | Apr 05 |

1972 – The last ‘true’ GTO?

Many enthusiasts feel that 1972 was the last of the true GTOs. A new LeMans/GTO body was supposed to have been ready for 1972, but a strike put it back a year. So, the previous body was mildly restyled and used again. Since the GTO had been relegated back to option status on the LeMans, it was available as both a hardtop and a coupe. The GTO coupe production was very limited, accounting for only 134 cars out of the year's 5,807 total. The 455 HO engine was still available and ten coupes received it. Five more coupes were fitted with the standard 455 V-8. A Ram Air system was available with the 455 HO engine, which was rated at 300 net horsepower. Customers, however, could still get a big-block, Ram Air, four-speed GTO.

1973 – A new body, another option

The GTO was back in 1973, but as a LeMans option. The LeMans received a new body for 1973. The styling, especially the rear quarter panels and rear quarter windows, was noticeably different from the direction of previous Pontiac A-bodies. The GTO option was offered on the LeMans coupe and sport coupe. (The sport coupe had louvers in place of rear quarter windows.)

Two GTO engines remained – the 400 and 455 – but horsepower was down to 230 and 250, respectively. Compression had been dropped again to 8.1:1. Only the automatic transmission was allowed with the 455, but the 400 could be ordered with a three- or four-speed manual transmission or the automatic. All LeMans options were available on the GTO. The two-door coupe accounted for 494 sales and the sport coupe attracted 4,312 customers, for a total of 4,806 1973 GTOs.

1974 – The end of the line

Another body style change marked the 1974 GTO. The GTO option was shifted to the Pontiac Ventura platform for what turned out to be the GTO's final year for 30 years. The sole engine for the '74 GTO was a

350 V-8 with 7.6:1 compression and 200 horsepower. A four-speed manual transmission was still optional. A rearward facing “shaker” hood scoop, similar to the Firebird Trans Am, allowed cold air into the Quadra-Jet four-barrel carburetor under full acceleration.

Given the toughened insurance and government restrictions, the '74 GTO made a valiant effort to keep the muscle car spirit alive. The smaller displacement engine avoided the insurance surcharges on big-displacement engines. The 1974 GTO sold considerably better than the '73 model. The unique-for-a-GTO hatchback accounted for 1,723 sales and the coupe with its traditional trunk sold 5,335 units. The total of 7,058 was encouraging, but not enough to continue the GTO option.

Worth? Continued on pg. 8.....

Worth? Continued from page 7.....

The legend lives on

The GTO ceased production after the 1974 model year, but its legend remained as strong as ever. After many beautiful muscle cars were quickly cast aside during the seventies energy crisis, those same cars soon became very desirable collector cars.

The GTO was at the forefront of the muscle car restoration hobby. In 1982, the GTO Association of America was established to preserve and promote the original muscle car.

An aftermarket industry evolved to serve needs of GTO restorers. Many of the same people who owned or wanted a GTO in the sixties proudly drive them today. It takes a great car to fuel that kind of desire for 40 years.

The GTO helped to establish Pontiac as the performance and “excitement” division of General Motors. With the rebirth of the 2004 GTO, Pontiac continues to be at the forefront in terms of creating driving excitement for the 21st century.

More than half a million GTOs were produced during its initial 11-model-year run. Totals ranged from a high of 96,946 in 1966 to a low of 4,806 in 1973.

All five of Bob's “What's It Worth?” columns can be downloaded from our website at www.cactusgto.com.

Your Cactus GTO Club Officers – 2006

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| <p>Catch The Excitement!</p>  <p>CACTUS GTO CLUB</p> | <p>Catch The Fun!</p> |
| <p>Cactus GTO Club 2005/2006 Membership Form</p> | |

The Cactus GTOs Inc., is a club dedicated to the enjoyment, restoration and preservation of the Pontiac GTO. We are having another great 2005/2006 season with club cruises, car shows, parties and special events, including the Annual Kruse International Automobile Auction. Sign on for a year of GTO excitement. Monthly meetings are generally held on the LAST WEDNESDAY of the month at Denny's restaurant, 825 S 48th St. (HWY 143 & University), Tempe, Arizona. See us at www.cactusgto.com

Name _____ GTOAA # _____

Associate Member/Spouse _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ E-mail _____

List GTO/Pontiac Ownership

| Year | Model | Body | Eng./Trans. |
|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |



Send completed application along with a check for \$12.00 (\$5.00 associate member), for full yearly membership to:
CACTUS GTOs Inc., 5546 E Shangri-La Rd. Scottsdale AZ 85254