

Cosmic Bowling – This Saturday, July 21

All the details at www.cactusgto.com

Valley of the Goats

Newsletter of Cactus GTOs Inc. • Phoenix, Arizona

www.cactusgto.com

June-July, 2007



Letter from the Editor

As the summer creeps along, we all slow down. It's hard to get motivated to do anything that doesn't involve an air conditioner. Luckily, we have the High Country to escape to. I spent two weekends this past month enjoying camping with my son Alex. There is nothing like cool fresh air to revive the senses – even if it's for one day. Get up early on a Saturday morning (after the weekenders have already finished clogging up I-17 the night before), throw your bicycle in the back of your pickup truck and make the drive up to Prescott or Flagstaff. Hit some of the mountain trails, or take the Skyride up at Snowbowl. If you head toward Payson, take a hike at the Mogollon Rim. Spend the night or just drive back at the end of the day. You will feel so much better.

One thing that will keep you cool if you stay in the Valley – **cosmic bowling this Saturday, with the Club**. It will be a friendly competition – join the fun and as always, we'll talk about car projects – that makes it worthwhile in itself!

— Mark Neumann



From the Driver's Seat...

Well, the very busy pace of March and April car-related activity in the Valley of the Sun has given way to the inevitable desert summer once again. And after our mid-20's temperatures this winter, you thought it would just never warm up...

I don't know about you, but I'm keeping busy in the morning and early afternoon, until my westward facing garage/workshop gets hot enough for me to seek refuge in the pool for awhile. After that, it's time to catch up on e-mail, do some Cactus GTO business and peruse parts and speed shop catalogs, dreaming a bit of when I might actually get back to working on my cars again. It seems as though house projects are occupying all my time. Hopefully you are able to be enjoying your GTO's either on the road or making the next improvement in the never-ending quest to "finish" your project car.

While some have escaped to other parts of the country already, I know others in the club are braving the summer heat to do some restoration work. As I write this, one club member is replacing the rear springs and redoing all the brake lines in his '66 GTO; another is in the beginning phase of restoring a newly purchased '72 LeMans with a good deal of Missouri iron oxide "patina;"

another is continuing to work away at an extensive restoration of his '65 GTO whenever his work schedule permits; another has just completed a disc brake conversion and another has recently put the engine back in his car and got it on the road again. If you have any ongoing projects, let me know – I always like to hear about what y'all are doing. Keeps me motivated to (hopefully) get going on my long (and getting longer) automotive To-Do list.

I did manage to get two (sort-of) car projects done this past few weeks – prepping, photographing, writing ad copy and selling two of our long-time family members – automotive type “family” that is. As those of you who know me are aware, I am far better at acquiring cars than I am at ever parting with them, so this has been quite a traumatic event for us (well, for me at least). This is part of the slowly dawning realization that I have far too many cars to keep up with and more projects that I can ever hope to finish. So, it's time to whittle down the flock and concentrate on my GTO and other “special” cars. Realizing that you're gettin' old is definitely a downer... Don't let this happen to you! ☺

I invite your comments and questions thomohr@cox.net or 480-991-6106

*Thom Mohr
Club President*

Pontiac in the News

• We're still awaiting more information on the new G8, the Grand Prix successor. Cars.com has a review on it, but no details as to arrival or final form when it arrives as an '08 model. Here is a quick review:

2008 Pontiac G8



Joe Wiesenfelder
Cars.com
April 24, 2007

Vehicle Overview

The G8 sedan is Pontiac's next full-size sedan and the first North American model based on a new platform that will also support the upcoming Chevrolet Camaro. Fear not, performance junkies: This is a rear-wheel-drive platform developed by GM's Holden division in Australia, where large rear-wheel-drive cars never fell out of favor.

Exterior

The G8 was introduced at the Chicago Auto Show, and if you don't recognize it immediately as a Pontiac, you've been living in a cave ... or California. It has the presence of the GTO — the one discontinued this year, not the classic — but is less rounded. The air intakes (I count three pairs) recall the late Grand Am, and there's a little of the current G6 in some of the front end's shapes. If some of Pontiac's older styling was exaggerated and the GTO and G6 are too plain, then the G8 falls somewhere in the middle — but leaning toward exaggerama.

The fender flares are a nice, muscular cue. Alas, the G6 concept car's flared fenders didn't make it to that actual product, rendering it regrettably plain looking. Perhaps the G8's shape will remain.

Eighteen-inch aluminum wheels will be standard on both the G8 and G8 GT trim levels. A Sport option package will replace the tasteful trunk lid lip spoiler with a wing and swap in different wheels, including 19-inch alloys for the GT. Quad exhaust pipes and clear-lens taillight clusters come on the V-8-equipped G8 GT. The base G8's V-6 engine gets twin chrome tailpipes and simple red tail lamps.

Interior

The G8's interior features a simple, clean layout and glowing gauges, and the GT will include leather sport bucket seats with prominent side bolsters.

Under the Hood

The base engine is GM's 3.6-liter V-6 generating 261 horsepower. The transmission is a five-speed automatic with a manual mode. Again, fear not, driving enthusiasts. The GT adds not only a 362-hp, 6.0-liter V-8, but also a six-speed automatic or an optional six-speed manual and a standard limited-slip differential. Pontiac says it will do zero to 60 mph in less than 5.5 seconds.

As in the front, the rear suspension is fully independent, employing a multilink design. Pontiac says the rear brakes will have two-piston front and one-piston rear calipers. The GT gets both firmer suspension tuning and larger brake rotors.

Safety

Standard safety features include six airbags, including side torso airbags for the front occupants and side curtains for the front and rear seats. Antilock brakes, traction control and an electronic stability system are also included in both trim levels.

Exec returned Buick, Pontiac to radar screen

Jim Mateja
Chicago Tribune

May 8, 2007

John Larson's legacy at General Motors may not be the vehicles he gave life to, but rather the ones he helped kill.

As general manager of the Buick-Pontiac-GMC Division, he dumped the out-of-date and out-of-fashion Pontiac Montana and Buick Terraza mini-vans, Pontiac Bonneville and Buick Park Avenue sedans and Buick Rendezvous and Rainier sport-utility vehicles.

In a few weeks, Larson will step down from his GM post to become president and chief executive of Escort, the radar-detector folks, and fulfill an ambition "to run a company on my own from top to bottom."

It's more than a bit ironic that a person associated with Buick was enlisted at a company that makes and sells radar detectors. Maybe Larson thought they said pacemakers?

Larson, 44, a native South Side Chicagoan and graduate of Northern Illinois University, says that before leaving, he will use his final employee-discount chit to buy a Pontiac GTO or a Cadillac CTS-V and put a radar detector in it.

Larson assumed his current job in January 2005. Four months later, he found himself at the New York Auto Show, where some media members were promoting inside knowledge that the demise of Buick and Pontiac was only moments away, and General Motors was about to crumble.

"I had a stack of news stories on my desk that said Buick and Pontiac were going out of business. I knew they weren't accurate, but I had to prove they weren't," Larson said in an interview.

To do so meant dumping outdated vehicles and launching fresh ones, such as LaCrosse and Lucerne at Buick and Solstice and G6 at Pontiac, and promising the rear-wheel-drive Pontiac G8 performance sedan and Buick Enclave crossover would soon follow.

Larson never had to attend a wake.

Though he'll depart in a few weeks, Larson hopes a Firebird coupe will be back in the Pontiac stable now that the Chevy Camaro is returning. Ditto the GTO.

"I'd like a return of the Firebird and GTO, if that's what they'd be called, because those cars feel right at Pontiac. A non-four-door, rear-drive Pontiac would be great for the lineup, but there's nothing to announce at this time," he said.

As for Buick, it sports only the LaCrosse, Lucerne and Enclave.

"I don't think Buick should be only a three-vehicle division. It should have a premium rear-drive flagship, too, but while there's been lots of talk, there's been no announcement, either," he said.

Buick unveiled a car with such potential, the concept Velite convertible, at the New York Auto Show in 2004. It was an instant hit with media and consumers alike.

But it didn't get the green light, a disappointment for Larson.

"In all our research and consumer clinics, it never got a bad mark. But the decision was to put money in our core, not niche products," he said.

With only a trio of Buicks, you would expect to see more soon. GM unveiled a concept Riviera coupe, a name last used eight years ago, at the Shanghai Auto Show last month in China, Buick's best sales market in the world.

"A Riviera in China doesn't rule out a Riviera for the U.S.," Larson said. "When you have enough demand to develop a [rear-wheel-drive] car for China, why not develop it for North America, too?"

Velite will at least make a token appearance at Buick. The 2008 LaCrosse and Super edition coming out this summer and the 2008 Lucerne and Super edition coming out early next year sport the front end lifted from the concept.

CHEVY CROSSOVER: Chevrolet refuses to comment on a report in the trade publication Automotive News that its long-rumored version of the Buick Enclave, Saturn Outlook and GMC Acadia crossovers will be built at the former Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tenn., next year.

"We haven't confirmed a crossover, so we obviously haven't confirmed where it would be built," a source said.

Upcoming Cactus GTO Club Events

- July 21st Cosmic Bowling / Impromptu monthly meeting – start by 6:30 PM out by 9:15. This will replace the regular last-Wednesday-of-the-month meeting on July 25th.

Location: AMF Bowl - Tempe Village Lanes - 4407 S. Rural Rd. Tempe, AZ 85282 (480) 831-5322. Please contact V.P. Bill McCoy for information. bmcco@Skymall.com or call him at home: 480-777-9620 or at work 602-528-3225

- August Activity (?).... We discussed the possibility of doing the Prescott car & antique engine show. We need an event leader & organizer for this event - If you are interested, please let Thom know ASAP. Prescott show info - Car Show & Swap Meet Saturday, August 04, 2007 thru Sunday, August 05, 2007 - Watson Lake Park N Hwy 89 Prescott, AZ 928.778.5386.

Can you help?

Future club member Dave Martin is looking for a good, reliable (and hopefully, reasonable) car hauler to bring his '70 GTO convertible out from his previous home in Maryland to his new home here in Arizona. If any of you can offer advice on good (or not so good) car haulers and any words of wisdom regarding enclosed vs. open haulers, insurance or whatever else might be helpful to a guy trying to get his GTO safely here, **please contact Dave directly** at purudm@aol.com or give him a call at 410-303-9594 or 602-725-2147.

Do you have a favorite Charity? Please help out club make a positive contribution to our community by nominating good causes for us to donate \$ or time & energy. Please contact either Matt Madonna or Bob Paris with your nominations.

For the Record...

Cactus GTO Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 27, 2007

Meeting brought to order by Pres. Thom Mohr – at Denny's, 7:15 pm

13 members in attendance. **New members:** Prospective new member Bill Evans – welcome!

Treasurer's report – Elly Mohr - \$7,988.80 in Money Market; \$237.49 in Checking

Secretary's report – Tony D'Angelo

Member introductions –

Thom sold the Chauncey Ranch Kruse auction tow truck through craigslist.org. Bill also bought his new car through this website.

Bill stated that he was losing transmission fluid from his (1970 Formula) TH400 and it seemed to be coming from the vacuum modulator; the vacuum line was blown off and there was fluid present. Talking to member Mike Baumgardner, he mentioned that the diaphragm had probably failed and recommended replacing the unit. Bill was able to purchase one at Auto Zone and this seems to have fixed the problem.

Up to the minute news -

Thom passed around some literature about Jim Wangers' new book Pontiac Pizzaz! which is now available. For more information see www.geetotiger.com/Pizzaz.

Members with Hagerty collector car insurance received a post card stating that each Arizona record has been updated to reflect eligibility for emissions exemption and they have electronically filed the insurance policies with the state of Arizona.

From our V.P., Bill McCoy:

- Chevy is planning to release a new Impala on the Zeta rear drive platform in 2009; maybe an El Camino.
- Pontiac will get another Australian (Commodore Manero) based GTO.
- From Road & Track – if your car is running hot, the first thing to consider should be a thorough flushing to remove the sediments that accumulate over time.

Activities –

Bill McCoy reported that there were 17 people that turned out for the June 10 cruise to Bugles restaurant in Forest Lakes. It was a fun cruise with a good breakfast.

Upcoming Activities -

July 21 Cosmic bowling event at the AMF Bowl on Rural Road. Start at 6:30 pm.
Contact Bill McCoy for information.

NOTE: The July monthly meeting will be held during this event. Members are encouraged to attend even if they do not wish to bowl. This will replace the regular last-Wednesday-of-the-month meeting on July 25th.

No event planned for August but some possibilities are:

Prescott auto and antique engines show on August 4, 5

Kingman air and car show

The August club meeting will be held on Wednesday the 29th at Denny's.

September 16 – Dinner cruise to Mining Camp? [Matt noticed a 'closed' sign when he was by there recently; Thom to check into it.] An alternate could be Pinnacle Peak Steakhouse (Reatta Pass).

October – Adapt-a-highway; no word on Julio G's car show. Club could attend the 83rd ave cruise instead on Saturday the 20th. Dan and Murray will submit a write-up about the cruise for Thom to distribute.

Charities -

Bob Paris is looking into Habitat opportunities for the club to participate in.

Matt Madonna reviewed the charitable contribution policy that the club had adopted. He will collect all member recommendations and prepare a voting ballot for the September meeting. In the meantime the Board has the action to determine a donation amount and number of charities to support for this year.

50/50 – Won by member Tony D'Angelo. Total kitty was \$14.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Legislative News

Help Protect the Hobby We Love...

The Arizona Automobile Hobbyist Council is a grass roots organization that helps to protect the classic car hobby from restrictive laws and regulations that stifle our rights. Its motto, "United We Drive, Divided We Park," emphasizes the need for all car clubs in the state to work as a unified voice to protect our hobby. Check out the AAHC website at www.azautohobbyist.com for updates on legislation and their monthly newsletter. The AAHC meets the first Monday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the Sanderson Ford truck dealership, 5300 W. Grand Avenue, Glendale.

Your Cactus GTO Club Officers - 2007

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