

GTO of the Month

My GTO's
Frank & Cheryl Chapman

I have been asked to write an article concerning my past and present GTO's. To do this a bit of history seems to be in order. First and foremost I come from a family that drove almost exclusively Pontiacs while I was growing up. But, as with a lot of teenagers my first cars were Fords and Chevys while in high school.

My first Pontiac was during my freshman year in college and that was a 1957 Convertible, a good car for a college freshman, this may have affected my grades. My sophomore year saw a 59 Catalina which was my driver until I went overseas with the Army. The Pontiacs held up the best during this time as my requirements were tough to meet due to my driving habits of wide open acceleration with great frequency.

After returning from overseas, I purchased a 1966 Catalina with a 389 4bb1 and a three speed. This was my ride until I graduated from college at this time I was shopping around and found a 1970 Ram Air IV GTO Judge that had been a demo car and had about 4,000 miles on it. It was love at first sight, especially after the test drive, I was hooked. This was my favorite GTO, it did give me some mechanical problems, but more my way of driving than the car. I drove it the way it was intended, wide open throttle and often in all the gears. Very seldom was it shut down on the streets and became well known in the area.

During this time I met my wife to be and didn't realize what marrying into a family where my father in law was a Ford dealer would do to my choice of cars for the next few years. The gas crunch came in the mid 70's and I sold off the Judge and have regretted it since, partly because it was totaled out two weeks after it was sold.

After this we went several years without a Pontiac. I purchase an 87 Firebird and drove for several years and gave it to our oldest boy his senior year of high school. After we became empty nesters we decided to sell my 75 Vette and find another GTO. After a couple of years looking for another Judge I was ready to accept a regular GTO. Our youngest boy found a 70 GTO listed in Indianapolis and since we were heading that way to



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attend a car show in our 58 Ranchero we decided to check it out.

After looking it over and checking out the numbers I was positive it was a Ram Air III car with matching number drive train. It was a repo car and had been sitting on the lot for almost two years. It had been set up for the 1/8 miles strip with 456 gears and a fuel injection system which wasn't performing well and needed work. My wife, Cheryl, convinced me to buy the car and take the chance it was a Judge since it was priced right for a GTO in the shape it was.

We drove the car back from Indianapolis. With the 456 gears it only took three tanks of gas and five hours. After getting home we sent in for the PHS and a week later you can only guess our reaction when it came back to be a real Judge. With this we started the restoration process. We had the car on the road in about eight months, but took almost two years to restore it back to numbers with correct heads, intake, carb and distributor, since these had been removed for drag strip use. Since then we have taken it to several GTO and POCI nationals and have enjoyed the positive comments and friendship we have formed.



This led us to purchase our second 70. In 2004 Cheryl decided she wanted a 70 GTO with an automatic and air so I started searching. As luck would have it we found one in Independence, KS on her birthday. After looking it over we purchased the car it is a 70 with a 455 and three deuces. The only requirement she had was the auto and air, so we found one I would enjoy also. We did take this

one to Detroit to the nationals and left our mark on Woodard Ave. That trip was a lot of fun, no trophies, but enjoyed Woodard and leaving our marks. The credit card company even questioned our gas purchases every 180 miles.

Since that time we have purchased a Brazen Orange 06 for my daily driver and are currently in the process of restoring a 70 GTO convertible which we hope to have on the road by this spring.

As you can see we do indeed enjoy our GTO's and drive them wherever we go. The Judge has about 25,000 miles on it since we put in on the road. If you ever see one of our

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GTO's on a trailer, please question what is happening as it is either broke or stolen and either way help is needed.

We have enjoyed the friends and good times in our GTO's and look forward to many more years of enjoying them. Someday, when retirement comes we plan on taking one of the old GTO's on an extended road trip and seeing the country as only you can while driving your GTO.

