

My GTO

By Carol and Charles Morton

We are Carol and Charles Morton, your online members. We live about 50 miles north of Birmingham, Alabama. I am a firefighter/paramedic and Carol is an Emergency Department RN. We don't live close enough to be active members but we do enjoy visiting at least once each year. Also, I keep up with the activities of the Association through Mark's emails and the newsletters.

How did we become members of the Gateway GTO Association? Kind of a long story but basically because all of the Gateway GTO Association members we met were so friendly and hospitable. I am not sure of the year now, but it was the second year of the Route 66 Mother Road Festival in Springfield, IL when I ventured off up north in my 69 Mach I alone and knowing nothing about where I was going. I knew to meet at the Chain of Rocks Bridge on Friday morning for a tour of old 66 up to Springfield. As the tour proceeded, we stopped for adult refreshments and as I was talking to some guy on a motor cycle, I noticed all of the cars were gone except for some Pontiacs. Only knowing that I was somewhere in Illinois, I fell in with the Pontiac group and followed until they stopped for lunch. At that point I introduced myself and explained my situation. I met one of the Pontiac guys, Cecil Morton, at an earlier stop as I admired his 68 GTO. For the others it was our first meeting and they invited me to have lunch with them. From that point we became friends. Cecil and I do not appear to be related but we do have some things in common, or so Annette and Carol think. The next year rolled around and Carol started going with me to the festival in Springfield and we met more Gateway members. In a conversation with Tom Oxler, I mentioned that I had a 66 GTO in many pieces waiting to be restored and Tom invited me to join the Gateway GTO Association since there is not a GTOAA group in Alabama.

I fell in love with GTOs as a senior in high school when my best friend got a new 1966 GTO yellow with black interior four speed four barrel. I purchased my first GTO in 1967. It was a used 1966 four speed tri-power ram air (the ram air box came in the trunk) and 3:90 rear end. The original owner added air and changed the rear gears to 3:55. Soon after my purchase, I learned why the original owner let it go. You could not go over 55 mph without the car running hot. Six months later, I sold the car and went to a used ford but still loved GTOs (that did not run hot). In 1969 my friend from high school put his GTO up for sale and I purchased my favorite car of all times. I finished wearing the engine out, put a new engine in, and wore the entire car out. At that point it was time to concentrate on my career and family for a couple of decades.

I purchased my next GTO in 1999 while in Pennsylvania purchasing a fire truck. The fire equipment salesman had a 1966 GTO original engine, automatic, power steering, and air that he

purchased in 1976 from the original owner. The car had been semi-restored with a rebuilt engine and paint but the trunk floor was rusted out from the rear window leaking. Still the price was right and I returned to Alabama with a fire truck and a GTO. We drove the GTO for two years until the rear main began to leak oil excessively and I decided to completely restore the car. It is disassembled and in many pieces, still waiting on me to retire (June 2012) and complete the job.

Our current drivable GTO was announced for sale by Molly Butterworth in an email from Mark Melrose. I called Cecil Morton and asked if he knew the car. Cecil remembered seeing the car at a car show but did not remember what condition it was in, however he agreed to check it out for me. So one beautiful snowy mid winter day Cecil traveled to some area west of St. Louis, took pictures, and emailed them to me. From the pictures, I purchased the car, a white 1967 convertible (original color was blue) and the car had the PHS data with it. I have repainted the car and replaced the upholstery but it is still a work in progress (see picture).



We are members of GTOAA and POCL. We are unable to make the GTOAA show in Denver but we will be at St. Charles this July. We will be arriving in St. Louis Monday evening, July 16, 2012 and hope to see many of you there or in St. Charles.