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NEWSLETTER

GTO Association of Maine March 2012

President's Message

Happy 2012. Hope you survived the snowless winter. We had our first big snow storm in October and our second big snow storm in March. Very Strange! It didn't stop yours truly from snowmobiling though. I plan 4 trips each winter and got them all in again this winter in spite of the lack of snow..... We just had to go to Fort Kent (6 hour drive) to find good riding. But I'll tell you that you've got to seize these opportunities when you can. The riding and hospitality of that area is awesome.

We hope to have a successful 2012 for GTOAM too. Your suggestions for activities and participation will go a long way towards that success. Please plan to join us in 2012 for some great GTO events.

Check out our first event of the year. It's happening this next weekend. Read on.

Prez PJ

NEXT EVENT

GTO Tech Session Workshop

The first GTOAM event of the year is scheduled even before the most of our GTOs have come out of hibernation. Charlie has graciously offered to host a Clutch/Bell Housing Tech session. We will be working on Charlie's '66 Goat and it should be fun and educational experience.



Charlie's 3 Bay Heated Garage

See next page for details

When: Saturday March 10th 2012
Where: Charlie and Rose Huntington's home, 78 Lynch Road, Newcastle, ME
Time: Plan to arrive 1 pm
Agenda: We will remove the transmission & clutch from a '66 GTO and "dial in" the bell housing. If you are mechanically inexperienced then the clutch replacement will be interesting to you. If you've never seen a bell housing "dialed in" then there's something in it for you as well. Even if you're not into the mechanical aspect, come for the camaraderie.
Follow-up: After the clutch is out and the bell housing is "dialed in" we will decide what future date to accomplish the reinstallation. Once the group decides a good date, we'll send out another email so that you can put that date on your calendar. It is not mandatory for you to make both sessions. Come to either one or both and I'm sure that you'll learn something and you'll enjoy the team effort. Hope to see a good group for this.

Put this on your calendar, as it should be a great time.



Charlie's '66 Tripower Convertible

Our Summer Events Report

2012 Annual Meeting

Our 2012 Annual Meeting will again be held in the Augusta area (central location) sometime in April/May. More details to follow.

As the Flywheel Turns

By Charlie Huntington

Some of you may have read of my cross country adventures in the spring of 2011 in my newly purchased 1979 IH Transtar. In case you haven't, let me back up and set the stage for the following story/ technical article.

In February I had slipped on the ice and torn the muscle off my left knee. This resulted in surgery and awhile for recovery. Prior to the fall I had delivered a correct 400 motor to my engine rebuilder for my 1977 Trans Am Special Edition (Bandit) car. By the time the engine was done, all I could manage was to watch it get unloaded into my garage. Not to be totally held back, I purchased a 1979 IH Transtar cabover in Washington state and made plans to drive the truck back to Maine. The trip was fantastic and fueled my interest in big trucks.

During the cross country drive I was able to spend a little time in the Transtar's sleeper catching up on some of my automotive magazines. We always go to the Pontiac Oakland Club International's annual convention and I got to read up on some of the upcoming events at the following summer's convention. My diesel fuel brain got shifted into high gear when I read that a replica truck from Smoky and the Bandit would be at this year's convention. I knew that it was time to jump from the Snowman's side of the fence (driving truck) to the Bandit's side (driving the TA) and vowed to have the TA ready to go to the nationals.



Charlie's 1977 Bandit Trans Am

Once back in Maine I dove into installing the motor into the TA. I bought a correct numbered carb on eBay. I had one of my crew members help me pull the motor and drop the rebuilt one in. We swapped the flywheel off the 73 455 that had been in the car onto the 77 400 that had been rebuilt. Once the tranny was back in and everything hooked up, the engine fired right up. Although the engine ran fine and had plenty of power, it had an annoying vibration. This came and went depending of RPM so it seemed it could be a balance issue. I swapped the harmonic balancer but that had no effect.

The engine builder was consulted and we agreed to drive it and see what might become of it. I pushed to get 1000 miles on the motor prior to the trip to Kentucky, changed the oil and headed out. The rest of the trip is a story to be told another time. The engine ran fine but still had the vibration, however.

Once back from Kentucky, the TA got put aside and the 1966 GTO became the next focus. The GTO had developed an issue, which I was sure was a bad bearing in the front of the tranny. When I pulled the tranny, the retainer for the front bearing was loose and one of the bolts was actually out. In addition, the pilot bushing in the flywheel that holds the front of the input shaft was hollowed out. I ordered a heavy duty front bearing kit, a special wrench, gaskets, and a new pilot bearing. Naturally these 4 components came from 4 separate vendors!

With parts in hand, I installed the heavy duty bearing kit. Not too bad to do once I figured out where the additional spacers needed to go. I pulled off the bell housing, clutch, and pressure plate. I used the old "grease injection" trick to remove the bad pilot bushing. Now we're ready to reinstall.

Assembly stops abruptly when the pilot bearing does not fit into the crankshaft. Some internet research reveals starting in 66-67 not all crankshafts had the hole for the pilot bushing fully machined. My motor was donated from an automatic car and fell into that category. Apparently when the motor was rebuilt 15 years earlier, the machine shop had turned down the bushing so it would fit. No problem – order a pilot bushing instead of a bearing and get the OD turned down. I get the local parts store to order one for me and when I go to pick it up it's not a bushing it's a bearing. They rechecked the parts book and informed me that that was all they had listed. It's Ok, I just need to order once more on line. The tough part is the bushing is a \$6 part but I had to add \$8 shipping!

Once the part was in hand, I visited a local machinist who did the job for me for free! (Another story in itself!). The remainder of the assembly was smooth and the GTO went great.

Now this is supposed to be a story about the TA... Well sometime in the middle of the GTO project, I awoke on a Sat AM. I began my morning routine when I was hit with a thought like a bolt of lightning. When researching the GTO crank issue, I had read that starting in late 76 Pontiac had reduced the diameter of the hub that the flywheel goes on. The flywheel on the 77 TA motor had come from the 73 455 motor that was pulled. Eureka! As soon as the thought hit me I was 100% sure that was going to fix the vibration.

The following Monday, I took the flywheel from the 400 and had a machine shop clean it up. They were even able to do it while I caught a quick lunch around the corner. I had a doctor's appointment that afternoon and left for home at 5PM. By 8PM I had removed the tranny, swapped flywheels, reinstalled the tranny, and taken a test drive. The vibration was gone!

REQUESTS FOR FEATURE ARTICLES

Thanks Charlie for the great article!! It would be great if others shared their experiences. Please send me some stuff. Any input is welcome. C'mon, there must be something that you could share.
PJ

NEW MEMBERS

Frank & Barbara Witham of York
Robert & Julie Senter of Standish with a 1966
GTO
Welcome!!!

DUES

Are you up-to-date?

Please, if you haven't paid your 2012 dues yet send your check of \$10.00 (or \$20.00) for two years. If you are unsure if your membership is current, just check the GTOAM roster at the end of this newsletter to see if you have "2012" under "Status". Remember this is our only source of income other than the sale of tee shirts and hats. In saying that lets try to gain new members. Remember we accept any and all Pontiacs not only GTOs. And we welcome any and all new members that have an interest in Pontiacs. You don't even have to own a car to join.