



THE OIL CAPITOL AUTO CLUB'S

Oil Capitol Auto Club
P.O. Box 1861
Mills, WY 82644

Sept-October 2014
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BLOWN GASKET

The Blown Gasket is published every month by the Oil Capitol Auto Club Inc. Editor reserves the right to edit all copy for length, grammar, and or style. Deadline is the 15th of each month. Meetings are held at 7 PM every 2nd Wednesday at Z's Classics, 2049 E. Yellowstone. Dues are \$20 per year - payable January 1st. Dates and times are subject to change. Club web site: <http://ocac.cc>.

Recurring Club Activities

General meeting: Every 2nd Wednesday, 7PM, Z's Classics, 2049 E. Yellowstone, Casper.
Friday night dinners: 6:00 PM, Check with Skip Hoffman, 277-0818.
Wednesday cruise: 6:30 PM, K Mart parking lot (except meeting nights or otherwise noted).

Special Events

Sept 3: OCAC annual club picture night, leave Kmart exactly at 6 PM for a club photo.
Sept 5-6: Rawlins, WY Car Show & Shine, 307 324-6303
Sept 6 8: Cheyenne, WY Children's Miracle Network Car & Motorcycle Show, Frontier Park, 307 274-1433
Sept 10: Club picnic, EKW Park, leave K Mart 6 PM, club furnishes main dish, bring side dish, \$4 charge.
Sept 20: Torrington, WY, Cow Chip Nationals, 307 401-0743.

OCAC Meeting Minutes

The July 9, 2014 meeting was called to order by President John Gudgeon with 24 in attendance.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter. (Kennedy/Barton)

The treasurer's report was given with \$2089.09 checking & \$377.33 in the auction fund.

Birthdays honored were Will Combs, Lyn Kaper, Dixie Blower, Ralph Butler, John Gardner, Don Heil, Mary Boldt, Mike Johnson, Pam Burrows, Carl Baker.

Committee Reports:

Valve cover has 40 people who have registered & are ready to race so far.

Mirror hangers have been ordered & should be here any day.

Car show checking balance is \$19,180 & they are waiting for a final bank statement before deciding how much money should be donated. A suggestion as to how much money is to be donated will be presented at the next OCAC meeting. \$1,000 has been given to OCAC. Thank you gifts comprised of the poster size aerial picture were given to Potter's for what they do for the club & to Jerry Barton for being car show chairman. The suggestion was made by John M. that the award classes be changed so the same people don't win all the time & he would like to see Handy shirts rather than the crew neck style. As to shirts; this is restricted due to lack of color variety and cost. The award classes will be changed for the next show. All the committee has agreed to serve again next year in the same capacity but we could use a couple more people

Benevolence reported that Steve Shafer is still struggling with infection & has been in & out of the hospital.

Cruise night still has schedule openings for anyone who wants to lead a cruise. Talk to John G.

New Business:

Motion(Nissan/Gudgeon) We have a club picnic, meat provided, at Edness Kimball Park on Sept. 10th at 6:00, with the meeting following. Passed. The committee is Ralph, Jerry B., and Pam.

Phil asked if anyone would like a day cruise, probably in Sept. Most everyone raised their hand in agreement.

Car Activities:

July 30: OCAC Wed nite cruise will be guided by Pam & Chuck Burrows & ending at their home for a garage & quilt show along with dessert. Meet as usual at Kmart

Aug. 3: Deer Creek Days, Glenrock Town Park Cost: \$30 with a free t-shirt. Show: 8:00-4:00 Contact Frank Hill 307-797-1921

Aug. 9 & 10: Stan reported the WSRA cruise & meeting in Riverton starting on Sat. by going to Lander for all day tours & the meeting following lunch on Sun. Contact Stan Goodwin

Aug. 16: Absaroka State Takeover at Sheridan @ noon. Gathering of pre 1965's with free entry. Whitney Plaza Parking Lot. Contact: Stutz 307-752-4676

Aug. 22 & 23: Cody Country Car Show at Denny Menholt Chevy, Buick, GMC in downtown Cody. From 5:30-8:30 Fri. nite BBQ, poker run & cruise. Sat. 8: AM-3:00 Cost is \$20 Contact: Ken 307-899-7677

(Ron/John S.) Meeting adjourned at 7:45. Passed Skip was the auctioneer raising \$68.00 thanks to the generous donations.

Secy. Pro-tem: Pat Potter

Eight in a Row for Wally

This story concerns a certain yellow 1949 Pontiac Silver Streak convertible proudly owned by Wallace Reeves, a spirited WWII Veteran known to many members of the car club. Both Wally and his late wife Gerri were recent members of the OCAC and the pale gold tin Indian could be seen all over Casper. They took their honeymoon in 1950 in a car exactly like this one. Wally originally restored the car in his back yard from the parts of at least three others around fifteen years ago.

Last summer though, something went terribly wrong with the old car. It isn't known whether the hydramatic transmission failed or the engine let go causing the demise of the other component. At any rate, both were toast and Wally had it towed to a Casper shop that had performed its routine service for years. The drive train was removed, and there the "Streak" languished awaiting parts. The hydramatic case was cracked and a replacement came from Denver. But pistons for the old girl were not readily available anywhere.

Enter Mark Milliken. Mark had known Wally for many years, as both are petroleum geologists. Wally had long since retired and after losing his wife, experienced a stroke. Obviously, tackling the big Pontiac as he had done so many years ago, wasn't in the cards and Mark wanted Wally to be able to enjoy the car while he is able. But there the car sat in the weather outside the repair shop, getting run into by other vehicles and looking more and more forlorn as winter turned to spring.

Mark contacted an automotive machine shop in Greeley, CO that had dynoed his Shelby engine. *(Greeley Machine's bread and butter business is oval track racing engines. But their favorite work and what they are highly regarded for is rebuilding engines from the "golden age," 1920s through the '60s. And not just cars. They have even tackled antique tug boat and fire engine engines...ed.)*

And in the span of a mere six weeks, the flathead straight 8 was completely rebuilt (with custom Ross pistons machined from forged aluminum billets)

and ready for pick up. Enter Mike Kennedy who drove Wally down one day in May before Cruisin' with the Oldies to pick up the power plant. Unfortunately, the original Casper repair shop now wanted no more to do with the Pontiac even though its engine was now ready for reinstallation, so Mike and I offered the use of our shop, tools and lack of know-how and agreed to lend a hand to Mark and Wally.

Being retired, Mike and I generously offered the project lead to Mark, who was ever so grateful. Unfortunately Mark works about three jobs and was only able to wrench on the tin Indian one or two days a week. Still, steady progress in the end won the race. Wally helped where he was able, running parts, getting oil, and providing what he was able to remember about how the old buggy was originally put together. This was good, because all of the parts were just lying in a box in the trunk of the car. Fortunately Wally did possess an original shop manual which proved invaluable.

Mike actually worked on the car every night that Mark was able, and I lent a hand a few times myself. The most important job was repairing the wiring to the lit-up Indian hood ornament. To install the engine, it was necessary to lower and lift it in and out of place no less than three times before everything lined up right. As hard as we tried to smash our fingers, none occurred. Thanks to Bruce Dangle for his engine hoist. Mike "Magic" Johnson generously transported the car over to Dayton Transmission after the tranny sprung a huge leak on initial start-up. Fortunately that was a simple fix, and by the middle of August Wally was again driving the Silver Streak around town (well, sort of. Seems the starter had other ideas).

Wally plans to enjoy what is left of the summer and then come fall, the car will head to the body shop to repair last winter's damage. If you see Wally, give him a shout and a thumbs up. His is likely the only '49 Pontiac straight 8 daily driver in Wyoming, and Mark should take a bow for spearheading its rebirth. Phil Nissen, Wrench #3



Mike and Mark mating transmission to engine



Wally adding technical and moral support



Ten minutes before the first of three installations



Engine sitting in place and waiting accessories



Wally gaps a new set of spark plugs for the engine



Phil and Mark consult the official shop manual



Engine installation complete, Wally is anxious to roll leak



Cleaning up the shop after the transmission fluid leak



Magic Johnson getting ready to tow the car to Dayton



Back from Dayton, Mark sets the engine timing



Eight happy cylinders of straight eight Pontiac power ready for new adventures

Update, 8/27/2014: The '49 Pontiac starter motor would start the car once, then overheat and lay down. Wally got the car up to B&B Electric, where Jerry discovered the starter was pulling about 300 amps due to excessive drag. That's enough current to melt the armature and singe the positive battery cable. But it was an easy repair.

While driving home from B&B in a downpour, Wally discovered the windshield wipers were non-op. The technician responsible for the proper routing of vacuum lines denies any wrongdoing. But at least the old girl is at home under Wally's roof once again. Gerri would be proud.

“Summer of Love,” Flower Girls, and a GTO in the Park.

By the editor

The July evening in 1967 was very warm in Thermopolis, Wyoming. The fumes from the hot springs at State Park didn't add any comfort. But that had no effect on the young folks, who with their cars were cruising the main drag between the park and the bowling alley. One car was a brand new metallic gold Pontiac GTO 4 speed just purchased from Western Motors, still smelling of new engine paint. The owner was a tall, slender 27 year old named Harold Bendlin. The new GTO was drawing more than its fair share of attention.

It was July '67, and the “Summer of Love” was sweeping the nation, or at least San Francisco. The words of Sgt. Pepper, Light my Fire, and White Rabbit convinced the young that drugs, sex, and rock-n-roll were hip. The Monterey Pop Festival was only a couple of weeks ago. Little did we know that most of the performers would eventually die young or become mental cases due to drugs. After all, what did we care? Many of us would be in Viet Nam shortly. Wow, did Egypt just attack Israel? What are they thinking?

“Summer of Love” or not, hippies, flower power, free love, protests, and free drugs were hard to find in this part of rural Wyoming. Instead, young people liked their cars. The muscle cars of 1967 created their own culture. It was the last great hurrah before the federal government cracked down on this the 4-wheeled symbol of American freedom.

Tri-power 427 Corvettes, dual-quad 428 Shelby Mustangs, 396 Chevilles, 400 GTOs, and 426 Hemi GTXs were readily available for \$4000-\$5000. For 1967, GTO lost the famous tri-power 389. The 400 was just as fast, but with fewer vacuum leaks.

Harold's car was “stripped down” for speed, with power-nothing and of course no A/C.

On weekends, Harold would run up to the Greybull drags. Harold even thought about entering the Tensleep Canyon Hill Climb. That idea faded as the beer wore off that particular day. On this July '67 evening, there were no fast targets in sight on the “strip.” So back to the State Park went the GTO.

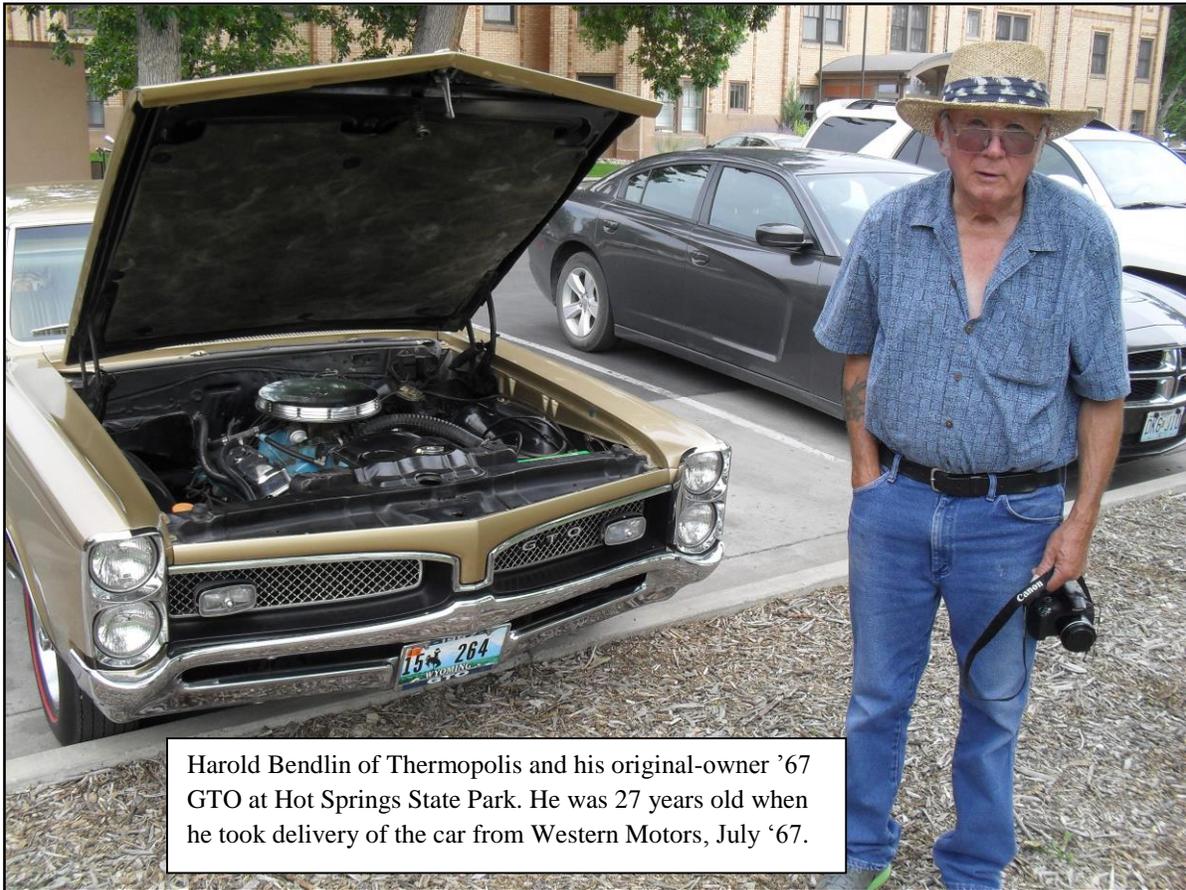
Saturday evenings in August were just as warm as July. In a familiar scene, Harold and his gleaming GTO “chick-magnet” once again dominated the State Park scene. A group of people were crowded around the car, including a pretty 20-something woman who was especially enthralled by the father of all muscle cars. She insisted on getting her picture with Harold and the GTO.

Most people alive today have no clue about the Summer of Love, Monterey Pop, Haight-Ashbury, Viet Nam, LSD, and Timothy Leary. Nor do they understand cross-ram dual fours, 435 HP, 11” clutches, bias ply tires skinnier than Twiggy, marginal brakes, and the muscle car counter-culture that manifested itself during the summer of 1967 and continues to this day.

Speaking of “this day,” did I mention that the August evening above was in 2014? Yes, it's the same Harold Bendlin, and the very same GTO that plied Thermopolis streets 47 years ago. The original interior looks new. The engine has never had a wrench turned on it (except when the original plastic timing sprocket stripped itself under warranty). Harold was forced to get a new paint job when the original was vandalized.

Harold and his GTO comprise a living history book of that summer of love. We can only hope that we'll see them at a show in central Wyoming soon.

Thanks, Harold, for the memories.



Harold Bendlin of Thermopolis and his original-owner '67 GTO at Hot Springs State Park. He was 27 years old when he took delivery of the car from Western Motors, July '67.



When it comes to '60s muscle cars, some things never change.