

## GTO of the Month

By Darrell and Tootie May



In 1960 I brought a 1958 Pontiac Chieftain with Tri-Power an automatic, I changed it to a 4 speed after rebuilding the Automatic 3 times. Then in Nov. of 1964 I meet Tootie and we started dating, when we got engaged

she said we need to get a different car as she could not keep the 58 Pontiac running. She would kill the engine and could not get it started again.

So we went shopping for a new car, I was looking at a Grand Prix when my friend who was dating my sister drove up in a new GTO. So I gave it a test drive, so off I went to the dealer to price a GTO or a Grand Prix, the GTO won out as the price was about a \$1000 cheaper, even though both cars would be equipped the same.

So we ordered the GTO with 4 speed , PS, PB, A/C, Lamp Group, Console, and AM/FM radio. Tootie liked the GTO color of Yellow but



I talked her out of it. The only reason for the am/fm radio was Columbia had a FM radio station at the time. The station carried all the local news, and that was important to her. This was to be our family car. We bought the GTO in May of 1965 and I drove Tootie's 1955 Red and White Chevy back and forth to work for 3 weeks till the GTO came in,



since we traded my 1958 in for the GTO. We got married that August. About a month later I bought a 421 HO engine, that I was going to put in a 52 Pontiac I had. Kids entered the world and that never happened.

One rainy evening in 1968 coming home from work a car pulled out in front of Tootie, she locked up the brakes and slid head on into a telephone pole. She found out they do not give. I thought the GTO was going to be totaled; but her dad who was in the garage business said that he would keep the cost down so the insurance company would not total the car, so that is what we did.



In about 1972 or 73 while I was driving home from work, the radiator split open, since I was working a lot of overtime I parked the GTO in a spare garage that my father-in law had. Since I had other cars to drive I never got around to fix the radiator, and there it sat till around 1983 when our oldest son started driving and

he needed a car for after school activities. All three of our sons drove the GTO to high school. It helped that almost every police office in Monroe County knew who the car belonged to and who their grandfather was, and there would be hell to pay if they did something wrong while driving the GTO.

So sometime in the early 1980's I decided to enter the GTO in the My-Fest car show in O-Fallon, IL. There I meet Tony Bezzole and he gave me an application for the Gateway GTO club, I took it home and my wife said to fill it out, so I did. I drove it to many car club meetings in the following years.

Then in 2004 I decided to put together my 421 HO engine that I had bought in 1965. We had met a couple at the Red Wing MN Convention, He was from N. Ft. Myers FL and told us to look him up when we took our vacation each winter in Ft. Myers. He was a Ft. Myers fireman and on the side he ran a speed shop. He kept telling us to bring our engine down and he would build it. He hoped to get it done from Jan to March, but it took him longer and we did not get it back till the following year(2006), when we went down. He has become a great friend and each year I help him in his garage or just go out to eat with him and his guy friends, naturally it is all car talk.

In 2008 I had Cee-Jay Auto Body give it a frame on restoration. A lot of people ask me how it came to pass that I kept the GTO all these years and I tell them it was a stroke of luck. I also have a hard time getting rid of cars and car parts , which also helped.

When we went to Wichita GTO Convention 2010 I entered the GTO in Concourse Modified Points Judging. I just wanted to know how they judged cars. I really did not think I would get an award, but was pleasantly surprised that I got an award. Tootie really was upset then I did not get bronze award. She figured I would not get any award and she was rooting for me. Well we were ecstatic when they called Darrell's name for a SILVER AWARD. What a great feeling.

