

## Big Chief's Corner

# Do As I Do And We'll Get Along

The line of cars, trucks, trailers and motorcycles snaked from the front gate at Centerville, out to the highway. This was an hour after the gates opened.

The young man helping direct the traffic said that the owners told him they'd never seen that many cars before. It seemed like everyone with a driver's license had brought anything that rolled to try their luck on the 1000 foot track.

I had been warned. Those who had been to the track the previous weekend said it was the same. Two hour waits in the staging lanes were to be expected.

They weren't far from the truth. Club members waited for an hour and a half to make their first pass. Grumbling was loud and long.

To make matters worse, a second wave hit. Shortly after lunch the import crowd showed up. Now the lanes were completely plugged and the grousing was getting louder.

I was a little upset by the old timers complaining that the "ricers" had ruined the day. Sure, they added to the volume of vehicles trying to make it down the track but what about the others?

I was taking note. There were full blown race cars. There were street cars. There were trucks. There were junior dragsters. There were motorcycles and, yes, there were imports.

If those kids racing those import cars hadn't come to the track that day, where would they have gone? Aren't we the ones who keep saying "Get those kids involved in racing and keep them off the street?"

For the most part, they were a well behaved, polite group of youngsters. They laughed at each other, not at other competitors. They encouraged each other and fellow competitors.

The only problem I saw was late in the day in the staging lanes. Tammy made a hole for a youngster to come across the lanes. She and I both assumed he was trying to pull in under the trees on the other side of park and be with his friends.

What happened might have been youthful enthusiasm or just not knowing but it went a long way towards tarnishing the reputation of that import crowd. As the line moved forward, one of his friends made space for him in front, allowing him to cut into line in front of many competitors who'd been in line for some time.

I didn't say anything. I'm not a regular and I'm not the track owner. I think if I was a regular at the track, I might have but I didn't feel I had the right. Now I wish I had.

The lesson out of this for me, and all of you, is that the actions of one can affect everyone in that group. That is especially true for a car club.

It is incumbent on each of us to do our best to represent what's good about the car hobby in general and Pontiacs in particular when we participate in car events. Who knows, maybe the youngsters will be watching and learn from our actions.



Jerry and Velma Spradlin have done it again. They not only paid for the club banner but took care of having it made. Our thanks to them.

# Sponsors being sought

February's meeting began with a change to the lineup of officers. Club treasurer, David Templeton was having difficulties attending meetings because of overseeing construction of his new house. He graciously stepped down and allowed the members to elect Dusty Palmer as our new treasurer.

Jerry and Velma Spradlin showed off the new club banner. They donated it to the club and took care of having it made.

This opened the floor for the discussion of sponsors for the club. It was decided that we would offer two levels of sponsorship.

For \$100.00 the sponsor will get their name on the banner in 3 inch tall letters, a spot on the website sponsors page, listed in our newsletter and a trophy presented at the car show in their name. For \$50.00 they will get the same as above except for 1.5 inch tall letters on the banner and no trophy.

Club president Chris Ritter will work up promotional materials for club members to use when we begin seeking sponsors. That will be presented at the next meeting.

Ritter reported that he had not had not contacted Maumelle authorities yet regarding using

the city park for the car show. He will have a report on that at the next meeting.

Ritter gave a report on shirts with the club logo. The Fancy Stitches company offered a quote with the option of us providing our own shirts to reduce the cost. Brian Ray agreed to do some checking on shirt prices to see if we could save some money. The club voted to use club funds to pay for the \$50.00 setup fee for embroidering the logo.

Stacy Major told the group about the Cruise for The Cure that will take place on September 21st at the RiverFront Park in North Little Rock. This event will benefit the Arkansas Prostrate Cancer Foundation. Organizers are expecting 400 cars to attend and are asking local clubs for help. Ritter was authorized to tell organizers that we could supply ten people to help with the event.

Ritter wrapped up the meeting by mentioning that Carl Reed of Sherwood Pontiac had not returned his call regarding not doing a show at his dealership. Jay Woodson also agreed to visit with Steve Landers regarding dealership sponsorship for the group.

# Poncho Power Hits The Drag Strip

Race day started with a bit of confusion. Bryan Blocker had Bruce Rhoad's 1967 GTO on his trailer, ready to roll. The only problem was Bryan's stomach. It seems the flu bug had bitten him with a vengeance.

After a few phone calls between Bryan, Bruce and myself we worked out a solution. I stopped by Bryan's house, hooked his trailer up to my truck and Bruce and I fol-



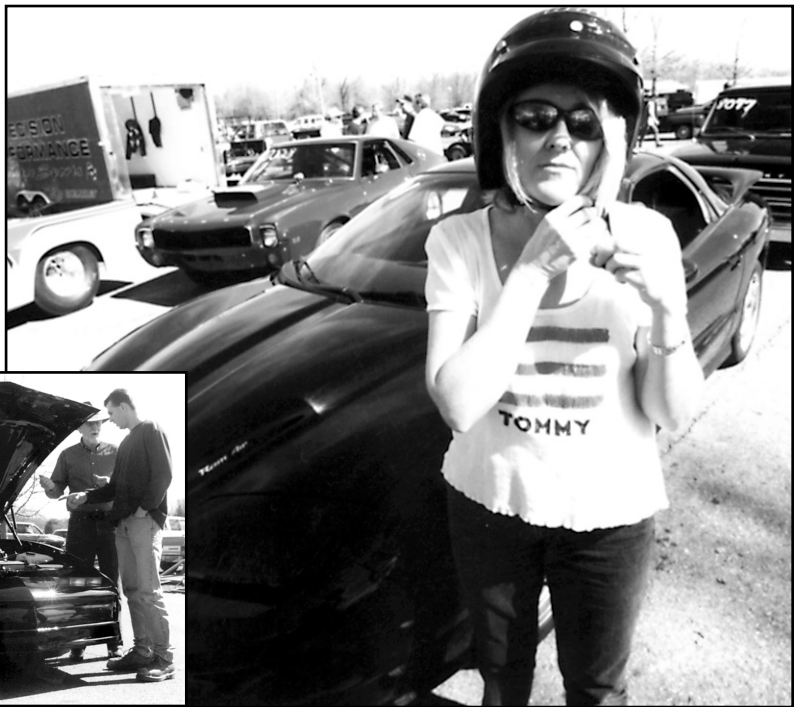
It was that kind of day. Jay Woodson waits in line.

There we met with Jay Woodson, Brian Ray and James Matchett. The view of the interstate from the window gave us a warning of what to expect. A multitude of hot street and full race cars were headed north on Interstate 40.

After a hearty breakfast we drove the hour plus trip to the track. The line into the track was traffic jam. The scene in the staging lanes was just as bad.

The bright side of all the waiting was that it allowed us to meet and recruit prospective Pontiac enthusiasts for the club. A fair selection of Ponchos were in attendance, including early GTOs and late model Trans Ams.

The crowd really limited the number of passes for club members. Some only managed two runs after a full day. Others squeezed in three or



**Clockwise from top, left - James Matchett heats them up. Tammy Ritter slips on her helmet. Chris Ritter, Tammy and Bruce Rhoads wait in the staging lanes. Brian Ray keeps the hood up to cool the engine in the lanes. James Matchett answers questions for a fan.**

**Poncho - continued from I**

four but spent the entire day in the staging lanes.

Tammy was behind the wheel for her first official drag racing experience. Her first attempt met with some difficulty (we'll let her explain that) but her second pass was an excellent first effort, turning an 11.7 second pass at 90.8 mph on the 1000 foot track. She beat the Mitsubishi 3000GT in the far lane by nearly a full second.

Bruce Rhoads had problems that limited the true potential of his 1967 GTO. A missed shift on both runs limited him to a best of 11.95 at 95mph in his 455 powered Goat. Once he works out his traction issues and gets the shift points down, reaction times like his .578 light will make that GTO a force.

Brian Ray squeezed in three runs in his 2000, GTX Grand Prix. His perseverance landed him a personal best, running 11.89 at 87.5 mph. Brian says he's still getting the hang of launching a front wheel drive hot rod.

Jay Woodson kept the personal bests going for the Grand Prix crowd with a pass of 11.31 at 92.8 mph in his 1999, Grand Prix GTP. He was breaking in some new drag radials and felt he could have worked into the 10's if he'd been able to make more passes.

For any of you who thought that James Matchett's futuristic design, custom, 1989 Trans Am was all show and no go, back up and hush. James managed to pull away from the gawkers in the staging lanes for 3 passes and turned in a 11.86 at 89.2 to silence the doubters.

Overall, despite the crowds and waits, it was a good day for the Pontiac contingent.

**SALE OR TRADE**

**CARS.....**

1972 LeMans. Over \$10,000 invested but will sacrifice for \$7,500. Dealer paperwork comes with it. Very nice car. Call Shane Shelton at fbodyman@iwon.com or call 501-315-3881.

**PARTS.....**

455 short block. 1973 date code. Standard bore, standard crank. Slight ridge at the top of cylinder. Includes oil pan and damaged, but repairable windage tray. \$425.00, OBO. Chris Ritter - 501-803-9219

Header panel for 1974 Trans Am. Refinished and ready for final prep work/paint. \$125.00, OBO. Chris Ritter - 501-803-9219

1969 GTO standard differential. Code WC. 2.78 gears. Solid housing with good 28 spline axles. \$100.00. Call Bryan Blocker at 501-529-8020.

Set of 7M5 and 4X, 455 heads. \$50 for each pair. Call Bryan Blocker at 501-529-8020..

Complete set of five, 15X7 rally wheels off a 1977 Grand Prix. Trim rings and center caps included. \$100.00. Contact Claudio Garcia at 501-843-0731



**Mark Your Calendar**

**March 17th**  
**Regular Meeting - Arkansas Pontiac Association**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Westland Apartment Complex**

**April 6th**  
**NASCAR Display - Club Event - We need for club members to bring their cars out for display**  
**All Day -Sherwood Pontiac**

**April 13th**  
**North East Arkansas Street Rod Association**  
**Open Auto Show**  
**Craighead Forest Park - Pavilion #3 & #4**  
**Jonesboro, AR**  
**Roy Coble 870-932-6110**  
**rojocoble@cox-internet.com**  
**Entry fee is \$15.00. Registration is from 8am - 12pm.**

**March 23rd**  
**Pratt's Antique Vehicle Show**  
**620 Pratt Road (Hwy. 65-530)**  
**Little Rock, AR**  
**Clint Cusick - 501-316-1203**  
**Limited to 60 entries - Divisions based on years**  
**1925-1977- No entry fee**

**Friday, May 31st thru Sunday, June 2nd**  
**Pontiac Southern Nationals**  
**Dallas Area Pontiac Association**  
**www.pontiacsouthernationals.com**  
**972-618-0700**