

1969 GTO CONVERTIBLE

By Steve and Jolene Ellefson



Back in the early 1990s the Pioneer Auto Club talked about having a club house at Buckstop Junction. This was also in the early development stages of Buckstop Junction. So with that in mind, the Pioneer Auto Club discussed what building would be appropriate as a clubhouse. At that time our Pioneer Auto Club President was Dennis Neuman, Sam Wangler's brother-in-law. He knew where an old gas station was located here in Bismarck, ND.

A vacant building that was previously used as a Bus Stop and Gas Station was located at United Tribes. Dennis and I checked out the old building and spoke with Ray Dwelle, the Buildings and Grounds Administrator. The Pioneer Auto Club approved the building for our clubhouse and United Tribes donated it.

After the meeting Ray mentioned he had an old car, a GTO Convertible and was thinking of selling it. Instantly my heart started beating rapidly. I asked him when I could see the car and he said tonight would be a good time. That was the I first saw the 1969 Green on Green GTO Convertible. We negotiated and I bought the car that evening and trailered it home. In the next few weeks I cleaned it and took it for a drive.



In 1994 I decided to do a minor restoration. I changed the interior to a black, installed a new convertible top, and I painted the exterior black in my backyard. During this restoration I examined the car quite closely. The 3 speed manual transmission had a FoMoCo logo cast into the tranny. Wow- this car has a Ford Transmission! After research I discovered the Pontiac transmission plant had a fire and burnt down in 1968. To replace the 3 speed transmissions Pontiac purchased the transmissions from Ford with Pontiac mounting holes.

One summer afternoon on the return trip from the Mercer car show, the engine knocked and sounded like an aerosol paint can being shaken. Yes - new motor installed. In 2009 after minor rust started to appear we had the car repainted.

After retirement we trailered the 69 GTO to Arizona. We changed the transmission to automatic as Steve was done racing 18 year olds and the old linkage definitely needed to be repaired. Now it is so much easier to drive. Also while in AZ our next door neighbor had her roof painted white... Unfortunately on a windy day! Do we need to say more? White overspray drifted all over our car. The convertible top needed to be replaced and the body needed buffing.

Over the years we have driven, repaired, and enjoyed our 1969 GTO convertible. It was Jo's daily driver to work in the Summer. Many business cards and notes have been left on our windshield inquiring if it is "For Sale". Sorry, Not For Sale as it's one of Jo's favorites. When you see this car cruising around, it's usually Jolene driving it. She loves the car so much and has even learned a line dance to the song "Little GTO".

Note: We would LOVE to hear your 'car story' ... please submit your story to Don Roloff at rolnon@bis.midco.net and we will publish it in the newsletter as soon as we are able!