

Preparing the '66 for my Retirement

By Jim McCarthy



I retired April 30, 2016 after 43 years of working in the electronic banking world so it is only fitting that I prepare the 66 GTO, after 50 years of service, (22 years with me) to enjoy our golden years together.

During these past 3 years I have changed the focus of the car from one of performance to comfort and reliability.

This journey started when I married Mary 'You are my Everything' and we formed Team McCarthy. I have told her that we can do great things together and I look forward with hope and excitement to the future we will build together. Part of that journey includes the GTO and





our involvement with the Gateway GTO club.

As a wedding gift she provided me the funds to purchase the Vintage Air Conditioning unit that is now in the car. After we put the A/C unit into the car it did not quite create the comfort that we thought. We spoke with Tom Oxler, who also had installed a similar system into his 66 GTO, he informed me that to make the A/C effective that the windows needed to be tinted. He was right and once the windows were tinted the A/C is now quite effective.



The next major change required for comfort, was to install some sound deadening material which has enabled us to better enjoy the sound system as we cruise on down the highway. This material has been installed on the floor, the inside firewall, the doors and the under the headliners.

The next major effort which was done last summer was to provide more seating comfort. This was accomplished by finding seats from a 2006 GTO and having them upholstered to match the car (the seats that I bought were blue which would not work at



all). This work was performed by Top Stitch in Cottleville and they both look great and are very comfortable.

As I have gotten a bit older and the eyes are not what they used to be I have installed LED lights in all the gauges. This has greatly improved the visibility of the gauges and improved the safety of the car. I have also installed the LED tail lights and sequencers on the rear turn signal lights. My GTO is now much more visible to other drivers at night.

Another safety feature was to install Wilwood disc brakes in the front and also a Wilwood Master Cylinder. I changed from power brakes to manual as I had to have a vacuum pump to make the power brakes work and I kept having issues with a switch on the vacuum pump. With the manual brakes the braking is now consistent and four piston disc front brakes is an improvement from the single piston 70's style brakes.

I also have been able to make the passenger rear view mirror work properly. This was done by replacing the mirror glass with a piece of convex mirror glass. Again, this was to add to the safety of the GTO for future cruises.

The journey of making the car as reliable and as comfortable has been done with help of Kenny Bier of Bier Brothers Performance and Ed Koob of SRC Body both of which are located in O'Fallon, MO.

We are looking forward to participating in future cruises and to the GTOAA convention in July, 2017.