

Monthly Newsletter April '09

Newsletter No. 0016

What's in This Month

Topic: Get Ready for the 2009 Cruising Season

Tip: Replacing bushings Part 1 (Rear)

Spotlight: Spotlight of the Month April 1971 Formula

Spotlight: Performance Years

Classifieds



Get Ready for the 2009 Cruising Season

Here we are in April and getting ready for the long Cruising season for the Summer. So what is there to look forward to this Year?.... well, alot of things. I have listed back in January many of the larger Firebird shows that will be going on for the year, but also don't forget about your local car shows. Many times these can be just as enjoyable as the larger shows. To myself, going to shows is all about getting out and meeting people. Getting together with friends and enjoying the evening or day. With everything that is going on in the world today, these cruises and car shows are like an escape to where you can get away from the grinds of daily life and relax. Now one of my favorite activities is taking my Trans Am out on the Country roads for a few hours with the wind in the hair and music on the radio. But a close second place is attending local car shows. Calling up friends and going to sit around and look at cars and sharing stories about your cars. No

matter what is going on in the world today, there is nothing more important than friends and Family. Even if you don't have anyone to call on that is close, you will be surprised at what kind of people and maybe new friends you can meet at these shows. It seems like every times I attend a local show around here, I meet someone new and gain another friend in the hobby. Many of these people extend beyond going to shows. We get together at each others places to work on cars and share more stories.

So don't make 2009 about winning trophies.. make it about sharing fun times with friends. When all is said and done, it is more important to have friends than a 3 foot plastic and metal thing sitting on a shelf somewhere. But that is just my opinion.. Maybe you can find out for yourself.



Replacing your Bushings Part 1 (Rear)

Well, last month we covered a broad topic about replacing your bushing all the way around the car including the front, the rear, and also the body mounts. This month I will cover replacing the rear bushings on your suspension parts. This does take a little bit of time and will run you about \$140 but it will be worth it in the end. You will need to purchase the following:

1. Front Eye Bracket Bushing
2. Rear Shackle Bushing (8)
3. Leaf Spring Cushion (upper and lower)
4. Sway Bar Bushing

You can purchase the bushings you need for this project from places like Performance Years.

You will also need some simple tools like mainly a socket set, a jack, and some jack stands. Some penetrating oil to loosen the bolts and some loc-tite to put the bolts back on may also be needed. This is a fairly simple job that will take you about 2 to 3 hours to complete. Once you have all of your new bushings and

tools ready to go, invite over a friend.... it makes it easier.



Go ahead and place the rear end up on jack stands using the frame as the support. You will need to leave the jack under the rear axle because you will need to lift it up and down to make things easier when removing all of the old bolts and bushings.

The first thing to do is remove your sway bar and get it out of the way. Remove the two bolts on the bottom of the leaf springs and then remove the top bolts from the sway bar drop links. Now you can take and set it aside. Lay the sway bar aside and set the new bushings down next to it. You can remove the bushings now and put the new ones in place, or you can wait until you are ready to install it again. Either way is fine and it is up to you which you would rather do.

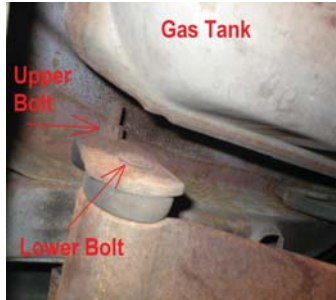
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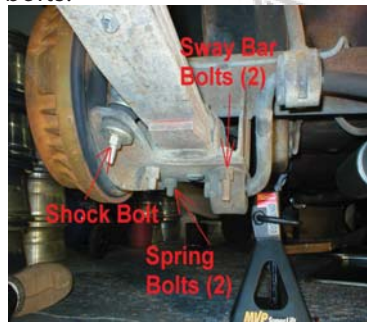
Replacing your Bushings.... Part 1 (Rear)

Now that the sway bar is out of the way, the next thing you need to do is drop down the rear leaf springs. You have already removed the two bolts from the bottom of the leaf springs when you removed the sway bar which just leaves two remaining, so the only ones left are the three front spring perch bolts, the shock bolt, and the two rear shackle bolts.

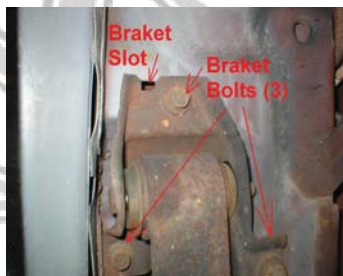
of the car to drop down the rear of the leaf springs.



Now you can remove the two remaining bolts that attach the spring to the axle on the spring plate and the one shock bolt and the leaf spring should drop down being just held on by the front spring perch. You might need to get a hammer to knock it free from the axle, but it should fall fairly easily. You can now move to the front of the leaf spring and remove the three bolt that hold the spring perch to the car.



Now when you do this, you really just want to do one side at a time to help minimize the shifting of the rear axle. So start with one side and remove the bolts. It is easiest to start at the rear shackle bolts while the front is still attached because you need the leverage to help remove these bolts. The Service Manual recommends removing the lower bolt first and sliding it out to the inside of the car.. but you will find out that you can't because there is a thing called a "gas tank" in your way (funny.. who put that there?). So you need to remove the upper bolt first and slide it to the outside



Once the leaf spring is removed from the car, lay it aside and lay out the new bushings next to it. You can start removing the remaining bolts that attach the front spring perch and rear shackles to the leaf spring in order to replace the bushings. As you can see, the leaf springs are now free from the car so if you wanted to spend the extra

\$200 for new leaf springs, this would be a good time to also replace those if needed.

Once you remove the bolts, you will probably have to work a little bit to remove the front eye bushings from the leaf springs and maybe even the rear shackle bushings. Once these are removed, replace them with the new bushings that you have laying there.



It would probably help to also spray a little white lithium grease on the new bushings to help slide them into place.... just makes it a little easier on the install. Now you can start putting the rear shackles and front spring perch back on the leaf springs and install them in the reverse or of which you removed them. Do not tighten them all the way up..... get them nice and snug, but not fully tightened yet. You will need a little play in them in order to install it back onto the car. Also, once everything is installed back on the car, you want to set everything down in place to let everything settle and then tighten all of the bolts to factory specifications that are listed in the Service Manual.

Install the leaf spring back

on the car and rear axle and snug down the bolts to hold everything in place. Again, if you also wanted to spend an extra \$80 or so you can also replace the rear shocks to help improve the ride. At this stage, there are only two bolts at the top of the shock that hold it in place.... but that is up to you. Now, you can move to the other side of the car and repeat this same process on that side.

Once you have everything back in place and nice and snug, you want to jack the car back up, remove the jack stands and lower the car back onto all fours and let everything settle in place. Now, you have to snug under the car to tighten the bolts to the factory settings.

A few other things to consider while you have everything taken apart and depending on how much time you have is to freshen up everything that was removed during this process. You can take your front spring perches, the leaf spring plates, the rear shackles, the sway bar and drop links and sand them down or use a wire wheel to clean them off. Then you can use a durable black paint to paint them to make them look better and also help protect them from any rust.

Next month we will move onto the body mount replacement.



78ta.com Forum:

<http://forum.78ta.com>

Check out the Calendar for upcoming shows and events for 2009.

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Spotlight of the Month - 1971 Formula of Beno

Here we are getting closer to Spring.... the air is getting warmer... the flowers and tress are starting to bud and grow..... and the Summer cruising season is right around the corner. What better way to get you Firebird hearts pumping than spotlighting a beautiful 1971 Formula 400 4-Speed owned by Beno. I have known Brad for going on about 8 years or so now and probably about 10 or more Firebirds, Formulas, and Trans Ams. Everything from Pace Cars to Trans Ams to Formulas and alot of other cars as well. All of his cars have been outstanding examples of Firebird History and his current 1971 Formula is no exception. The car is a beautiful example of a 1971 Formula 400 4-Speed car. It is a Castilian Bronze and Black top exterior and the Deluxe Black Comfortweave Interior. The car is a matching numbers car and PHS Documented and underwent a frame off restoration in 1999. The car has already pulled in some awards at the Trans Am Nationals. Brad has been here on the Forum for over a year and a half. Brad is a great guy and would do anything for anybody. He works hard and has a great family and even better friends. For those of you who have met him and his son at previous Trans Am Nationals, you already know what I mean. For those of

you who have not met him yet.... you need to at this year's Nationals. Brad is a great guy to have around and his current Formula and all of his previous cars have been great examples of Firebird History.



You can check out the full story on the Forum. *****

Spotlight of the Month - Performance Years

Performance Years (PY) was founded by Chris Casperson in 1983 when he began to sell Pontiac parts out of his basement via a newsletter called the GTO Journal. His first reproduction (65-66 wood wheel center cap) was made in 1984. In 1987, a catalog of his reproductions was created. In 1991, PY introduced the first Classic Pontiac online community. Today the PY Online Forums is the internet's largest such community. PY has full color catalogs for GTO and Firebird and an online catalog for Fullsize cars and parts are

distributed worldwide. They can be seen on the web www.performanceyears.com or at national Pontiac events and large swap meets.

I have been using Performance Years for a majority of the parts that I purchase. When I was restoring the Trans Ams, I would get about 90% of my parts through PY. If you get a chance, check

out their website and get a catalog from them. And when you call for parts, their highly trained staff are always glad to help. I have been dealing with Stacey for a long time there and is a great help when I am looking for parts. Make sure you mention 78ta.com when you call. Performance Years 1-800-542-PART

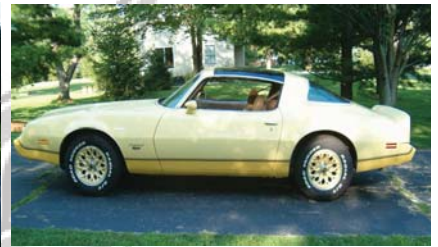
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Want to sell your car in the Monthly Newsletter here at 78ta.com? Send an email to Sales@78ta.com for more information. List your car for sale that reaches over 100,000 people each and every month.

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1980 Pontiac Yellowbird \$12,500 or best offer
T-Tops, Air, Cruise, Tilt, Automatic, Solid Rust Free New Mexico Car, Original Build Sheet
Call Jason at (616)889-9925 or email JTrace63@aol.com



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1976 Trans Am, 455 engine, gear driven, 400 Transmission, posi traction, nitros, new 750 double pumper Holly carb new flame thrower distributor, new master cylinder, Eddlebrach manifold. Wes Combs 909-702-9283 Located in California \$10,500 OBO Call for more info or any questions.

