

Member Feature

“With a Little Help From My Friends”

Early in December I found, from online at the AACA website, a genuine 1934 Pontiac accessory “bustle back” trunk that was for sale. It came from another '34 Pontiac in Pennsylvania that had been restored. The owner, after the restoration, decided he did not like the looks of his car with the accessory trunk so had the restorer remove it. The restorer then listed it and I found it two hours after his posting. Lucky me, because I have been wanting this type of trunk or one that would rest on an attached rack at the rear of the car. As you might imagine this type of trunk is extremely rare, if not impossible to find 77 years after the car was manufactured. Included in the sale price, the restorer repainted the trunk (from green) to black AND shipped it in the best crating I have ever seen.



Over the past three weeks I have been prepping Phiona for her new bustle trunk, removing the rear bumper, loosening the back fenders, etc and undercoating all the exposed areas that were then exposed to daylight.



Did I have any problems? Heck yes...Skinned knuckles, scraped head, sore back and shoulder, but I kept at it, anticipating the day the crates would arrive with my treasure.



Don Kline at work on Phiona.

This, of course, was a much bigger project than I could possibly handle alone, and so, asked several friends for their help. I was really delighted to have such a great response and experienced car buffs who jumped right in and helped me tackle the installation.

On Friday afternoon I started to assemble the new framing and brackets to the car with the help of my friend Tom from Kingman.

Then, Saturday morning the crew started to arrive, I gave them an overview of the project, we uncrated the trunk, installed welting bead around the back and bottom edges, did a preliminary installation, marked drill holes in the body and a whole lot of “adjusting the framing” and so on to be sure we got the correct fit. I can tell you how impressed I was with the guys as they simply went about the tasks at hand and tackled them with such skill.

Of course there were times when we all had to confer and reassess the project, then resume with a





The all important "peanut gallery" intently observing the progress and standing by to offer much needed advice on the project!

clearer idea of how to make things work. At mid-day, I stopped and prepared lunch for the group (which I think was up to 14 at one time). Most were an audience (in some instances they were the "peanut gallery" with their arm chair coaching - ha, ha). But, all in all, with joking and ribbing of us



A problem with the spare tire fitting.

aside, I know everyone was pretty impressed watching as the trunk installation transformed Phiona's

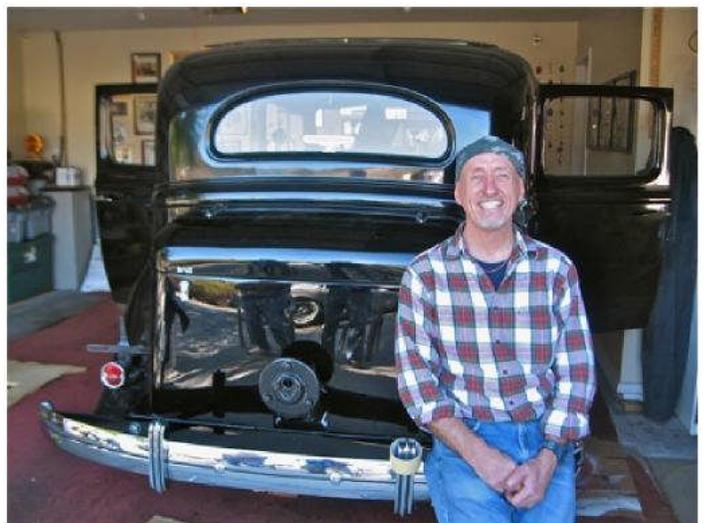


appearance.

At the end of our Saturday work day, we, at last were ready to put the spare tire back on, only to discover that it would not fit between the trunk and the bumper.

In studying the photo of the car from which the trunk had been removed, we could see the brackets ends had a distinct curve that moved the bumper out at least two more inches, enough clearance for the tire. My bumper brackets were more straight. Several remedies were discussed, primarily to add spacers and turn the bumper around, end for end, which would give us a bit more room for the spare. When everyone left Saturday, I ran up to Home Depot to buy the added hardware, which were simply, longer bolts, and 16 washers and two couplings.

Sunday afternoon, the work crew returned, and a few of the peanut gallery - oops, sorry, my audi-



Time to relax and reflect at the end of the day.

ence, and we resumed our work to fix the spare tire fit problem. We ended up using the washers for spacers. But adding the spacers was no easy task as

the bumper bolt holes did not line up and required pulling the new bracketing under the trunk together with a ratcheting tie down strap and jacking up the trunk base cover until the holes were aligned. Not an easy operation by any means, but with primarily 4 able bodied men, we got 'er done.

After the others left, Steve reminded me that the turn signals needed to be reinstalled on the bumper, so we proceeded to finish up with that. Steve is very proficient with auto electric and wiring so extensions were added to the old wires to reach out to the now extended bumper location. Then came the test of the signals. Nothing, nada, no blink, no wink, just a



The spare tire successfully installed at last!

faded glow from the bulbs - not just the back ones but the fronts too. Arrgggggh!

Seeing as how Steve is so much better versed in these matters, he tried to figure out what kind of grounding problem I might have created by having painted all those exposed frame parts and under the wheel wells. But all testing would not resolve the issue. As it was then after 6:30 I called it quits and Steve left me with some advice on how to test some more for making a good ground.

This morning, Monday, I sanded down some points that I thought might be compromised, tried running a makeshift ground wire from there, cleaned up some wire ends, but all to no avail.

OK, so Bob S also knows a whole lot about electrical circuits, so I called him and he agreed to come over. As with Steve and I, to Bob it seemed it had to be a grounding problem, but on his testing meter, it showed a good ground. Bob, too, went through what seemed to be the relevant areas of the problem, but with no resolution. After more head scratching, and my lamenting that I could not for the life of me figure what I could possibly have done

to disturb the balance of the electrical karma on Phiona's turn signals, even going backwards in what I had done over the past couple of weeks and still not seeing where the problem could lie. To top it all off, I have a kill switch on the battery, which was off for the past 3 weeks, so no electrical current was even running through the system.

Bob, and I talked a bit about how the obvious isn't always the case, and he related some stories about past experiences with organ repairs he had done, which then presented a mischievous electrical malfunction. Bob decided to take a look at the flasher unit (which I have had for less than two years) whereupon he found voltage where it should not be on one of the terminals. I told him the unit was fairly new, but we decided to go to NAPA to get a replacement, just for grins and giggles. Back home in the garage again, Bob installed the new flasher



A close-up view of the completed installation.

unit and guess what? Hallelujah, and then there was light! Bright and clear, flashers blinking away.



Don Kline and some of his friends; from the left: Don, Tom Bodmer, Steve Moore and Roger Irland. These fellows certainly look like they had a good time helping Don with his car!

Editor's Note:

I asked Don why he chose the name "Phiona" for his car. He replied that he wanted a name that sounded like it dated from the thirties. He went on to say he used the "ph" spelling because Pontiac also begins with the letter "P".

Pete

I was amazed that, while I (we) had thought of all the obvious areas for the problem, the flasher was the simplest of all and one that, at first, second and third, reviews was not what we would have imagined.

That goes to show, don't overlook the simplest (and maybe, seemingly unlikely) points that might be culprits, even if the parts are relatively new.

Am I happy with the results of this past weekends work? - oh yeah, most definitely! The accessory trunk, I think, makes Phiona even more spectacular and beautiful. I certainly am happy that I found the trunk and bought it.

In closing, I want to say that I have realized over the past year or so that I really need to ask for help in more of the projects that I want to do. That said, with the trunk addition to Phiona, I could not have had a better bunch of friends who came to my aid. In the process, I feel I have become better friends with the group and the others who were curious enough to come and witness some really talented men get involved with a friend's project and watch them finish it to the end. Thank you, everyone. You are appreciated more than mere words can say.

As has been said, "I'll get by with a little help from my friends"...actually with this project it was..."with a lot of help from my friends!!!"

Submitted by Don Kline, Phoenix, AZ



Here are the before and after views of Phiona. The installation of a trunk rather dramatically changes the appearance of the car.

