

# Monthly Newsletter December/08

Newsletter No. 0012

## What's in This Month

*Topic: How to use the Internet to Your Advantage*

*Tip: How to Replace your Door Panels*

*Spotlight: Spotlight of the Month December 1978 Trans Am*

*Spotlight: 2009 Trans Am Calendar*

*Classifieds*



### **How to use the Internet to Your Advantage**

When looking back at the Newsletters from all of 2008, there is a trend that you will see across many of the topics covered here. The main trend that you see developing is the use of the Internet. From determining what your car is worth, to how to purchase a Trans Am or sell your Trans Am, down to how to find parts for your Trans Am. We don't know how lucky we have it today to have a great resource like the Internet in our back pocket. Just think of what our Father's or Grandfather's must have gone through to be able to find parts for cars that they were working on and restoring. They had to use the phone of search for the car in newspapers or magazines or trade publications. What used to take them hours upon hours to search for, we can now find in a matter of minutes. And chances are, if you are reading this newsletter, then you have a pretty good sense of using the Internet to your advantage.

The Internet has

brought information right through our doors and into our homes. In previous newsletters I have talked about using the Internet to find cars and parts, but there is another level that it brings to us.... Information. Chances are that pretty much anything you wanted to know is available out there for the taking.

Just about any question you want to know the answer to is probably out there somewhere. Someone has done or performed or questioned what you might be doing and has posted it out there somewhere. A few strokes of the keyboard and a few clicks of the mouse and up on your screen the information will flow.

More and more information is becoming available on your PC. You can search which oils could be best for your engine, what rims and tire sizes are recommended for your car, what the best suspension package or set-up is for what you want to accomplish. There are even programs for your computer like "DesktopDyno" which you can program in different camshaft and head

selections and perform tuning to your engine so you can veiw what the best results will be.... and all of this before turning a single wrench or purchasing a single part for your car. 101Tires has a great online resource to plug in original tire sizes and then the tire and rim sizes of your planned upgrade and it will give you all of the measurements and differences and what effect your change will make.

So with all of the information out there, why not use it? Alot of time and aggrivation can be saved (probably along with alot of cash as well) if you just take the time to look and ask the right questions. There are also alot of Forums and Messagebarods out there that are dedicated and specialized in just about every aspect of these cars. The members of these Forums can be valuable assests when looking to do your next project.

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### **2009 Trans Am, Abstract, and Special Edition Trans Am Calendars**

I want to thank all of the people who submitted their cars and photos for consideration in the 2009 Trans Am and the 2009 SE Trans Am Calendars. I actually came up with three different versions of the Calendar. There is a regular Trans Am calendar, a Special Edition Trans Am calendar, and also an "Abstract" Trans Am calendar. You can see all three versions at [www.78ta.com/calendar.php](http://www.78ta.com/calendar.php).

I will still be taking orders for the Calendars through December 17th so I can have them printed and mailed out by December 19th to hopefully still make it in time for Christmas. So make sure you visit the store to pre-order your copy today. These will be in limited supply so make sure you don't miss out.

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## **How to Replace your Door Panels**

Are your door panels looking a little shabby.. maybe a little worn out and have seen better days? Maybe your carpeting at the bottom is starting to come off? Maybe the top rails of your panels have faded due to the effects of the sun? Or like most... has the chrome trim piping around the door panels come off? Well thankfully replacing your door panels is a fairly simple and straight forward project to do for your car.

The complete pre-assembled door panel replacements themselves range from about \$239 to \$429 depending on your car and interior. The standard door panels for most interiors start at \$239 and the most expensive ones being the 10th Anniversary deluxe door panels for \$429.

To remove your old door panels, you first need to remove all of the hardware on the door panel itself. This consists of the interior door handle escutcheon (one screw behind the handle) and the door arm rest/pull (three screws located under the arm rest). You also need to unscrew your door lock knob to get it out of the way. Now that is for the later 1978 to 1981 door panels. For 1977 and earlier door panels, there are also about 5 screws that hold on the plastic lower door panel as well. If you do not have power windows, you need to also remove the

window crank handle from the door. Now there still are some things attached to the door panel itself, but those items need to be removed and disconnected when you remove the door panel from the door. Just like all projects, make sure you put the screws and parts in separate bags and keep them labeled for re-installation.

Now once those are removed, you can start to pull the door panel away from the door itself. The door panels are held on by a few metal clips along the top half of the door and about 8 to 10 plastic clips along the bottom half of the door panel. You can simply pull these carefully away from the door. Once you have the door panel free from the door, you need to lift straight up to remove the top rail of the door panel from the door. Now you need to disconnect any items attached to the door. This could consist of the power lock switch and the drivers side rear view mirror adjuster. The power lock switch just need to be un-plugged and make sure you take note of the position and how it gets plugged back in. For the rear view mirror adjuster there is a "U-Shaped" clip that holds it in. Remove that clip and the adjuster will slide out the back of the door panel.

Now that you have the door panels free from the car, this would be a good time to inspect that parts to see if anything else needs

to be replaced as well. You need to remove the power lock switch (if your car came with power locks) by slowly bending in the tabs that held the switch to the door panel. You also need to remove the bezel for the rear view mirror adjuster which is held on there by just two screws and two tabs. If your car had power windows, you also need to remove the clip holding on the Firebird Emblem that covers the unused window crank hole. If these parts are in bad shape, you can purchase new ones. If they are in good shape, then put them aside for installation on the new door panels. You also need to remove the metal and plastic clips from the backside of the door panel as well. Again, if they are in bad shape, you can purchase a new clip set from places like Fbodywarehouse for about \$30 or so. The last thing you need to take a look at is the watershield behind the door panel. Now this maybe should just be replaced anyway at only about \$15 for a new set. The last few things that would be a good idea right now is to wipe down and clean out the inside of the door itself. Also check any and all wire connections inside the door and possibly re-grease your window tracks to keep them in good working order. Hey, as long as you have everything exposed in there, why not right?

Ok, now that you have everything removed and

checked out what is good and what is bad, you can get to work on getting the new door panels ready for installation. The door panels can be purchased pre-assembled which means they are pretty much ready to be installed. The door panels do need some ready work to be done to them before installation. On the back of the door panel, there are perforation marks for certain items like the inner door handle and window crank opening. For items like the power lock switch and the rear view mirror adjuster bezel, you need to take measurements from your old door panels and make these cuts on your new door panels. You can use a razor blade to make these new cuts in the door panels cutting through the cardboard backing, the foam padding and the vinyl covering. Make sure you measure twice and cut once. Install your old parts, or new ones if you needed to purchase them and install the door panel in the reverse of how it was removed. Slide the door panel back down on the top of the door making sure it slides into place on the clips along the top of the door. Push the door panel back into the holes for the plastic and metal clips, and then re-install your accessories.

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- 78ta.com Forum:  
<http://forum.78ta.com>
- 78ta.com Gallery:  
<http://gallery.78ta.com>



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### Spotlight of the Month - 1978 Trans Am of Virgil Pyatt

Well, to close out the 2008 Year of the Spotlights.. I figured I would choose a Rare Bird with the 1978 Trans Am of Virgil Pyatt.... aptly known as "Rarebird" here on the Forum. It is a beautiful example of a 1978 Pontiac Trans Am with the W72 Pontiac 400 and the 4-Speed transmission. Now this isn't the first "Muscle Car" that Virgil has owned.... according to him, his first car was 1973 Chevrolet Chevelle SS , Nick named the "Gator-Moble" .....His second car... 1975 Nova SS torques blue with white landau top 350 .... 3rd car.. 1974 Olds Cutlass Supreme, 350 Rocket, Bucket seats w/ console, which he called the car "unstoppable". Ex wife talked him into trading it for a mini conversion van. But enough about his old cars. Here is his story about his current 1978 Pontiac Trans Am:

my eye I seen the shape and color of a RED Firebird. I pulled in the dealers lot and upon closer inspection seen a 75 Z28. I inspected the Z first. It was in terrible shape 3 coats of paint, none the same, and asking 2500. I then .....



He is also a little nice fact about his car... his car was built the second week of April.. which just happens to be the same week as Virgil's own birthday (of course he was only 11 years old at the time..... We can thank his wife to pointing that one out of the matching Birthday's. You can check out the full story on the Forum.

Check it out for yourself on my Forum.

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"I had always been a fan of the F body as long as I can remember. I wanted a (don't shoot me) a Camaro 1970-1973 in High School. Unfortunately there were none to be found where I lived and the internet was not even a thought back then, so I started to think I would never have one... well in 2000 I could not resist anylonger seeing all the "project cars" in magazines so I took a day off work to drive around the area and see if I could find ANY F body. Out of the corner of

## Classifieds

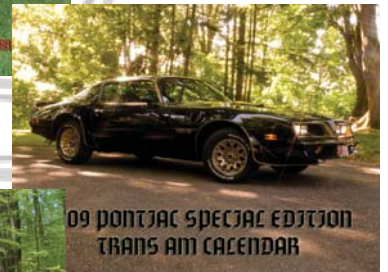
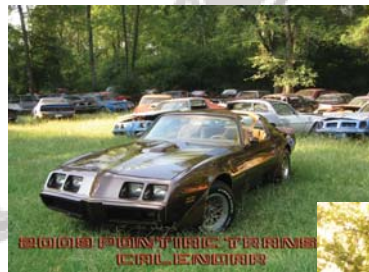
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1979 Trans Am for restoration. Olds 403 with automatic transmission, complete and all original, needs complete restore, \$1,500. Email Ken acepayday@yahoo.com



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2009 Trans Am Calendar or Special Edition Calendar or "Abstract" Calendar. All will be an 11x17 full color 12-Month Calendar for the 2009 Year. Orders are being taken now and calendars will hopefully be out in time for Christmas. Visit store.78ta.com for more details.



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