

## **Nut Gets Lose, Goes Missing and Causes Havoc**

“We had to replace one of your nuts and tighten the others.” When I heard that, I didn’t know whether to give my mechanic my Visa or my Kaiser Card. As it turns out, Kaiser would have been cheaper!

Here’s the whole ugly story. A couple of years ago we took our GTO out on Route 66 for a 3,000+ mile trip. It was a great trip, but not without incident. On our way home, out in Raton, New Mexico, we managed to crack a control arm and have the driver side front wheel collapse at the local McDonald’s. What fun.

Thanks to our sister GTO club, the Land of Enchantment GTOs in Albuquerque, we had a replacement part the very next day and were back on the road in record time.

Fast forward two years up to a couple of months ago or so. It seems the bolt the mechanic used to install the replacement control arm was not an exact fit and a bit shorter than the original. As a result, over time the nut worked it’s way lose and evidently came off – no doubt imbedding itself in the front grill of some hybrid following me home from work, thereby giving them yet another reason to not like me or my GTO.

Now, without the nut to hold it in place, the bolt was able to move and vibrate the control arm just enough to cause the front end to go slightly out of alignment. The vibration got worse as the front tires started to wear unevenly. In my defense, it is virtually impossible to notice a front end vibration while commuting on Highway 880, and the tread wear was on the far inside edge on both tires right where it was well hidden.

Still, I should have noticed that something was not right much sooner than I did, because this missing nut problem evidently began several months ago. What finally got my attention was a loud knocking sound at low speeds. By now, the front end being out of alignment and the tires wearing badly caused enough vibration for all kinds of nuts and bolts to come lose. The one that caused the noise was from the crank pulley. Yet another nut had gone missing from there along with its bolt – probably knocking off another “green” vehicle or two when they shot out of Audrey’s back end.

When all was said and done, that one control arm nut coming off cost me crank pulley repairs, two new tires and a front end alignment. However, my mechanic did throw in a new nut and bolt for the control arm.

The moral of this ugly little story is simple. With classic cars (and other old things), little problems will almost always turn into big, expensive, hard to fix issues when ignored. So take some hard-learned advice from me, and have your nuts checked on a regular basis if you know what I mean.

I’ll see you at the on ramp.

**Russ**