

Meet-A-Member

continued from page 20

4-speed that cost me about \$500. (That was 12 Fieros ago.) It had really cool Trak Auto plastic hubcaps and the shifter cables were really stiff. Since then, I've purchased Fieros for cash and have done many more trades. I once traded a laptop for a GT with a kid going away for school, and I traded an '85 GT for an F250 diesel work truck, eventually trading that up to a C4 Corvette.

For me, the Fiero obsession started because it was the best bang for your buck in a sports car. Plus, weighing 300-400lbs myself (depending on the year), it's a car I can actually fit into! Since that first '86 Coupe, the Fiero has been my main "toy" of choice. I've owned over 80 vehicles in my lifetime, everything from high horsepower classics like Buick Skylarks, Rivieras, and Grand Nationals, to Mustangs, Charger SRTs, and even a Model A replica - but none have my heart, or the story, like the Fiero.

The Fiero is also the ultimate kids first car. Why? It's not fast. Parts and insurance are cheap. With no power steering, you have to keep both hands on the wheel. The 1980s style brakes make you pay attention and stop early. The steel space frame is extremely safe. The fuel economy is good. For those of you with daughters, there is plenty of room between the driver and the passenger. And, your kid can't load the car up with tons of friends to go cruising! (If you haven't already guessed, my kids are not as big a fan of Fieros as am I.)

I currently have two Fieros (#11 and #12 that I've owned). One is an '84 Indy (#1899 of 2000) that sat in the warehouse of its original dealership for many years after the owner's son unexpectedly passed away in the late 1990s. I paid \$1,800 for it. The interior was in rough shape (I figure that the windows were left open), so I replaced the headliner with one from The Fiero Store (fierostore.com). I also added new stainless front brake lines and hoses, a Bluetooth radio, an Alex B recovered steering wheel and shifter knob, and a matching TXGOOD console/cup holder. Other than those changes and replacing the dry rotted tires with some fresh BF Goodrich's, the

car is all original.

My other Fiero is a gold '86 Sport Coupe that was a one owner car, bought from an estate sale during the pandemic for a great price. Both cars have been driven less than 65,000 miles and are Iron Duke automatics. The \$1,800 I spent on the Indy was the most I've spent on any Fiero I have owned; most were in the \$400 to \$600 range and needed some work to get them back on the road safely.

I've had some fun times in my Fieros. Besides my first '86 being a blast in the snow back in the 1980s (my Fieros never see snow now!), Fierorama is *always* a fun time. My first Fierorama, which I think was Fierorama #3 (1998?), was on Summit/Cass Ave in Oak Brook, IL. The first year I had the Indy out at Fierorama, I won a bunch of awards. I had the oldest Fiero on the show field by VIN and won



best in show for coupes with 50k-100k miles. I was truly surprised. My family had already left and I was just hanging around to congratulate the winners, which ironically turned out to include me!

Surprisingly, I have had very few issues with any of my Fieros. I had one '84 Iron Duke have the ignition module fail, but the most unusual problem was with the current Indy. It had sat for many years, and once on a NIFE cruise, I lost reverse once the car was hot. I took it to my local transmission repair shop (auto transmissions are the only thing I won't diagnose and repair myself) and they rebuilt everything. At the following Fierorama, I lost reverse again by the time I made it to St. Charles, so I took it back in. It had been a year, but only 200 miles were driven during that time. The same shop replaced the valve body and it seems to be fine now.

As I said before, I've owned a lot of

vehicles over the years, but the current stable includes my two Fieros, a Pontiac Solstice that I turbocharged to 300hp, an electric Chevy Bolt, an electric Fiat 500e, a rusty Chevy Silverado, a Subaru Forester, a Jeep Wrangler (mostly an off-road trail rig and plow truck), a '30 Shay Model A replica, and a '03 Ford Thunderbird convertible that I gave to my dad as his summer toy. (Does my '16 Thor Chateau 31' Class C motorhome count as a car?) Regardless of anything else I own, I will always have a Fiero. I even bought a set of Keith Goodyear's GT lenses before the sale deadline because I know another GT will come my way some day!

Outside of Fieros, I am the rhythm guitarist and manager of the rock cover band "Forget Hannah". I am on the board of directors for Embrace Living Charities and a proud past master and member of Elmhurst Masonic Lodge #941 AF&M. Up until a few years ago, we had all the family/kid activities to partake in, but now they've gotten older and are out of school. As a result, my wife Nancy and I enjoy our Fiero club activities, along with traveling with our RV and three dogs, outings with our Jeep club, and spending time with our family, including our kids, Jenny and Alex.

I've been in technology nearly all my life (my first computer was an Apple II+ in 1979). Currently I am the President and CTO for TANJ Technologies, based in the western suburbs of Chicago. We provide IT managed services for small to medium organizations since 2018, and in 2022 became a Fierorama Key Sponsor. We are proud to have a program where we train military veterans with zero IT experience for a career in IT through paid on-the-job training and career guidance. With our in-house 3D printers, we donated thousands of 3D printed face shields, ear savers, and other pandemic related supplies during 2020 to many first responders, schools, doctors' offices, hospitals and bus drivers. Information about all our programs as well as our company can be found at tanjtech.com. Feel free to reach out to me at todd@todddware.com, and see you at the next NIFE outing! 🍷

Image Source(s): Todd Thorson