

# 10th Annual GTOAA Regional in Pontiac, Illinois

By Chris Winslow



It is hard to believe that this was the tenth year for our annual benefit car show at the Pontiac Oakland Museum in Pontiac, Illinois. The big change for this year, for me anyway, is that Tom Oxler has stepped back from his role organizing this show and so Terry Schott and I took over the event. Tom left us with a detailed how to guide, which we followed and even tweaked a bit.

Over the years this event has expanded and some traditions have developed that make



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the weekend the great time that it has become.

One of the more recently developed traditions is the Friday Night Bar B Q at the Finkenbinders. This event has quickly become a big highlight of the weekend. Alan and Liane put out a great spread at their home in Pontiac and we all descend on Alan's super-sized man cave for a great meal and some socializing and catching up. This year the Oxler's headed to Pontiac a day early and helped get everything set up.

The weekend officially gets underway on Saturday morning. This year the City of Pontiac had everything ready to go for us out front when we rolled up on the Museum.

They also had boxes of goody bags that they had prepared all ready to go. Once we added a few more items to the bags, including dash plaques that we had brought and tire pressure gages that Heart of Illinois GTO had brought, we were ready for business.

The first activity for the event is always the car cruise. Once again Alan Finkenbinder

had done all of the prep work for another great cruise event. This included all the planning and coordination with the owners of several local collections and a lunch stop on the way. The people of Chatsworth Illinois even had a welcome sign up when the group got to their town.

One of the traditions that had to change starting last year was our Saturday evening activity. Prior to 2020, that activity included





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a Chicken Dinner with an Ice Cream social and then a show put on by Pontiac’s own Vermillion Players. For a number of reasons, COVID included, this has changed. Last year, the City of Pontiac invited those of us there for the weekend to join a cruise in around the town square. This was a lot of fun and allowed those of us there for the weekend to meet some of the car enthusiasts from Pontiac and also see their cars. For this year, the City built on that for the Saturday evening event. The car cruise was moved from the town square to Humiston Riverside Park a few blocks from the Museum. The event also included live music by *Rick Lindy and the Wild Ones*. The City had also arranged for a number of food options and even ice cream.



Of course, the main event is the big car show on Sunday. We arrived early and had registration up and running by about 8:30. While we were getting that set up, Terry Schott had assembled a crew and set up a pair of balloons. One was the Pontiac balloon that we had set up before during these events, but the other was a Pontiac Arrowhead balloon and had never been used before at one of our events.

We had once again been lucky enough to have

nice weather for the show. It was a bit warm for a September day in Pontiac, but there was no hint of rain.

With help from Paula, Gail Schott, Donna Bowers, Sue Vie, Jim McCarthy, and Sharon Wildebrandt, the registration went off without a hitch. And, with a combination of folks from



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Gateway and the Heart of Illinois GTO Club, we were able to keep traffic into and out of the town square under control so everyone could be safe looking at all of the great cars.

After all the voting was done it was time to tabulate. Once again Tammy Hedrick made that super easy by setting up all of the balloting sheets up front for us. We would not be able to pull this off anywhere nearly as efficiently without her help!

Brian Sorensen and members of The Heart of Illinois GTO club took the lead performing the tabulation with some help from Jim McCarthy and Frank Chapman. Once we had it all totaled up, Mark Melrose helped Brian get everything in order for the awards ceremony.

The first order of business was for Pontiac Mayor Alvey to say a few words to welcome the crowd. During his opening remarks, he noted that Gateway GTO had organized an effort to help the City of Pontiac with the cost of the new awnings that had been installed at the Museum. In recognition of those efforts, the Mayor handed out certificates of recognition to those who had contributed to this effort. Recognized were Gateway GTO, The GTO Association of America, the Mays, the Oxlers, the Bowers, the Wildebrandts and the Schneiders.



We then proceeded to hand out trophies for the Mayors Choice, The Museum's Choice, and the Kids Pick. This year Tim chose a 1926 Oakland for the Museum's choice. I think most of us thought that car was the star of the show.

Next up on the agenda was the 50/50 drawings. As he does every year, Earl Lewis had done a great job selling tickets and ended up raising \$557 for the museum.



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Then it was time for the main event. We handed out a total of 72 trophies including several to Gateway GTO members including:

- Rick Lacavich
- Jim McCarthy
- John Grissom
- Mark Melrose
- Frank Chapman
- Lucas Hedrick
- Harry Timmerman
- Jon Havens

Of course, all of this is to raise money to help support the Pontiac Oakland Museum. Once we totaled up everything, we determined that our final tally was \$4757.73 We will be presenting that to the Museum in a few weeks.

Terry and I would like to thank all of you from Gateway who came and helped out again this year and we also want to recognize all of the great support that we got from the staff of the City of Pontiac, especially Ellie Alexander and Liz Vincent. Without their support, we would not be able to pull this off every year. We also want to recognize the help and support we get from Penny Dye who works tirelessly to make sure we have what we need. Finally, I would like to thank everyone that sent me their great photos from the event.







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