

SUMMER 2011 NEWSLETTER

# THE ORIGINAL **Pontiac** CHAPTER



KEYSTONE STATE CHAPTER of POCI Founded 1975; LONGEST CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING



## Pontiacs At The Grove



# From the Chief

By Scott Shuman

Well, the car show season is in full swing. Lots of local events and cruises that give you the chance to get car "fix". May was a busy month, but we pulled it off! The Haley curse was transferred to the Freysingers show. Pontiacs at the Grove, considering a six year hiatus, turned out to be a success. Special thanks to Jim Zeek and our own Steve Liebert for pulling it off. June brought the mid year meeting at Knoebels Grove. Unfortunately, I was unable to make the meeting. Now we have Das Awkscht Fescht to look forward to in August. Again, lets see some new faces, come on out and lend a hand. And thanks to all who make all our events a success.

## Pontiacs at the Grove 2011 KSC

A rebirth of the Pontiacs at the Grove went well. We were a bit weather challenged, but not according to the weather service. That helped as we had 74 show-cars and 91 racers converge on Maple Grove Raceway to celebrate the renewal of this great event. There was a good sized swap meet also. SVGTO and Keystone State Chapter POCI managed the car show side. We had some different and unique cars show up. Russ Searle's '68 Jeep mudder with the venerable Tempest slant 4 power plant, supercharged with an aluminum head and zoomie style headers. A '57 Chieftan 2dr. wagon, modified with a stick trans. A Zimmer Fiero based custom car. A '73 Grand Am packing a 455SD and a stick with the ultra rare ram air system. Every participants car is unique in it's own way, these were just a few of the "ones you don't see much". As always a few bumps, but we have a decent base to build from as another Pontiacs at the Grove for 2012 looks good. We want to thank everyone who showed up to help set-up and registration. Especially Karen Britton for trying to keep registration and the show ballots straight. Jim Martin for being chief judge and the guys from SVGTO for getting registration smoothed out. We also want to thank Jim Zeek for investing in this event to bring back Pontiacs at the Grove. I took some overall pictures of the show.

Steve Liebert



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**YOUR BEST SOURCE OF THE LATEST INFO IS THE CLUB WEBSITE—**

**[www.kscpoci.org](http://www.kscpoci.org)**

**May 1 (Sunday): GM on Display at Macungie, PA; Contact Don Haley at 610-640-7464. Print the registration form from [www.kscpoci.org](http://www.kscpoci.org)**

**May 14 (Saturday): Spring Meet at Freysinger's; Mechanicsburg, PA; joint Meeting with the Mid-Atlantic Fiero Owner's Assn and Susquehanna Valley GTO Club; Contact Steve Liebert at 215-322-9636**

**May 22 (Sunday): Pontiacs at the Grove (Maple Grove), south of Reading, PA; drag racing and car show—KSC will manage the show part. Contact Steve Liebert at 215-322-9636**

**June 5 (Sunday): All Pontiac Show at Burdette Bros., 1909 Urbana Pick (Rt. 355); Hyattstown, MD; Hosted by Nat'l Capital Area Chapter POCI; Contact Joan Richardson at [richardson13@cox.net](mailto:richardson13@cox.net)**

**June 11 (Saturday): Mid-year membership meeting (11am) and fun event; Pavilion 'P5' at Knoebels Grove, Rt 487 east of Elysburg PA and west of Sunbury, PA; contact Ralph Keller at 570-326-9237**

**July 5-9: POCI National Convention; Bowling Green, KY; see POCI web site: [www.poci.org](http://www.poci.org)**

**Aug 5, 6, & 7: Das Awkscht Fescht at Macungie, PA; club day is Sunday Aug. 7; Contact Don Haley at 610-640-7464 or [chiefpontiac1@aol.com](mailto:chiefpontiac1@aol.com)**

**Aug 20: 4th Annual Pontiac Show sponsored by SVGTO; contact Liz at: [elizabethschlegel@hotmail.com](mailto:elizabethschlegel@hotmail.com) <http://svgto.com/2011allpontiac.htm>**

**Sept 25 (Sunday): Fall meet at AW Golden's FasTrack Car Care Center; north side of Reading, PA; 1/4 mi. north on HY61 from HY12; Contact Frank Kept at 610-367-6664 or [fkemp@dejazzd.com](mailto:fkemp@dejazzd.com)**

**Oct 22-23: Fall Driving Tour; tentatively we go back to the wine country around the NY Finger Lakes; details to follow**

**Nov 25: Junkyard tour, Friday after Thanksgiving—tentatively Klinger's in Pine Grove, Pa. ; contact Steve Liebert at 215-322-9636**

**Dec 3 (Saturday): Christmas Party; Bird-In-Hand Family Restaurant, east of Bird-In-Hand and the underpass on HY-340; (tentatively 1pm) \$20/person; contact Jim Martin at 717-393-3031**

**Jan 8, 2012: Board and Membership Meeting; 1pm, Bird-In-Hand Fire Co., at the underpass on HY 340; contact Jim Martin at 717-393-3031**

# Freysinger Cup Challenge

As in last year's Challenge, the Freysinger hospitality was top notch. They supplied the trophies, prizes, t-shirts, hot dogs, drinks, pastries, tech session, test drives at all three of their dealerships (Buick /GMC, Mazda, Hyundai), and a show field location in the front of the dealership lot.

The Best of Show awards are at the heart of the Freysinger Cup Challenge. Again this year the trophies were the popular replica gasoline island trophies that featured an oil can with crest on top surrounded by two Fire Chief '50's style gas pumps. The MAFOA participant cross-club selection of "Best of Show for the Keystone State Chapter POCI was a incredible white '62 Catalina dragster owned by Mike Clay that had been converted from a four-door to a two-door. You had to go through his photo album to gain a true appreciation of the amount of work going into this car. For the SVGTO Club, our MAFOA voters selected a white '69 Firebird owned by Jason Korb.

The Keystone State Chapter POCI choices for best of show were the same '69 Firebird for SVGTO, and Bill Heath's red '87 Zimmer Quicksilver. SVGTO's selections were the same '62 Catalina for the KSC, and Mike Mayer's maroon '87 Fiero GT.

The Freysinger Buick / GMC selection of Best of Show from the combined show field was Vince Pestilla's carousel red (orange to most of us) '69 GTO Judge of the SVGTO Club. All seven Best of Show cars were deserving cars and great examples of what "Pontiac Excitement" is all about.

The "Freysinger Cup" going to the club with the most registered cars on the show field went to MAFOA with a count of 14 cars. SVGTO came in second with 11, and KSC came in third with 8. The show car total for the day was 33 cars. The total combined pre-registrations were up from last year's count, but the weather not only discouraged many of these, but also diminished the day of the show drive-ons.

In summary the 2011 Freysinger Cup Challenge was a huge success for those who braved the weather and attended. While it did rain at times during the show, it was mostly dry for most of the event.



50th Anniversary Year  
**The 1961 Pontiac - Part I**

The A-Body Models

by Bill McIntosh

The 1961 Pontiac would be Bunkie Knudsen's last of these three model years ('59, '60 and '61), which were truly Knudsen cars. He was about to become general manager at Chevrolet. Bunkie had transformed Pontiac from a somewhat imageless brand into one of performance, relying heavily on the "wide track" theme. To quote two former Pontiac executives, "He (Knudsen) was a good administrator and he was a real car buff. He knew cars. Knudsen wanted to build the best Pontiac in the world. He certainly got some good people under him, and they were doing everything they could to be first with the best in engineering, to have the best engineered car." So, the 1961 year was his last hurrah and arguably the best Pontiac yet.

Engineering and Design

As mentioned, the 1961 model was a significant departure from the previous two model years. The full-sized A-body cars were shorter, lighter and had a whole new styling approach. Gone was the X-frame (sometimes referred to as the "cruciform" frame). Instead, Pontiacs now had a new perimeter frame, which necessitated modifications in both the front and rear suspension. Overall, it was 4 inches shorter, 2 1/2 inches narrower and lower by almost an inch compared to previous models. This offered the many benefits of a lighter car, a more sporty feel, better handling and improved gas mileage.

With the new downsized A-body, weight was down 200 pounds from the 1960 models. Wheel bases were reduced a bit - Bonneville and Star Chiefs with 123 inches versus 124 and Catalinas and Venturas with 119 versus 122. Overall length was reduced from 213 inches to 210 inches. While the much-touted "Wide Track" remained, it, too, was reduced by 1 1/2 inches in front (62.5 inches) and by 1 1/2 inches in the rear (62.5 inches). Nevertheless, the 1961 models had a front track 2 inches wider than Chevrolet and 1.5 inches wider than Plymouth.

Model Line-Up for 1961

Model line-up for 1961 was almost the same as the 1960 Pontiac - seven Catalina models, two Ventura models, two Star Chief models and four Bonneville models. Notably, the Star Chief Sports Sedan (2-Door Hardtop w/ Pillar) was dropped from the model line-up in 1961.

Engines/Transmissions

Previously, Pontiac engines were dubbed "Tempest" V8s. Since 1961 brought the new Tempest compact car into the line-up, a new name was given to the venerable 389 V8, or so-called "Trophy" V8. Again, essentially the same options were made available in 1961 as in 1960 as follows:

<b>1961 Pontiac "Trophy" V8 Engines</b>		
<u>Carburetor(s)</u>	<u>Compression Ratio</u>	<u>Horsepower</u>
2-BBL	8.6:1	215
	10.25:1	267 (Catalina & Ventura)
	10.25:1	283 (Star Chief)
4-BBL (Standard)	8.6:1	235
	10.25:1	303
4-BBL (Optional)	8.6:1	235
	10.25:1	287
Tri-Power - 3-2-BBL	10.75:1	318

Pontiac also offered 333 H.P. and 348 H.P. Trophy V8 'A' engines on special order. As far as engines were concerned, the big sensation for 1961 was the mid-year offering of a factory "Super Duty" option. The Super Duty was a racing engine that displaced 421 cubic inches, had a compression ratio of 11:1, solid valve lifters and two Carter AFB four-barrel carburetors. Pontiac rated the engine at 373 H.P. but it was widely known that it exceeded 400 H.P. with highly tuned versions reaching close to 500 H.P.

Transmission offerings for 1961 included the standard 3-speed, Hydra-Matic, and heavy-duty three-speed and a floor-mounted four-speed set up.

For Pontiac buyers who wanted performance at a budget price, they simply had to order the lowest price Catalina two-door sedan for \$2,390 -- and include options of the \$396 Trophy V8 Tri-Power V8 with 348 H.P., the four-speed manual transmission (\$338) and the Safe-T-Track limited-slip differential (\$43). This potent street performance sedan could be had for less than \$3,200!

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### Styling, Body and Options

The new body had smoother sides, less chrome, rounder more open wheel openings (especially in the rear) and, of course, Pontiac returned to the split-grill theme of 1959. The semi-recessed grill has frequently been described as a "waterfall" grill.

Two distinct, new roof lines were available. First, the rakish hardtop sports coupe came with C-posts that tapered to an extremely narrow base with the rear window wrapping around to almost meet the side glass (commonly known as the "bubble top"). Second, the new Vista model would no longer have the wrap-around rear window, but rather a more conventional rear window treatment with C-pillars taking the form of a sail. However, on two and four-door sedans, a modified wrap-around rear window was retained with the familiar "roof shelf" over the back window.

Curiously, Pontiac designers had a total of three tail light treatments for 1961: a three-light/lens for the Bonneville and Star Chief; a single-lens, two light affair for the Ventura and Catalina; and a completely unique, vertical, fin-like lens for all station wagon models.

### Marketing and Sales -- Pontiac Moves to Number Three!

The Pontiac Division had a strong sales and marketing team in place in 1961. In 1960 sales had just missed the "400,000 cars delivered" milestone with 399,646 units sold. But due to the general decline in the economy (and the car market in particular) in 1961, sales for the year stood at 372,871 cars. Nevertheless, Pontiac's market share increased to 6.37 percent of the market. For the first time in the division's history, Pontiac captured third place in sales behind Chevrolet and Ford. It would not have been possible without the introduction of Pontiac's unique compact car, the Tempest (to be the subject of Part II of this article).

### Racing

Continuing its winning ways of 1960, Pontiac won 30 NASCAR races in 1961. While 21 winning cars were 1961 models, the other nine were 1960 model Pontiacs. Clearly, both the 1960 and 1961 models were exceptional stock race cars.

See the web site for all  
of Bill's pictures

### Acknowledgements

- *Pontiac 1946-1978 -- The Classic Post-War Years* by Norbye and Dunne
- *Pontiac's Greatest Decade* by Paul Zasarine
- *Pontiac: The Complete History 1926-1986* by Thomas E. Bonsall
- *75 Years of Pontiac -- The Official History* by John Gunnell



It turned into a beautiful day, Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> at the KSC mid-year meeting. We had about 12 attendees that talked about the upcoming Convention, Macungie's Awkscht Fescht, the Golden show, Fall Tour, our Junkyard tour and the Christmas Dinner. The 1<sup>st</sup> three items are taken care of. Our Fall Tour is Bill Stephenson's contribution and could probably use some promotion. We decided the Junkyard tour would re-visit Klingers in Pine Grove, Pa. The Christmas Dinner is at the Bird in Hand Diner, Bird in Hand, Pa. 1:00 PM start time, Saturday Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Jim has also reserved the Bird in Hand Firehouse for our January business meeting on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup>. We also celebrated Betsy Wrights' Birthday. Jim picked up a tasty Pa. Dutch cake and we sang to her. As we handed out the cake a young patron of the Park asked if he and his sister could have a piece, sure! Everyone can celebrate! Merle, Jim and Marlin also revealed their plans for a 2012 Alaska cruise. Congratulations!



## GM ON DISPLAY

by Co- Chairs Don & Rosemary Haley

What a difference a week makes! Finally, GM on Display taking place without rain and or borderline winter temperatures. The change in date came about because the last Sunday in April fell on Easter Sunday. Last year, when we found out the park was available for May 1, 2011; the decision was made to make the switch. Although we threw many folks a curve ball, the day was a success. As expected, we did conflict with other events that may have taken a good chunk of our attendance away from our show field. In addition, only weeks before this event, we were informed we would be sharing a portion of the park with a pet show. We did receive some negative feedback about this prior to the show and hence some may have been turned off thinking we would be sharing the show field with pets. Changes were made to the show field and to the dismay of some who felt like they were not part of the show. As it turned out with less overall cars on the field we could have accommodated everyone together and note we will re-evaluate this for next year and come up with a better-planned show field.

GM on Display was a success with over 180 cars on the show field and about 15 vendors. In fact, most of the car show and pet show people intermingled and were more than respectful of each others passion. Both parties have booked the park again for the first Sunday of May. **So MARK you CALENDARS NOW** for Sunday May 6, 2012. Once word gets out about the change, we hope people will get use to the idea that this is our new time slot for GM on Display and we promise that we will make every effort to work out all the bugs before next years event. Amazingly, while it rained cats and dogs (no pun intended) for pretty much the entire month of April, it let up for our show with some gorgeous sunny dry May days following, and has now reverted back to rainforest conditions. As I get home from work each night, in my headlights I see a foot and a half tall, soaking wet grass. Oh the Joys of summer in the Amazon. All kidding aside, it can only get better.

Thanks to all who lent a hand on the show field and at registration. We certainly appreciate all the members who came out to support our event that day. Many hands made light work. With all the show field changes, our members certainly met the challenge enthusiastically and cheerfully. In addition, many thanks to all the directors for bringing tons of door prizes for our participants. Special Kudos sent to our newest director, Brenda who must have brought a carload of prizes.

Enjoy the rest of the car show season. Looking forward to seeing you all back at Macungie next year.

Return Address:  
Richard Stover  
262 Watergate Dr.  
Langhorne, PA 19053

Postage

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**'11 and '12 Officers and Directors:**

- President: Scott Shuman
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- Co-activities Director: Marlin Guigley
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- Director: Merle Wright
- Director: Brenda Steinhauer
- Chapter Historian: Bill Stephenson

**Keystone State Chapter Membership Information**

For general information, contact Richard Stover at  
kscpociinfo@gmail.com

Annual Chapter dues are \$15.00 payable in **January, 2011**. You must be a member of POCI National FIRST before joining a chapter. Send dues payable to KSC-POCI, c/o Rick Harding; 314 Reinholds Rd.; Denver, PA 17517

For Pontiac-Oakland Club International information write: POCI; P.O. Box 9569; Bradenton, FL 34206; or call: 941-750-9234

Annual POCI dues are \$35.00 and include a monthly magazine.

**Check out our web site: [www.kscpoci.org](http://www.kscpoci.org)**