



PONTIAC-OAKLAND  
CLUB INTERNATIONAL

[www.southjerseypontiacs.com](http://www.southjerseypontiacs.com)



# PMD Excitement

Newsletter of the South Jersey Pontiac Chapter, P.O.C.I.

2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014 2017 and 2018 Golden Quill Award presented by OLD CARS WEEKLY



## The 2019 POCI International Convention





# PMD Excitement

Monthly Newsletter of the South Jersey Pontiac Chapter, POCI

Volume 36, #8 August 2019

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## Club Info

[www.southjerseypontiacs.com](http://www.southjerseypontiacs.com)  
2011 POCI Best Chapter Website Award of Merit Winner



## Officers & Directors

President:	Chuck Catalano	856-904-4843
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Treasurer:	Rodger Airey	856-596-9235
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Director:	Bob Axtman	856-962-9180
Director:	Mike Genovese	856-424-8302
Director:	Wayne Guy	856-423-3073
Director:	Steve Laughlin	856-829-0750

## CLUB MEETINGS

Meeting location is Domenico's Italian Restaurant, 916 Greentree Square Shopping Center, Marlton, NJ. Greentree Square Shopping Center is on Route 73 North, between Greentree Road and Lincoln Drive, behind TGI Friday's and to the left of the AMC movie theater. There is a Whole Foods market at the intersection of Greentree and Route 73. Domenico's phone number is 856-596-0342.

## CLUB MERCHANDISE

Contact Chuck 856-904-4843

**Short Sleeve Shirts:** Red with Pontiac logo in white on front. Small arrowhead on back near collar. \$10.

**Jackets:** Nylon squall-type dark blue outer layer with dark gray fleece lining. Right inside pocket. Embroidered red Pontiac arrowhead and "South Jersey Pontiac Club" on left chest. You can add your name or anything else you want on right chest. Jackets are \$45 (\$5 more for 2X and \$10 more for 3X). Must be ordered. Pay when you get it.

**Club Logo Pin.** \$33 for gold alloy, \$40 for silver. Contact Bob Titone.

Membership dues are \$20 per year, pro-rated monthly. You must be a member of POCI to be a member of the SJPC. POCI dues are \$45 per year.

For club membership information, contact:

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# President's Message

August 2019



## On the Road in Gettysburg, PA

The 47<sup>th</sup> POCI International Convention was a great event. It was brutally hot, but that didn't lessen my enthusiasm. This was my first POCI national convention and I am glad I was there to see the 419 Pontiacs on the show field. I don't think I saw all of them, but I came close. I was impressed by the friendliness and helpfulness of the co-host chapters' club members. The combined 110 volunteers did their very best, especially considering the hot conditions.

Conventions of this magnitude are almost impossible to manage. It takes several people more than a year to plan for an event like this and outstanding leadership to bring it all together. That task fell on the co-chairmen, Jim Martin from the Keystone State Chapter and Bob Dunbar from the DelMarVa chapter. This was a very well-organized event in all aspects. I know what it takes to host a local car show; I can only imagine what a colossal effort is needed to host a national event. Everything they, and the many volunteers did, reflected well on the entire Pontiac community.

Throughout this newsletter you will read personal convention stories from Chad Catalano, Anthony Griffo, Wayne Guy, Vince Laurelli, Don Symonds and Jim Vertolli. You get my personal experience on this page. My view is in the box below and on page 3.

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, August 24:** Club picnic at Steve and Patty's house in Lumberton, NJ. This event is free to club members and their guests. Food and drinks provided by the club, but you can bring a dessert or a salad if you wish. Starts at noon. Ends when you leave.

**Monday September 2:** Labor Day Car Show. Silver Diner Restaurant. Arrive at 7 am. Wear your red collared club golf shirt. We need your help.

## That's It for August So...

until next month, please drive carefully wherever you travel, in your daily driver or your Pontiac.

*Chuck Catalano*

*Don Simone's unrestored 1956 Star Chief will soon be featured in Hemmings Classic Cars magazine. Senior Editor Tom DeMauro contacted Don at the convention on Friday for a Saturday 3½ hour photo shoot to feature Don's car in a future issue. We'll let you know when it will be published. Don will be available for autographs.*



The GPS time estimate was 2 hours and 58 minutes to Gettysburg with a route south on Route 295 over the Commodore Barry Bridge to West Chester, then to Route 30 into the heart of Gettysburg. Wayne Guy and Anthony took the same route a few days earlier and made it in three hours. Between the traffic and the four rain showers it took 3 hours and 45 minutes.

Chad and I took my 1987 Sunbird to the convention. Chad drove, I got to enjoy the views. About half-way there Vince Laurelli joined us. The ride was so tedious that at one point, Vince texted "Shoot me now." I picked the route based on what Anthony Griffo and Wayne Guy suggested, and of course, it was the wrong decision. I'll blame them for the very long ride. The Pennsylvania Turnpike would have been faster, but not as scenic.

Chad put in many long hours to get his 1961 Bonneville ready for the convention, but even he couldn't solve a braking issue that forced him to leave his car home and chauffeur me to the convention. I'm convinced he would have won a POCI Points Judged Gold in the Survivor class. The car looked great, but it wasn't safe to drive.

We had a great time at the convention, meeting many very friendly Pontiac owners and seeing over 400 beautiful Pontiacs. This was our first convention and, other than the heat, was a great one to attend. A big thanks to the Keystone State Chapter and the DelMarVa Chapter volunteers for their friendly and helpful attitudes under difficult conditions.



**South Jersey  
Pontiac Chapter,  
Pontiac-Oakland  
Club International  
Minutes of July 15, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by the President.

Officers Present:

Chuck Catalano, Pres; Teri Giordano, Sec; Rodger Airey, Treas. Directors - Bob Axtman, Wayne Guy, Steve Laughlin.

Members in Attendance:

Chad Catalano, Frank Church, Ken Colacino, John Contrevo, Joe Farside, Anthony Griffo, Bill Hyde, Jack Kradzinski, Vince Laurelli, Ron Parks, Bill Reich, Ron Scott, Don Simione, Carl Stegmaier, Don Symonds, Steve Talmadge, Jim Vertolli, John Wilkins.

Opening Remarks:

Welcome to July. Tom is not with us this evening. He got sick in Gettysburg while attending the POCl convention. There were 17 club members in attendance with 13 cars. A total of 149 Points Judged and 440 Popular Vote cars were registered, with 419 total cars attending. Chuck and Vince brought their awards to show the rest of us what we missed.

Past Events:

POCl Convention – SJPC Points Judged winners were: Bob Axtman, Original Owner and Gold, Modified. Don Simione – Gold, Survivor. His car will be featured in a future issue of *Hemmings Classic Cars*. Tom Szymczyk earned his Silver but received a 3-point deduction per tire for radials. Chuck Catalano received his Gold, Junior. Don Symonds earned a Gold Junior, Survivor, Jim Vertolli Gold, Modified. Northeast Director John Cappellmann was a Repeat Champion. In the Popular Vote area Ken Colacino, Anthony Griffo, Wayne Guy, Steve Laughlin, Vince Laurelli, and Ron Scott won Most Outstanding vehicle in each of their respective

classes. Tom won a 1<sup>st</sup> Place award for his Ventura model car. CON-GRATULATIONS Everyone! The DVOGC hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Show at the Silver Diner, with 191 vehicles attending. Bill Reich earned a 1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up in the Pontiac class at the Elkins Chevrolet All GM Show.

Upcoming Events:

Friday, July 26 – Christmas in July car cruise at Johnson's Corner Farm. 5 to 9 PM.

Sunday, July 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cinn City Pirates car show at Speed Raceway, Route 130 Cinnaminson. Benefits the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. \$20

Saturday, July 27 – A Mid-Summer Night's Car Show hosted by High Octane – AACA. 3 to 7 PM at the Waterford Township Municipal Complex, Auburn Ave, Atco. \$20 Judged, all makes and years.

Saturday, August 18 – "Riverview" – Riverside late afternoon car show.

Don's Corner:

Chad is looking for a fuel pump kit for '61. Bill Reich asked about re-chromed wheels. Chad asked if disc brakes make a car modified – yes, at POCl events.

Club News:

The club picnic will be at Steve Talmadge's home in Lumberton on Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, starting at noon. The club will provide food and beverages. If you wish to bring a side or dessert, it will be appreciated. Please bring your Pontiac – all those shining Pontiacs in a row on the grass – awesome! We will host the Silver Diner Labor Day car show on Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. If you wish to purchase a t-shirt for \$10 please let Chuck know tonight. He is not ordering any extras. Jim Vertolli invited us to a cruise at the Millville Airport on Thursday, August 29, from 4 to 7 PM.

Good of the Order:

Bill Hyde sold his '60 Catalina to a person in Austria, through an ad in

*Smoke Signals.* John Contrevo was presented a new California Duster by Chuck and Bill. Chuck goes crazy every time he sees John using his old dirty one on his beautiful car. We have had lots of activity on our Facebook page and the website, now that show season is in full swing. Chuck has SJPC business cards with our Facebook and website addresses, telephone number, and e-mail. If you are talking to someone about the Club and they would like more information about joining – give them a card!

July SJPC birthdays:

Chuck 73 on the 4 of July

Jack Kradzinski 74 on the 6th.

Happy Birthday to both of you.

Please, make sure you renew your POCl membership. You must be a POCl member in good standing to be a member of SJPC. Cover stories and items of interest are needed for our multi *Golden Quill Award* winning *PMD Excitement* newsletter. If you are a new member, we want to hear about your car and love of Pontiacs. All members who have recently purchased a new Pontiac or are working on a new or old project, we would love to hear about that, too. If you have some information that the rest of the members could use, please write an article and contact Chuck. In addition to the printed newsletter, your article will be featured on our Facebook page – "South Jersey Pontiac Club" as well as our POCl award winning website [southjerseypontiacs.com](http://southjerseypontiacs.com). We need your input to continue to make our newsletters and our club great!

***Our next Club meeting will be held on Monday, August 19, 2019 at 7:00 PM at Domenico's Italian Restaurant, 916 Greentree Square Shopping Center, Route 73 - between Lincoln Drive and Greentree Road, Marlton.***

Adjournment: 7:50 PM.



This year marked the 47th anniversary of the POCI International Convention. The very first was held in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania in 1973. This year's convention was also in Pennsylvania, just about 35 miles southwest of Camp Hill in Gettysburg. POCI previously held a convention in Gettysburg 39 years ago, in 1980.

This was the 4<sup>th</sup> time a POCI convention was held in Pennsylvania. None have ever been in New Jersey. Ohio and Illinois are tied for the greatest number of conventions with five each. The closest it had been to us in the last 21 years was Sturbridge, Massachusetts.

So, this year was a perfect year for us to attend the July 16-21 event. We had 17 club members taking advantage of our proximity to Gettysburg to attend the convention. Of those 17 members, 13 displayed their Pontiacs, either in the Points Judged or Popular Vote categories.

#### Our Hosts

Two POCI chapters co-hosted the convention. The Keystone State Chapter and the DelMarVa Chapter. The Keystone State Chapter, POCI chapter #2, and in existence since 1975 is an eastern PA based chapter. The DelMarVa Chapter covers the entire state of Delaware, nine counties in Maryland and two counties in Virginia. The convention co-chairs were Jim Martin (a chapter Director) from the Keystone State Chapter and Bob Dunbar (the chapter President) from the DelMarVa chapter.

#### The Big Picture Schedule

The convention officially opened on Monday July 15. There wasn't much going on but Technical Inspection and photos for Points Judged and Popular Vote Pontiacs. The convention merchandise sales had their first day on the job. Some people like to arrive on day one and just relax throughout the day. Don



Symonds is one of those people. Anthony Griffo and Wayne Guy are two more.

Tuesday added the swap meet, chapter display setup, first day of the car corral, model vehicle display, and a tour to the AACA Museum. Bob Axman, Ron Scott and Jim Vertolli arrived at the convention.

Wednesday is the day the convention gets into high gear. More activities, more arrivals, more work for the host chapters. There were three non-regional chapter meetings: Custom Safari, GMC and the Pontiac Commercial & Professional Vehicle, which our own Wayne Guy is the Vice-President. A special tour to the Museum and Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park highlighted POCI Welcome Night.

Thursday saw more non-regional chapter meetings that included the 2+2, Australian Performance, Early Times, Little Indians, Overhead Cammers and Street Rod chapters.

Thursday evening brought the Chapter Night Banquet. Awards are presented for outstanding Chapter Newsletters, Chapter Editor recognitions and POCI Chapter of the Year, this year won by the Australian Performance Chapter. Our newsletter, *PMD Excitement*, was given an award at the banquet.

Also, on Thursday, was a seminar presented by Tim Dye, Curator of

the Pontiac-Oakland Museum and Resource Center and *Smoke Signals* editor.

Thursday continued to bring show arrivals. It was a big arrival day for the South Jersey Pontiac Chapter - Chad Catalano, Frank Church, Steve Laughlin, Vince Laurelli, Don Simone, Tom Szymczyk and I arrived at various times on Thursday.

Friday, July 19, was Points Judged part of the convention. Six of the 13 South Jersey Pontiac Club's cars were entered in Points Judged competition. Ken Colacino, Tom and Tim Kutchner, Ed Neubauer and John Trescott joined the rest of us on Friday.

We met Friday evening for dinner at the Appalachian Brewing Company. It was very busy, so we sat at several different tables and were seated at different times. After dinner we got together the group photo on the back cover.

Saturday was the day when the Popular Vote Pontiacs had their day in the sun. We had seven cars in the grassy Popular Vote area. Of those seven, six won their respective Popular Vote class.

#### A Well-Organized and Friendly Convention

This was an extremely well-organized convention. The co-host chapters did an amazing job planning for, then organizing the many activities, making for a smooth running and enjoyable experience.

There was a total of 419 Pontiacs on display, including Points Judged, Popular Vote, 1973 cars, Anniversary Cars and Special Display Pontiacs.

Thank you to the chapters and their volunteers from the South Jersey Pontiac Chapter for a great Pontiac experience and convention. You are the best.

**Chuck Catalano**



# Vertolli's View

It was a long, hot ride to my first POCI convention! Mostly hot, which made the ride seem long. But it was so well worth it, that I have no complaints. Donna and I left Vineland on Tuesday morning around 10 am, July 16. It was 170 miles, in 95-degree weather with no air conditioning. Thank God my 1958 Star Chief has wing and floor vents! With 193,000 miles, I had faith that there **wouldn't be any issues along the way**, and there were none.

We secured our rooms for the convention nearly a year in advance, but found that host hotels were all full. So, we booked a room at the Baladerry Inn, a beautiful historic bed and breakfast that was a Civil War hospital, about seven miles from the convention site. The inn was located beyond downtown Gettysburg, on the edge of the battlefield, and was reputed to have ghosts! Our room had a door that led to the third-floor attic. It was locked and we had no intention of unlocking it! We made it through three evenings there without incident ... well, almost. I woke up one night feeling a cold draft and the smell of formaldehyde. But maybe I was just dreaming!

On Friday we moved to another hotel, not by choice but because the B & B was hosting a wedding that weekend and every room was

booked. Our new location, the Federal Point Inn, was an extremely well-appointed hotel that was a former elementary school. Google said it also had ghosts, but none presented themselves while we were there. Anyway, thankfully both places we stayed had good air-conditioning as the entire four days had 90 to 100 degree weather with high humidity!



Once we settled in at the B & B on Tuesday, we headed over to the Wyndham, which was the primary host hotel for this, the 47th Annual POCI Convention. We registered the car in the modified class, and with card in hand proceeded to the TECH viewing area — a show requirement where all Pontiacs are inspected by convention officials. My 1958 was

designated for display in the Points Judged Modified area. Some other areas included Survivor Class for cars that were never restored along the way, Original Owner class for just that, cars brought to the convention by their original owners and Stock class..

We met up with some friends from our South Jersey Pontiac club and new friends who were Pontiac owners. Some of these were friends I only knew over the phone who had helped me with my car restoration. Meeting them in person was very special for me.

I was so impressed with the many Pontiac models that were arriving from all over the country - those that drove in and many others that were trailered. Great people with great Pontiacs!

Wednesday, July 17, was the official start of POCI Convention activities as many more Pontiac classics were arriving. I spent the day with my car in its designated display lot, meeting countless Pontiac owners and enjoyed their cars and the stories that went along with them. Meanwhile, Donna and friends Annette Scott and Maria Symonds went to the nice, cool, afternoon matinee at the movies next door. That evening Donna and I attended the POCI Welcome Night at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center.





Thursday was another crazy hot day! At 11 am we took part in the Road Warrior Outing, a cruise of about 100 cars that went first to the Hickory Bridge Farm for a really good family-style lunch, and then a visit to **Frank Buck's self-made** museum - eclectic mix of classic Packards, early racing Corvettes, fire trucks and militaria, including uniforms, jeeps, trucks, tanks and other tracked vehicles. The collection is located at the beautiful Buck country estate just outside of Gettysburg. It was a pretty amazing place!

Later that afternoon was the highlight of my days at the convention. With a little help from my friends, I was able to organize a photo shoot for ten 1958 Pontiacs that were present at Gettysburg. We got them lined up in an open field for an amazing photo opportunity. So excited to see these incredible cars all in one location! I called it **"A Covey of Chrome."** Donna took photos along with Maria Symonds and all car owners will receive the photos as a memory of their visit to Gettysburg for the POCI Convention 2019.

In the evening we were back at the Wyndham to attend the POCI Chapter Banquet. Here, Pontiac clubs from across the country were recognized with awards for a variety of achievements, some which were for creating a new club, increasing mem-

bership in existing clubs, and publishing outstanding club newsletters. Many awards were given and proud to say that two of them went to president Chuck Catalano.

Friday, July 19, was judgment day **"points judged" classification cars.** We had to be in position for judging at 8 am and not leave our cars until 3pm that afternoon. The heat was exhausting that day! But the excitement kept us all involved. There were some very specific rules: hoods and trunks closed until after judging, all windows up, no cleaning the car during judging hours. The judges followed an extremely specific set of rules and the day was intense. At **day's** end we were all so tired from heat we just wanted to get to somewhere that had air conditioning.

That evening our club members gathered for a dinner at Appalachian Brewing Company next to the Wyndham where our members were able to share stories and enjoy club camaraderie. Our thanks to Chuck for planning a pleasant evening.

Saturday was the last show day and all Pontiacs were displayed at the various parking areas surrounding the Wyndham. Another brutally hot day but what an opportunity to see outstanding classic Pontiacs and meet interesting, dedicated owners. That evening was the culmination of all the efforts of the POCI organization - the



Awards Banquet. With more than 500 people attending the dinner, and additional people coming in just for the awards ceremony, the event was very special. Happy that I was chosen for a trophy but even happier to see many of our Pontiac Club members recognized for their beautiful Pontiacs. Congratulations to all.

Our trip back on Sunday morning was another hot one! My 1958 was a real trooper and so was Donna. We only melted once... at a point where we were stuck in traffic on I-95 approaching the Delaware Memorial Bridge. We survived but were extremely tired from the heat by the end of the trip. We have a new appreciation for air conditioning! And I have a new appreciation for the many Pontiac owners I met and their devotion to their cars and the brand.

*Jim*





Tom Szymczyk's Points Judged Silver  
1972 LeMans Sport convertible



Ron Scott's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
1951 Sedan Delivery



Frank Church's 2008 G8



Ken Colacino's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
1963 Super Duty



Jim Vertolli's Points Judged Gold Modified  
1958 Star Chief



Bob Axtman's Points Judged Gold Modified  
1969 GTO



Steve Laughlin's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
1975 Grand Am



Vince Laurelli's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
2002 Collector Edition Trans Am



Chuck Catalano's Points Judged Gold Junior Stock  
1987 Sunbird GT Turbo convertible



Anthony Griffo's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
1962 Bonneville



Don Symond's Points Judged Gold Junior Survivor  
1976 Grand Prix



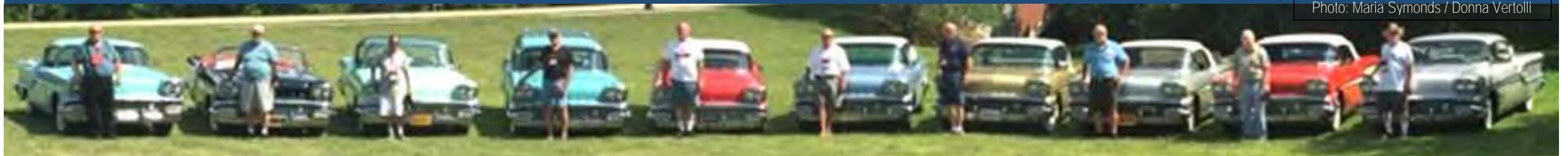
Wayne Guy's Most Outstanding Vehicle  
2006 GTO



Don Simone's Points Judged Gold Survivor  
1956 Star Chief

**Ten of the twelve 1958 Pontiacs at the Convention are pictured. Jim Vertolli's Star Chief is fifth from the right**

Photo: Maria Symonds / Donna Vertolli







**Don't listen to "Slow Lane" Wayne.** Those were the words running through my head as I followed Chad and Chuck on the scenic, but slow and rainy, route to the POCI Convention in Gettysburg. Once we got to our destination, it was hot. Temperatures were the hottest they have been in years. Luckily, we drove cars equipped with air conditioning. The show fields were spread out all over the place with Points Judged in the lots behind the hotel and Popular Vote out in the grass near the entrance. With the temperatures as hot as they were, it made it difficult for people to enjoy walking the show fields for more than an hour at a time. The heat must have kept a lot of Popular Vote cars away. There was a lot of empty space on the Popular Vote show field.

As a first-time attendee, it was great to be able to talk with other POCI members and to hang out with SJPC members. I feel like I bonded with some of my SJPC members since I got to spend more time with them. The location of the event was good with a lot of restaurants and things to do within a short drive. The family and I took a tour of the multiple Gettysburg battlefields and luckily, we could stay in the car with air conditioning for the two hours it took. It was well worth the time to view the scenic landscapes from the different battlefields even with the heat. I enjoyed my time at Gettysburg but wished for cooler temperatures. I think it would have been more enjoyable if we could have tolerated more time outside. Overall, **I can't complain**, I did come home with an award for Most Outstanding in my class.

### Vince Laurelli



The idea of going to the 2019 POCI Convention in Gettysburg started a year before when my dad and I found out where it was going to be held. Close enough to drive to, which meant getting his 1987 Sunbird GT ready for the trip. Over time, we fixed all the mechanical issues, making our way to Gettysburg on July 18th, a day before the actual Points Judging.

I have never been to an "all Pontiac" show, so I was excited to be around all like-minded car guys. The ride to the show was uneventful, but certainly scenic and memorable. We had Vince Laurelli in the rear view for about half the trip. It was like being followed by the sun in his yellow 2002 Collector Edition Trans Am! The few times he did try to pass us, we kicked in the turbo of the Sunbird and he didn't stand a chance.

After eventually arriving safely, we checked in and then went through technical inspection. Another new experience for me. Luckily, we had everything working on the car, and then some. It's satisfying to know that every bulb, motor, radio and clock are working on an older car. We parked the car in a Points Judged space, said hi to familiar faces, then headed into the hotel for check-in and air-conditioning!

I have not mentioned the heat wave that followed us there and remained the entire time. Yes, it was the hottest week of the year. We had to limit ourselves with the amount of time we stayed outside and then cool off inside. Friday morning, they started the Points Judging and we were luckily judged right around 8 am, which was great because it left us with the freedom to not have to be with the car, waiting for them all day.

There were plenty of our club members at the convention, so it was like being at a home away from home. It was a unique experience to share with everyone. I loved seeing all the B-bodies there and even the old GMC trucks. There was only one other Sunbird too. A little something for everyone. The car owners were also very nice to talk to and hear their stories. One family drove from Canada with no A/C!

I'm already looking forward to the convention in 2021, which I have heard will be at the Mohegan Sun in Connecticut, about a four-hour drive from here. We left the convention early Saturday morning, but Wayne Guy accepted the POCI Points Judged Gold, Junior for the Sunbird at the banquet that Saturday night. We took the "less-scenic" route home and carried on with normal life again. It was a fun little vacation, not far from home, and sharing that experience with our Pontiac guys made it most memorable

*Chad Catalano*





# Anthony Shows Off Dad's Bonneville

My experience at my first convention was awesome. First off, the ride up was uneventful. Wayne Guy and I drove to Gettysburg together in a two-car caravan on Monday. In addition to the ride being nice and easy, it was also fuel efficient for a 1962 Bonneville. I got 14 miles per gallon!

I met a lot of people at the convention from Paul Bergstrom to Tim Dye to Art Barrett and Jon Havens. I also met and spoke to Steve Ames and he sat in my car and started it.

I registered my Bonneville in the 1961-62 Full-Size class, except GP, station wagon and Super Duty. My class started with seven Pontiacs registered, but by Friday only one car was parked next to me for a two-car class.

Made some new friends as well. A nice gentleman named Larry Calabrese from the Bronx gave me a stuffed plush kitten to put on my fan shroud to hold the pamphlet of the car's story, as the wind was blowing. He told me his grandparents came from Calabria, Italy. He drove his 1964

LeMans convertible to the convention. A very nice guy, very genuine. Larry indicated that he may come to our show on Labor Day in Cherry Hill. I also met a gentleman from Toms River who is considering joining the club.

I met a couple characters from upstate New York. They did not bring a car but instead brought beer and weed. They asked me if I wanted a cold one. I said water? They answered beer. Then they lit it up. He then asked me if I want a papania. They were smoking weed. I told them no thanks, that I had to drive. The guy driving said, "so do I". All I could say was "Oh boy!".

I did attend a PCVC seminar where Wayne made a very nice presentation to the audience.

The car in my class, a 1961 Bonneville was restored by the owner. Final paint was completed by a body shop, but it still was a beautiful car.

It was nice to see all the Pontiac and GTO club

members there and everyone hanging out together. Tim Moore and Steve Laughlin were checking on me to make sure I was OK.

Just a little hiccup at banquet but I know what to do for next time. We worked through it and it was all good. It was a good banquet but, to me, what made it great was hearing the names of the guys in the club winning awards for their beautiful Pontiacs.

I didn't go to the convention just to win an award, but it was nice to do so. The Popular Vote awards were really clever, a replica of a Civil War cannon.

The most important thing was the ride home in the HEAT. The car ran well, no overheating, no hot light, no leaks. I made it home safe and sound. Just some vapor locking. I think I'll enter my Bonneville in Points Judged in Connecticut in 2021.





# Wayne's World - The POCI Convention



## The people behind the cars

This year was my fifth time to attend a POCI convention, so maybe the event was getting old and repetitive to me. Yes, there were a lot of Pontiacs, as always. The Pontiacs never change, but the people behind them do. This is about those people.

## Outbound, Monday, July 15

Anthony Griffo was attending his first convention. I was able to relive my first convention vicariously through Anthony's wide-open eyes. We convoyed together, with me in the lead driving my '06 GTO. Each time I checked my rear-view mirror, I got a great look at that Wide track '62 Bonneville, Anthony behind the wheel.

We arrived safely at the hotel, in time to check-in and go through tech inspection and registration. The procedure was like past events, with one exception. This year, the awards banquet was taking reservations for seating. Normally, the banquet doors open at a designated time and people rush in to stake out their preferred tables. Taking reservations seemed like a good idea, and the woman staffing the desk was so pleasant and cheerful. What could possibly go wrong?

## Meet Dick and Jane.

### They are from Maine.

Other early birds were also arriving on Monday. In the parking lot, we met Dick Shaw, who was wiping down his 1972 Catalina (pictured below). He had driven in from Maine, taking two days to make the journey with his wife Jane. Dick is the



original owner of the car and he was beaming with pride and enthusiasm as he told of his anticipation at getting the Original Owners Award on Saturday. At age 80, Dick displayed amazing agility at getting down (and back up) to wipe the wheels and lower fenders. I didn't meet Jane Shaw until Friday morning when she and Dick were having breakfast at the Wyndham. It was an interesting dynamic, as the normally chatty Dick went silent while Jane dominated the conversation. They were two different people, just like the fictional children of the same name who I knew from my grade school reading books. I saw Jane again Saturday afternoon at the fashion show. They both attended the awards banquet, where Dick got to the podium twice. First to receive his Original Owners award and second to receive an Outstanding in Class trophy. I was so happy for this young couple.

## Walter and the Defaulters

No, this is not a rock band! Walter was another early bird we met Monday evening. He was a hard-core Road Warrior. Walter could be the stereotypical person for whom that class was designed. We previously met in 2017 at the POCI Fort Worth convention. Walter drives his green Trans Am hard and he drives it everywhere, just as he has done with previously owned Pontiacs. No time for wiping and polishing for Walter. Just get in the car and go!

After a hard day of local driving, Walter could generally be found wandering the parking lot at night with a cold adult beverage in hand. His drink was always contained in an enclosed sippy cup to guard against spillage. Walter joined my tour group at the AACA museum on Tuesday. Of course, he drove his Trans Am so he could do his own thing on his own

time and on his own terms.

Defaulters is a term that I invented to describe people who, for one reason or another, did not bring the Pontiac that they had originally intended to bring to the convention. Thus, they defaulted to drive another car, usually a newer Pontiac or other daily driver car. I met at least a dozen of these defaulters personally. Some pointed to mechanical issues, like our own Chad Catalano. Others mentioned the very hot weather forecast. Many people who I met own more than one Pontiac. Perhaps the majority of conventioners fall into that category. The show field on Saturday contained a lot of empty parking spaces. Some of these were likely no-shows instead of defaulters.

## Tours, seminars, and the social scene

### **If it's Tuesday, this must be**

Hershey. At the AACA museum, the Keystone State Chapter had a nice showcase display plus a few of their Pontiacs. Number one highlight for me was the vast display of hood ornaments on the second floor. The Pontiac collection contained a real one just like the replicas awarded to Concours exhibitors. In the foreign collection, I found an Indian chief ornament used on British cars manufactured from 1930 to 1970 by Guy Motors, Ltd. Amazing!



**1930s – 1970s  
Guy Motors, Ltd.  
Indian Head  
Great Britain**



I had never explored Hershey Chocolate World despite going to the AACA meet every year. My lunch at the food court was excellent and the bakery had some nice desserts. I bought souvenirs and some chocolates to take home.

On Wednesday, my PCPV Chapter meeting was at 10 am. I spent most of my spare time since arrival polishing my presentation instead of my GTO. An old Pontiac ad campaign slogan from 1969-70 said "We take the fun of driving seriously". I added the words "Pontiac professional cars" after the word "driving". Much of my presentation was stuff that I had included in our chapter newsletters, even the silly caption contest! I want to thank Anthony Griffo and Ron Scott for sitting through my talk. Bob Axtman had been excused because he procured the hottest ticket in town this week, a ticket to see Gary's Goats.

I lunched at the Wyndham with Gregg Mersamer, publicity director of the Professional Car Society. Gregg attended my talk and was covering the POCI convention for Old Cars Weekly. For the past two years, Gregg and I have sponsored a POCI award for Most Outstanding Pontiac at the PCS national meet. Gregg has written a book about professional cars, and he gave a copy to Anthony for our club library. In the Pontiac section, you'll find my ambulance on page 268. By now, it was midafternoon, and the show field layout had been completed. Time to move our cars from the parking lot.

Wednesday evening was our private, after hours, visit to the Gettysburg Battlefield Museum. I had seen this museum in 2016, but only in the crush of the general public crowds. This private showing was a treat made even more special by the



**The tiger on this sign is named Tessa. She was used in Esso commercials. I met her when I was in Aruba in 2002.**

presence of General and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant. Thursday was a tour that I had anticipated since registering for the convention. It was a long bus ride



to Pottsville to visit Jerry's Museum and the Yuengling Brewery. I've had these stops on my bucket list for 15 years. Sure, I could make a day trip on my own, but I thought (correctly) that it would be more fun with a group of Grand Prix owners. What a lively group! Both stops were interesting, and the Grand Prix Chapter members kept the party going on the bus ride back to Gettysburg. In the trivia contest, I won a six-pack of Yuengling's newest release, a golden pilsner. Back at the hotel, Ken Colacino and Anthony helped with the consumption of my winnings.

On Friday, while all our Concours members were schmoozing the judges, I was at the fashion show, then later a seminar about the founding and early history of POCI. Both interesting and relaxing events, and both well attended. General and Mrs. Grant joined us at the fashion show. Mrs. Grant did most of the demonstrations focused on women's fashion, but the general did talk about men's attire and customs of the 1860's.

In real life, they are a married couple, Larry and Connie Clowers. I asked General Grant if they were part of any reenactment organizations. He told me no, that they work independently for events around the area. Back in 2016, at the PCS meet in Gettysburg, I had met General and Mrs. Robert E. Lee. Apparently, 154 years after the end of the Civil War, General Grant and General Lee are still competing against each other for gigs in Gettysburg.

Saturday was show day in Popular Vote classes. The awards banquet was fun for all our members who could attend. I was very happy to pick up awards for Chuck Catalano and Vince Laurelli, as well as one of my own! Everyone in our group who



had a ticket was able to sit at the same table, **after some confusion**. I'll take responsibility for that confusion as my busy schedule kept me from double checking the reservations. Most of us double check mechanical work and I should have done the same for this administrative job.

Disappointments

Not many disappointments of serious consequence. We all felt **Chad's disappointment to end up in the defaulter class**, but we know he made the right call. I was disappointed that there were no 1970 full-size Pontiacs in the show. Also, no ambulance, hearse, or limo. My Hershey chocolates melted in the trunk of my car while driving home on Sunday.

Tom was disappointed to receive a silver award in Concours. (I would love to own a car worthy of a POCI Points Judged Silver award).

I was disappointed that Tom

did not bring his Impulse Blue '05 GTO to park next to my Cyclone Gray '06 GTO. **We could have displayed a Civil War theme of blue versus gray. Tom's car could have outpolled mine**, as it did last year at Valley Forge. But maybe the south could have won this year at Gettysburg. **We'll never know.**

No members of our club competed in the same class against each other, although some members of the Delaware Valley Old Goats were in our classes. If I had brought my hearse or ambulance, then I would have been competing against Ron Scott in Class 46. No thanks. That would have been a tough one.

Homeward Bound Sunday July 21

The day dawned very hot and I knew it would be a tough ride for Anthony without his AC. In sympathy with him, I left Gettysburg with the windows down, but I could not last even until York before turning on my

air conditioning. We made a few more stops on the way home. It was a slow lane convoy for sure.

When we stopped at the Wawa on Route 322, before the Commodore Barry Bridge, Anthony looked like a boxer in the 12<sup>th</sup> round of a 15 round title fight. I felt like Burgess Meredith portraying Mickey Goldmill in the movie "Rocky." I looked Anthony directly in the eyes and asked, "Are ya gonna make it, kid?" He nodded yes. And he did.

As we honked our goodbyes on Route 295, I finally got a look at the rear of that Wide track '62 Bonneville as it headed north. Beautiful.

**Slow Lane Wayne**

**A Few More Convention Pictures**



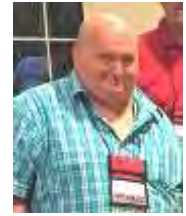
This is one of Tom Szymczyk's entries in the model car contest, a Valspar White 1973 Ventura with a 455 engine. The top is painted Citrus Green. Tom won First Place in the Senior Class.



Martin Hirsch's Sunset Glow 1959 Bonneville convertible won a Points Judged Gold, Junior



## The Don Symond's Experience



My wife Maria and I arrived in Gettysburg on Monday afternoon, July 16, on the first day of the POCI Convention. I went through early bird registration, points judged tech inspection, official photo and then parked the Grand Prix and covered it, where it would stay for the remainder of the show.

Besides a Gettysburg battlefield tour and a museum side-trip, the next three days were spent watching the cars go through tech inspection. There was a pretty good spot, in the shade of the overhang at the side entrance of the host hotel, the Wyndham, just a few steps from air conditioning and water.

From there, I was able to see a good percentage of the cars that were attending the show. This turned out to be a blessing since Friday and Saturday were so hot that I could pick and choose what I wanted to look at and not feel I missed many cars.

Friday morning, the day of the points judged show, started out with a pleasant surprise. A gentleman came up to me while I was prepping the car for the show and told me that he was the previous owner of my car. I bought the car through a consignment company and it is their policy to keep the two sides confidential. He introduced himself and his wife and was very happy and excited to see the car and that it was in great

cosmetic and mechanical shape.

He owned the car for 22 years, buying it in 1995 from the original owner, who purchased it from Dick Snedden Pontiac in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, with 5,000 miles on the



**Don Symonds 1976 Grand Prix was awarded a POCI Gold, Junior, Survivor scoring at least 390 out of 400 possible points**

odometer. Over those 22 years, it was entered in POCI events and won a Senior Gold. He also entered AACA National events and won National



**Don's brother Ed's 1939 Pontiac won a Points Judged Gold**

First Prize Junior. He did all of this and added just 4,000 more miles.

The car was trailered and pampered and was showing an original 9,000 miles when I purchased it.

We exchanged contact information and have already made some trades. I am sending him the three grille badges the car earned while he owned it, and in return he will send me a

copy of a sub-feature article done on the car in *Smoke Signals*, and the ORIGINAL price sticker and shipping documents from the dealer (not reproductions. Dick Snedden Pontiac has not existed for some time). Connecting with the previous owner was an unexpected highlight of my POCI experi-

ence.

Awards night exceeded our expectations when the car was awarded Gold, Junior in the Points Judged Survivor class, attaining a score of at least 390 out of 400 points. My exact score won't be available for a month or two. We were pleased for my brother Ed, who is also my mechanic, winning Gold in the Stock class with his 1939 Convertible. A Gold Award is given to cars that score 365 to 389 points.

We had a great experience at our first POCI convention with family and friends and members of the South Jersey Pontiac Club. Looking forward to Connecticut in 2021.

*Don*

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*Club meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month. Meetings start at 7:00 pm*