



The newsletter of the Motor City Chapter of
Pontiac-Oakland Club International

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Meetings held at

Bakers of Milford

www.bakersofmilford.com

Around the Hub

Presidents Message	2
Editors Message	3-4
Treasurer's Message	5
Member Happenings	6-12
Interesting Stuff	12-14
Retro / Funnies	15
Classifieds	16
Motor City POCI	17
National Convention	18-19
National POCI form	20
Club Officers	21



Kenny G's Message

The following message is information on the upcoming convention from Scott, our Great Lakes Regional Director.

First, yes, it's true - the M1 Concourse in Pontiac, Michigan is no longer our convention car show venue. Instead, we'll be at the Oakland Expo Center which is northwest of downtown Pontiac. But don't fret! The 2026 Convention promises to be fantastic, with exciting tours and an impressive lineup of guest speakers. You won't want to miss 2026! In the next issue of Smoke Signals, Tim Dye will elaborate on the venue change and share more convention updates.

Speaking of Smoke Signals, you may have read that Scott Scheel has been selected as the new Smoke Signals Editor. With his extensive Pontiac expertise and contributions to various magazines (Smoke Signals, High Performance Pontiac, Pontiac Enthusiast, and Poncho Perfection), he's a fantastic addition. For all POCI Editor communications, contact him at: sseditor@outlook.com for a speedy reply. Lastly, we have two new scholarships for POCI member's children and grandchildren. For 2026 we're excited to offer our usual POCI International Scholarship, along with the John M. Sawruk, P.E. - Memorial Scholarship, the Don Bougher - POCI Founder Memorial Scholarship, and the POCI Street Rod Modified Chapter Scholarship. Details are attached for sharing with your chapter members and newsletter editors.

Regards, *Scott van Tamelen*

Pontiac-Oakland Club International - Treasurer and Great Lakes Regional Director

West Michigan Pontiac Club - President

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Ramblings of an Irishman

Editor: Brian Dougherty

Things will be ramping up for the 2026 convention soon. The date is rushing towards us and there will be a lot of things to do. If you can, try to allocate a lot of time during that whole week to help out where you can. Obviously as we get nearer, expect more news and requests for help from Tim Dye and our president.

There have been some great lectures this year already at the museum. In early January, member Doug Ritter gave a great lecture on the early years of the GMC truck division.

At the end of January, on Saturday the 24th, to a packed house, a Milford Proving Ground (MPG) historian (past employee) gave a great presentation about his son and him driving route 66 a few years back. Route 66 is also turning 100 years old this year so the presentation was well planned. At this event, I ended up sitting behind John Schinella, which has quite the legacy in the Pontiac world. John is sitting down in the picture to the right. I hear Al Houtman and his beautiful wife Holly are also driving route 66 with a group in May, so I'm anxious to hear how that trip went when he returns. There are plans to celebrate this event at the museum afterwards in June.



In February, there was a great lecture on 100 years of testing at the MPG, with many current and past GM employees present. If you haven't made a lecture yet, they are always packed and well received. Each month is a different topic that you may find interesting, so check out the website for future events.

Remember, last newsletter I gave a challenge to everyone to send me your pictures of your mancaves or workshops. I haven't received any yet so don't be surprised if

one evening if I show up at your house for dinner and to take my own pictures. Try explaining that to your significant other. Of course, I'm kidding (or am I?).

I'm lucky enough to have more than one mancave. I have one dedicated to my Irish heritage including my family history and I have another one dedicated to the automobile. I'm gonna show you some pictures of my car one this month, although keep in mind, it is always a work in progress.



Above is a display of some of my models.

Most people hang up their hunting trophy in their mancave and some hang up their guns. I decided to hang up my deer killing weapon of choice, the front bumper from my 70 Grand Prix, which of course, has been replaced.



Some of my plaques, trophies and magazines.



Treasurer's notes:

Ray Golota

I'm currently in Florida, but I've been researching past years requirements for chapter booths at the convention. I have not seen anything yet for 2026, but I think I understand what needs to be done. When we have our April board meeting, we'll lock in what we want to do and begin the task of asking for volunteers to help set something up and to man it during the event.



If you are a POCI member you should have received an email titled "2026 POCI Convention Update for REGISTERED MEMBERS", explaining how to register your vehicle, itinerary, etc.

Highlights—Financial- End of January 2026

- ◆ Motor City POCI bank balance = \$11,434.52
- ◆ Chad Tough balance = \$254.67
- ◆ Total bank balance = \$11,689.19

Remember, we support these 5 charities!

We are again moving forward and planning our 12th annual Pontiac Summer Roundup at Bakers, on September 26th @ Bakers. We had to move the date back due to the Frankenmuth Auto Fest the weekend of the 11th and the weekend of the 19th was already taken at Bakers.



Looking forward to the start of another car show season. Take a look at our videos from last year.

Visit our website: <https://motorcitypoci.com/2025-events/>

54th Annual POCI Convention, June 22-27 in Pontiac, MI at the Oakland Expo Center: <https://motorcitypoci.com/2026-events/>

Ray

Treasurer - Motor City POCI

For more car shows: <https://motorcitypoci.com/2025-events/>

Member Happenings:

Motor City Car Show

Back on January 11th, all the cool members of our great club gathered to break bread, drink mead and celebrate another year of living. Unfortunately, our treasurer, Ray and his lovely wife could not attend cause they were diagnosed with Covid. He did drop off some great door prizes though for us to give away. Basically left overs from the car show in Sept.



Here we are all sitting around “catching up” with each other and enjoying the fellowship as only car guys and gals can do.

The attendees were Marge Sawruk and her son John, Mike and Sheila Cushing, Ray and Joyce Santo, Jeff Golota and friend and of course your editor taking the pictures.

To the right we see George Thornton and Angel Gippert, Scott and Michelle Van Tamelen, Al and Holly Houtman, Larry Kabrick, Tom Sidlick, Kevin and Alice Yash, Chris and Jan Fodell, Art and Jackie Boucher, Phil and Phillis Balmforth and Dave and Linda Olshefsky





Of course, we can't forget the unforgettable Gerry Liske and his wonderful daughter Cathy. Below, after dinner, our president Ken Galdes and his lovely wife Linda gave out the door prizes and gave an update on the club and happenings for this year.



After the business was taken care of we socialized, laughed and overall had a great time. I believe everyone left with full stomachs and empty glasses. I apologize if I left anyone out.





On the weekend of February 13-15th, the Back to the Bricks Ice and Chrome show was at the Flint Dort Financial Center arena. This is usually a good show, if a little small. Fortunately, the price is also reasonable and I always meet someone I know.



This year seemed like a Chevy fest, which is par for the course, but there were also some very nice cars and a few Pontiacs as shown. Above is a turbocharged LS1 engine in a newer Trans Am and to the left is also a nice Trans Am.



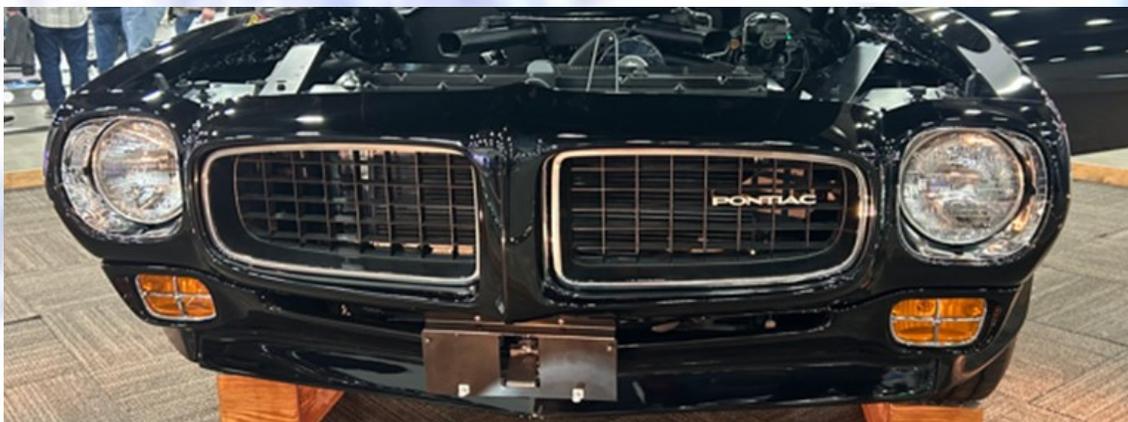
The weekend of February 27th, **Au-
torama** came to town at the old
Cobo Center (I know it's Huntington
place now, but it'll always be Cobo
Hall, just like DTE music theater will
always be Pine Knob).



Part of the weekend, I manned
the PTM booth, but on Friday I
walked around with some lifelong
buddies. When we first walked in,
we saw some beautiful, fantastic
Pontiacs.



One of my buddies had a 69 Fire-
bird 400 back in the day, so the 2
beauties here caught his attention,
almost enough for him to get the
“bug” now that he's retired.





As I've mentioned before, it irks me when someone takes a second generation motif and forces it on a tribute first generation design, which the recent Camaro definitely was. But then I'm also glad, someone is trying to keep the Trans Am alive, however they can.

Both of these examples are very well done though and I would not say no if someone were to give me one. There's nothing like dependable modern muscle, especially when it looks like old muscle.



The "basement" is always a hit with the crowds. If you have time to visit it, you'll see some of the most unique stuff down there. Mostly Rat Rods, but a lot of other stuff too. Downstairs is also where the band is usually playing too.



Gto's were very much in attendance as shown by these beautiful examples. Some were obviously very well done (expensive) restorations and "trailer queens" and others you could tell were worked



on and driven by their owners as much as possible. Club member, Chris and Jan Fodell were in attendance again this year, but they were in their classic Chevy, which I'm told is against the law for me to show a picture of in a Pontiac club newsletter.

I ran into Keven and Alice Yash too and instead of him buying a beer, he bought the cool looking ash tray below. I'm not sure I would've had the discipline to forgo a beer, but I'm not the awesome collector that Kevin is either, (to the chagrin of his wife, no doubt). Not only is it in the shape of an arrowhead, but it uses one of the original marketing slogans by Pontiac, saying: *Pontiac, Chief of the Sixes*

the Sixes





I don't know about you guys, but these customs are the cars that fueled my kid obsessed brain for cool cars. Cars by the great customizers like the Red Barron, the Mysterion, the Mummy Machine and the Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang cars set me up to be a true car nut.

I ran across this cool golf cart too that cost more than my first couple Trans Ams did. It would be cool though to run around the community in it like I did in my 77' custom Bandit Trans Am!



Interesting Stuff:

GMC Sierra Grande, High Sierra, And Sierra Classic: History Alley

By [George Barta](#)

October 31, 2025 2:05 am

Before Sierra became the enduring model name for [GMC](#)'s full-size pickup, it served as a badge of distinction for the brand's trim levels, marking a truck's place in the hierarchy of comfort and style. From the launch of the revolutionary "square-body" generation in 1973, GMC used the Sierra name to signify a step up from purely utilitarian offerings, providing buyers with a clear path to increased luxury. The journey of these trims – Sierra, Sierra Grande, High Sierra, and Sierra Classic – charts the evolution of the pickup truck into a more refined and comfortable vehicle, culminating in the name's promotion to a distinct model line.

The foundational 1973 model year established a clear four-tier walk. The base Custom was starkly functional, featuring a black rubber floormat, basic vinyl upholstery, and a dashboard with warning lights instead of gauges. The first upgrade, the Super Custom (RPO Z62), added more exterior chrome and introduced color-keyed floor coverings alongside choices of custom cloth or vinyl seat upholstery.



The true luxury began with the Sierra (RPO Z84), which included deluxe moldings, cut-pile carpeting, a full insulated headliner, and upgraded door panels with map pockets. Topping the range was the Sierra Grande (RPO YE9), which added minor exterior moldings and, critically, would later make a deluxe instrument cluster with full gauges standard.



For 1975, GMC recalibrated its trim nomenclature, marking the beginning of a period of consolidation. The base model became simply the Sierra, while the former Super Custom was renamed Sierra Grande (retaining the Z62 code). The old Sierra trim was now the High Sierra (Z84), and the Sierra Grande became the top-line Sierra Classic (YE9). This structure highlighted the Sierra Classic as the pinnacle of factory luxury, boasting standard features such as the V22 deluxe front appearance package and the BC2 instrument cluster with full gauges, which were previously optional on lower trims. After the 1981 model year, GMC discontinued the upper intermediate Z84 trim, simplifying the lineup for 1982-1987 to a three-tier walk: base Sierra, intermediate High Sierra (Z62), and top-line Sierra Classic (YE9).

The distinctions between these trims were most apparent inside the cab. The progression from base to Sierra Classic saw rubber mats give way to color-keyed mats and finally to plush cut-pile carpeting. Seat materials evolved from basic vinyl to custom cloth and vinyl, with the highest trims featuring more luxurious fabrics and velours. The base model's bare headliner was replaced with an insulated unit in the High Sierra and Sierra Classic. Door panels grew more elaborate, gaining large woodgrain appliquéés and, on the Sierra Classic, lower carpeting and pull straps. This evolution reflected a growing understanding of the pickup as a dual-purpose vehicle, equally suited for work and family comfort.

The story reached its logical conclusion for the 1988 model year. As GM introduced an all-new truck platform, GMC made the decisive move to promote its most prestigious trim name to the model name itself, dubbing its entire pickup line the [GMC Sierra](#). The old trim designations were retired in favor of a new alphanumeric system: SL, SLX, and SLE. This transition cemented Sierra's legacy, transforming it from a marker of interior appointment level into the primary identity for GMC's most iconic vehicle.



Funnies:

Brought to you by the internet



At a World Brewing Convention in the United States, the CEOs of various brewing organizations retired to the bar at the end of each day's conferencing.

Bruce, the boss of Fosters, shouted to the barman, 'In 'Strailya, we make the best bloody beer in the world, so pour me a Fosters, cobber.'

Rob, chief of Budweiser, calls out, 'In the States, we brew the finest beers of the world, and I make the king of them all. Give me a pint of Bud.'

Hans steps up next, 'In Germany we invented beer. Give me a Beck's, the real king of beers.'

Up steps Dutchman Jan, chief executive of Grolsch, who states that Grolsch is the ultimate beer and asks for one with two fingers of head on top.

Patrick, the CEO of Guinness, steps forward. 'Barman, give me a coke with ice please.'

The other four stare at him in stunned silence with amazement written all over their faces.

Eventually, Bruce asks, 'Are you not going to have a Guinness, Pat?'

Patrick replies, 'Well, if you lot aren't drinking, then neither am I.'

I was in Florida and saw a bumper sticker on a parked car that read 'I miss Detroit'.

So I broke the window, stole the radio and left a note that read 'I hope this helps'.

[Send a gift](#)

JOKE OF THE DAY-BUMPER STICKER ON A SENIOR'S CAR "I AM SPEEDING BECAUSE I HAVE TO GET THERE BEFORE I FORGET WHERE I AM GOING"

[Like](#)

I WAS A PERFECT PARENT...UNTIL I HAD KIDS

[Like](#)



Live, Laugh, Love.
IF THAT DOESN'T WORK,
LOAD, AIM & FIRE.

NO AIRBAGS
WE DIE LIKE REAL MEN

MOTOR CITY POCI

Pontiac Oakland Club International - Chapter 91

Dedicated to the Preservation,
Restoration, and Enjoyment of
Oakland, Pontiac & GMC Vehicles



Today's Date _____

Primary Member: _____

Shirt size: _____

Associate Member: _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____

City & State _____ Zip Code _____

E-Mail: _____ @ _____

*POCI# _____ (Application attached)

Signature: _____

Classic Cars Owned: Year, Make, and Model

1. _____

2. _____

Membership dues are \$20.00 per year (starting in 2024 it will be \$25.00). Dues are to be paid the first day of each January. Please pay membership by one of the following methods:

- cash or check at one of the monthly meetings
- by check made out to **Motor City POCI** and sent to the address below.

MOTOR CITY POCI
1595 Vanstone Dr.
Commerce Twp, MI 48382
E-mail: raygolota@gmail.com

*******Please read back page*******

- *We encourage all members to join the Pontiac Oakland Club International (POCI). Applications are available on line at www.poci.org
- *Active Member (United States) - An Active Member (United States) is afforded all the rights and privileges of full membership and receives Smoke Signals magazine via mail for a period of one year is \$45.00.

54th Annual **POCI** International Convention

PONTIAC, MICHIGAN
JUNE 22-27, 2026

"Home for the Hundredth"
CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF PONTIAC-MOTOR-DIVISION

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FOR MORE INFO CALL THE CLUB OFFICE 763-479-2111
— REGISTRATION FORM ON REVERSE —



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(YES, IT'S A PONTIAC!)
- FREE ADMISSION TO
MUSEUM FOR REGISTRANTS
- CRUISE WOODWARD AVE.
- AND MUCH MORE

PONTIAC

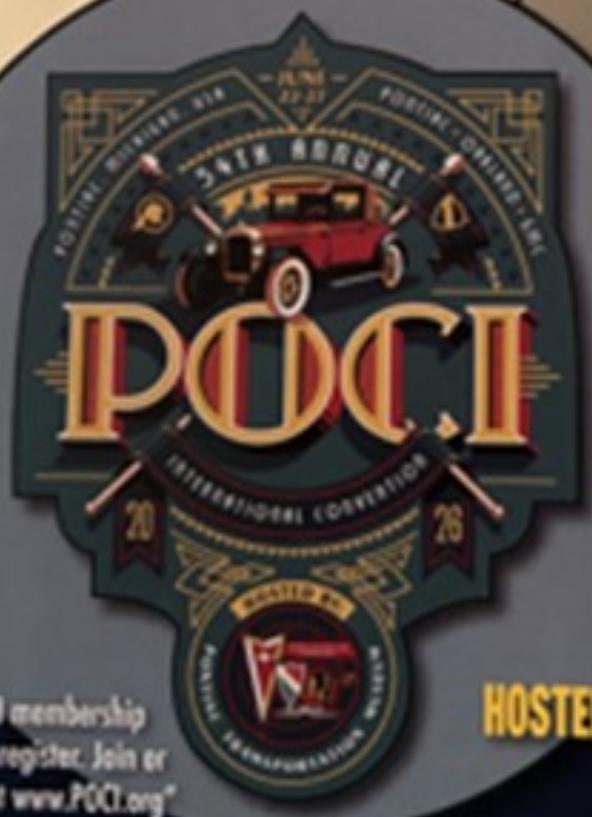


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OF PONTIACS, OAKLANDS
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2026 POCI CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM



54th Annual Pontiac Oakland Club International Convention June 22-27, 2026

Host Hotel: Marriott Centerpoint
(Auburn Hills Marriott)
3600 Centerpoint Parkway
Pontiac, Michigan 48341
(248) 253-9800

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL MEMBERS, EVEN IF NOT ENTERING A VEHICLE.

MEMBER REGISTRATION FEE: \$65.00 - AFTER MAY 15, 2026: \$85.00
(REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES MEMBER, SPOUSE AND CHILDREN)



MAIL THIS FORM TO:

POCI 2026 CONVENTION
PO Box 421
LONG LAKE, MN 55356

CONVENTION UPDATES ARE POSTED AT WWW.POCI.ORG
FOR CONVENTION QUESTIONS, CALL THE POCI CLUB OFFICE (763) 479-2111

Convention Coordinators: Art Barrett (417) 737-1469 artbarrett@centurytel.net
Larry Crider (918) 798-2765 pontiacfun@gmail.com
Host Chapter Contact: Tim Dye (815) 510-8950 Penny Dye (815) 822-5259

THE CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE.

PAY BY CREDIT CARD, CHECK OR MONEY ORDER MADE PAYABLE TO:
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CREDIT CARD # _____

(VISA, MC OR DISCOVER) EXP. DATE ____/____/____ SECURITY CODE: _____

POCI Membership RENEWAL Form

Your subscription to *Smoke Signals* magazine and membership in the Pontiac-Oakland Club International may be due. If the renewal date on your mailing label (which is to the right of your membership number) is between **Feb. 1, 2020 and Mar. 31, 2020**, please complete this form and return it immediately with payment (photocopies are acceptable). We don't want you to miss a single issue of *Smoke Signals* or any other important information about POCI.

- \$25.00..... Worldwide E-Membership: Web Site access & downloadable version of *Smoke Signals*
(NO *Smoke Signals* magazine is mailed)
- \$45.00 U.S. Membership (Includes 2 Associates)
- \$74.00 (U.S. Funds) Canadian Membership (Includes 2 Associates)
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Pontiac Oakland GMC

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YEAR STYLE NAME / NUMBER Number of CYLINDERS

YEAR STYLE NAME / NUMBER Number of CYLINDERS

Annual Membership

- \$25.00..... Worldwide E-Membership
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