

Buildin' a '55 Street Rod Safari



Look Inside for this Story Plus More

Custom Safari Chapter

Pontiac Oakland Club International

From the Prez's Garage

By Steve Cook

Seasons Greetings Fellow Safarians,

Thanksgiving is past and with the Christmas Holiday season fast approaching, I am finally in winter shut down mode. Here in Missouri, we had an unusually warm fall, which made it nice for extending the collector car experiences and working on "before winter hits" projects outdoors. Then winter hit us on Thanksgiving Day with a cold, blowing, inch of snow. My old cars now have Sta-Bil in the fuel systems and all the other preps for a winters nap. I hope your cars are ready as well. Throw another log on the fire, will-ya?

I have some interesting information to share involving our neighbors in Canada and autos from Canada. Andrea and I drove to Ontario, Canada in July of 2009 to pickup the 1930 Oakland we had purchased there. The owner stated that his family has owned the car since 1966. He also said that he thought that Canada has available the list of registered owners of vehicles for a minimal fee, and that GM of Canada has documentations available, much like our PHS that Jim Mattison runs. I had made several attempts to find this information both on-line and with phone calls to Canada. I did connect with GM of Canada in Oshawa, but they only have build info going back about 30 years.

I relayed this tale to one of our newest Safari Chapter members, Wilf Kaszanits of Canada, who was at the Charleston Convention and our Chapter meeting. He smiled and replied, "Unlike you Americans, with all of your privacy laws that safeguard this **top secret** information, past registration info is available for a nominal fee in Canada". Wilf then offered to run my VIN for me when he returned home. He did this and the fee was cheap, only \$18.08. The search information only dates back to the mid 70's, but this might be just what many of our car friends need. The search was done by UCDA, the Used Car Dealers Association of Ontario. They send the VIN Vehicle History Search to all 14 Providences and Territories of Canada, and compile the results. UCDA contact # is 416-599-7412, 800-668-8265, or FAX 416-232-0775.

I really appreciate Wilf spending time and effort on this for me. You meet the best people in the Safari Chapter! Thanks again and congratulations for winning the popular vote and your long distance award for driving to the Convention.

Let's all try to help Rich with the newsletter by flooding him with stories and how-to articles. I can tell you first hand, its not easy to put together an article, much less a whole newsletter without input from fellow members.

Dues are due!!!! Please send your \$21 to Robin right now for the Jan.1 renewal. I hope everyone will continue their membership and our Safari Chapter can stay strong.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays,

Steve Cook, "The Prez".

Behind the Wheel in the Editor's Seat

By Rich Pye

Hello Everyone,

As usual I find myself trying to put the final touches on this newsletter and beg my brother to print it out before a self-imposed deadline....this time being Christmas!! Someday, just some day, I'm going to actually plan ahead and finish one of these issues early... Not likely!

No matter how much I try I can't get ahead on any of my projects. I think I have too many... My wife's '69 Firebird is still sitting in pieces in my barn. It's already been dumped on by a bird passing through when the doors were open, dripped on by rain since it was moved under the only pinhole leak in my roof during one of our monsoon's recently, and I had some fly croak on the roof and 'out-gas' something that fogged the paint. Oh and I've pushed it around about 20 times and told anyone in the barn, "Stay away from the Bird." Now that it's in the single digits outside, I'll probably have time to go out and start re-assembling it.

I also have all the parts to put the headliner and sliding windows back in my '57 Safari. Of course I've had those since last year at this time. I actually didn't even drive a single collectible this year, nor did I bother going to get them inspected (a stupid procedure in NY for cars driven less than 2,000 miles per year). I think I still want to sell my '55 Safari. I just don't know how much to ask. It's time to liquidate!!!

Part of my time problem is spending too much time helping everyone else. I had an interesting situation recently where I helped out a buddy whose wife had had it with a '60 Chevy 4-dr hardtop that had been sitting in their 1 ½ car garage for 17+ years. She wanted it out and in a hurry, so who does he ask....me. So I get already to drag it out of his garage on my car trailer in between soccer games and practice earlier this month. Trailer and truck were all loaded the night before. I wake up the next day and there's 4 inches of snow on the ground, oh great. I forge ahead and get the trailer and there only to find the driveway inclines down and there are 2 flat tires on the Chevy. Long story turned short, we get the car up the ramps and realize it's going to want to come down the slippery trailer deck as soon as the momentum is right. Flash ahead to the car rolling toward me, as I'm between the front of the Chevy and the back of my truck yelling, "Put it in Park, Put it in Park!" (that's because the brake pedal went to the floor). Next thing I know is the car is stopped by the tongue jack with the front wheels hanging off the front of the trailer. A trip to the store, \$50, new come-a-long later, it's back on the trailer and I'm not split in half!! Anybody want to buy a '60 Chevy 4dr Hardtop I have for sale???

In regards to this issue, I have to thank all the folks that sent in items that I was able to share: Tom Young for the literature; Louie Brown for the Safari for Sale ad; Doug Kline for Member of the Quarter (I know that was a couple of year ago, so we need a progress update article!); Steve Cook for his President's message; and of course, Jack Johnson, for his "Building a Street-Rod Safari" follow-up article to "How I got my First Safari". I also received additional information from other members, but I couldn't fit everything in this issue. This is a good problem to have, but don't think I'm sitting on a year's worth.....keep the articles and pictures coming please. The two items that have gone over well are the "Safari Member of the Quarter" and "How I got my First Safari". I need more of those, please include pictures.

This issue was particularly difficult to get out since I had a ton of trouble reproducing the Vintage Issue from August, 1979. My copy of it was produced on "Pink" paper.....aka a scanning nightmare. I did the best I could and I hope you enjoy it. I loved the story from Lou Calasibetta on

how he found a Transcontinental on a foolish day. In the next issue of Safari News I'll include the rest of that Vintage issue since I ran out of room.

Enough from me.....Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

Rich



Member of the Quarter

Your Name: Doug and Teresia Kline

Safari(s) Owned: 1955

When/Where did you acquire your first Safari? Oct. 2003, Bridgeport, CT

What was your first car? 1967 Ford Mustang

What was your first Pontiac? 1955 Pontiac Safari

Reason for "collecting" Safaris: I liked it better than the Nomad!

Reason for joining the Custom Safari: Education

Favorite Safari Accessory owned: Lighted Hood Ornament

Do you have "other" Pontiacs? If so, list model and year: 1995 Grand Am

What are your favorite non-Pontiac hobbies? Gardening

Most favorite car task: Restoring them

Best thing about being a Custom Safari Owner: Driving a "cool" car

Favorite non-Safari car: 1955 - 1957 Nomad

Favorite car-related web site: Goodguys

Favorite parts vendor: Ames/Harmon's/Cars Inc.

Best car care tip to share: If you are going to paint your car, use one system from start to finish! (ex. Dupont, H.O.K, PPG). Don't mix and match brands!!!

How did you become a Safari Owner: I was looking for a 1955 to 1957 Nomad to buy at a local car show a few years ago. I was having no luck and was about to go home when a 1955 Pontiac Safari pulled in. I thought "wow" what is that! I never saw one before. I talked to the owner and he told me about the car.

I went home and showed the pictures to my wife and she like it better than the Nomads. I started looking for one and I finally found one on eBay. It was a 1955 Safari with a lot of rust and a reserve of \$7200.00. The car did not meet the reserve, so the owner relisted the car and took the reserve off! I was the only one to bid on the Safari, and it only took \$1500.00 to buy it!! The owner got a bid of \$5200.00 the first time, but it did not sell. Boy was I lucky!

I drove 1400 miles to get the car in Bridgeport, CT. I have purchased several NOS parts for it, including the rear wheel well mouldings. I plan to do the following: Art Morrison chassis, 454 or 502 big block, 20" wheels, Outside/Body = Stock, House of Kolor paint, Custom leather interior with modern conveniences!



Doug Kline





by Jack Johnson

My first article titled "How I found my first Safari" laid the background for this project. Quick look, my first car was a 1955 Safari, back in 1971. I drove it as my first car, and was sure proud of that car. I eventually took it off the road, and begun making it into a street rod about 1973.

I started by scraping all the sound deadener off the under chassis, and brazed the front sheet metal together to make an all steel tilt front end. By then I had a series of daily drivers, and this car was relegated to my parent's garage. I eventually sold the car after restoring the sheet metal, etc..

Fast forward to the late '90's. I picked up a '55 Safari X-Street racer in Tucson, Az. and decided to finally make the street rod I had wanted in the 70's. The car had flared fiberglass rear fender wells, and a naugahyde interior, and several modifications already, so I felt OK building her into a rod.

After a long wait I brought the car over to Larry Dagley's, owner of Dagley Auto. With a week and a half off of work for me, I proceeded to help him lay the ground work, or should I say, build the chassis for the "New" Safari. I had done my research, suggested by Larry and found an appropriate donor car, a 1979 Firebird WS-6 car with 4 wheel disc brakes and the big sway bar and quick ratio p.s. box. I traded the 10 bolt db posi rear for a Lincoln Versallais 9", that I had rebuilt w. a 3:55 posi setup.and a '67-71 GMC van tilt steering column.

The first thing we did after getting the car, along with the front sub-frame and rear axle to the shop, was pull the front clip off the Safari as a unit and set it over the FB front clip to see compatibility. Larry did all the work, and I assisted when possible. I was the Gopher, getting parts, steel, and supplying money. I had a vision of a late model Pontiac engine powered, OD auto, 4 wheel disc brake street rod that could be used as a daily driver, and tow vehicle for a future race car.

So Larry set out to make my dream come true. His shop has done many quality cars. First he mocked up the front clip on his frame building jig, which looked like a small lift. He then ran the car up on a lift in the next bay, and separated the body from the chassis, not an easy procedure. He initially wanted to subframe the existing frame, but I had decided I wanted to replace the existing frame with an all new mild steel frame. So I went and picked up 2 pieces of 4" sq. mild steel pipe, with a .125 wall thickness, and some same thickness 2X3" steel for the kick ups over the rear wheels and some 2" sq. mild steel .250 thick for the cross members.

He then proceeded to build the frame on the jig, after carefully measuring the wheel base, the wheel openings, and the overall length. Of course there were things like Rake, and tire to body clearance issues that needed to be addressed. I was drilling out new Body mounting brackets, etc. while he was welding. He built a fabulous frame, and painted it with GM Frame paint.

by Jack Johnson









by Jack Johnson

We lowered the body down onto the new frame, and using new rubber frame mounts got the two assembled. Of course there were several trial assemblies to make sure that everything would fit. A friend in the Local Pontiac Club "The Desert Renegades", Mike Symanski, loaned me his dummy 455 with T-400, both gutted, for mock up purposes, and we lowered them into place. When we bolted the





engine to the FB frame in the original position the back of the cylinder heads were 12" from the firewall!! So Larry made new motor mounts to set the engine back about 9". I thought, "Hey this should make the car nicely balanced for great drive-ability. Especially being a wagon."

Next he spliced in the '67 GMC tilt steering column, with new universal joints. Then came the installation of the donor car Brake pedal assembly, master cylinder & power booster. He got it all done and the engine installed in the car. We built a custom Transmission crossmember so several different transmissions could be used: 3:55 -9" posi, and it was almost a wrap. I liked the slammed look, but wanted the rear up, with a forward rake, so he went back and raised the rear axle off the frame with the FB Leaf springs and gave it a nice forward rake that helped with clearance on the rear tires.



by Jack Johnson



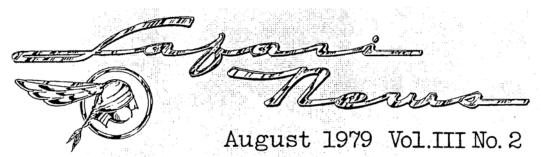


Because we went straight back with the frame rails off the FB sub-frame, the frame was narrower than original, which is a great segway to tubbing the rear later if needed. So I took a sawzall and cut out the complete rear deck including the spare tire well, area. I ended up selling the complete frame, the gas tank & the spare tire well to recover some of the cash spent. All in all it came out fantastic. Now I have a

"Newstalgia" Safari. "SASSY" I call her, and she was ready to go home and have the 1969 360hp 428 bolted up to a rebuilt 200R4 OD Trans and lowered into place. Next Phase of this write-up will be the detail work and the drive-ability section, so stay tuned and check out the pictures of phase 1.

'Njoy **Pontiac Jack**

August 1979 Vol. III No.2



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CUSTOM SAFARI CHAPTER, PONTIAC-OAKLAND CLUB INTERNATIONAL



• WANTED •

FOR 3RD ANNUAL SAFARI ROUND-UP AT GETTYSBURG, PA IN 1980

Top Row, L to R: Matty Sokol and "Dad", Jan and Glyn Rowley, John Hasken, Darrel Loeffler, Ed Hustad, Greg Kelley. Bottom Row, L to R: Lou Calasibetta, Georgette, Brian and Bud Stowers, Dennis Vaughan, Jane Kelley, George Weaver, Casey Kelley (behind George), and Bob "Pontiac Nut" Brown. Also in attendance but not shown were: Art Ruscher, Ron Fulsang, Mark Faiferlick, Gene Boeglin, and on the other side of the camera lense Edie Sokol.

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From the editor's desk

The "Convention Issue" you've all been anxiously waiting for is finally here! I must apologize for the late date of completion, but as long as the editorship is strictly a "non-gratus" position with time being donated as available, we may occasionally run late. The problem of "available time" has been more pronounced recently due to a number of things: my new promotion - "...more pay? Hah! More work!!"; the new house to landscape - "No honey, I think the rose bush would look better over here..."; and new "honey-do" projects every time I turn around - "Honey, when you have a minute..."; not to mention trying to squeeze in some of the typical summer activities we all promise ourselves "we'll find time for" each spring. You'd think with all this new stuff a guy would be really happy!! Anyway, I hope you all enjoy the new copy and I'm sure you'll find it was worth the wait.

I'm very happy to announce, there was <u>no winner...</u> for our chapter hardluck trophy this year. However, our chapter did make an impressive showing at the National meet with chapter member Glyn Rowley's '57 2dr Safari capturing <u>three</u> awards, among them "Best 55-57 Pontiac". This against some really tough competition including the Bonnevilles!! A well deserved and long overdue acknowledgement of Glyn and Jan's efforts. Their clean sweep of the gold is a real feather in the headdress for our chapter. Congratulations! Another National Competition winner was Art Ruscher with his '57 T.C. who carried home 3rd Place honors in the '49 and Newer - Modified Class. Good work, Art! Lou Calasibetta was no slouch either, coming in a close second after Glyn in the '55-57 class with his '57 Bonneville. In the "newer breed" '71-79 class, chapter member Ron Fulsang split 3rd place honors with Dick Choler. His '79 TRANS-AM SE must be some car!

So. Cal. Mini-Meet

A few Southern California Chapter members were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet one of our overseas members for a picnic in the park. Thanks to '55 Pontiac-er Bud Donato who tipped us off to Jon Bratten's arrival in the Los Angeles area, we were able to get together some of the cars and loads of pictures for Jon's enjoyment. For those of you who don't know Jon, he is the proud owner of the "only '55 Safari in Norway". Member's in attendance included Steve Brumm of Fountain Valley, Gary King and family from La Puente, Herman "Sonnie" Ferch also of La Puente, Jon Skovseth of Bellflower, and myself. Both Sonnie and Steve were able to bring their Safaris, a near matched pair of '57's. Needless to say, the cars got a few stares as we caravaned in to Rancho Park. I'm not sure, but from the many questions, and the close scrutiny Jon gave the cars, I suspect they may have been the first '57 Safaris he'd seen in person. Not too suprising considering the number that could have found their way to Scandanavia!

The Prez Sez!

A great time was had by all who attended what turned out to be the "best ever" Annual Safari Round-up, as well as one of the best P.O.C.I. Conventions to date. Nine Custom Safaris made the trek, most belonging to chapter members.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Dennis Vaughan, and I enjoyed making many new acquaintances, as well as renewing many old friendships.

In the show competition, Glyn and Jan Rowley knocked 'em dead in all categories, taking the honors as "Best 55-57 Pontiac", "Best Safari", and a well deserved "Long Distance Trophy" for their drive all the way from Santa Rosa, California. The most outstanding feature of their '57 Safari is the fact that you can eat your lunch off the engine anywhere without getting a germ!

Safari Chapter honors also went to Len Sokol's '56 - 2nd Place; and Greg Kelly's '57 - 3rd Place.

During Fridays chapter meeting a vote of thanks was given to Bob Johnson for his outstanding efforts as Editor of Safari News.
In attendance were chapter members: Bob BROWN, Lou CALASIBETTA, Rich GLEASON, John HASKEN, Ron HUDDY, Darrell LOEFFLER, Gerald REDDEN, Glyn and Jan ROWLEY, Bud and Georgette STOWERS, Len and Edie SOKOL, and Dennis VAUGHAN. Rumor has it Art RUSCHER was seen here and there that weekend too, but couldn't be dragged away from the flea market and car show! That's a devoted Pontiac Nut!

Our main topic of discussion for the meeting was judging of the cars. In view of the intense competition and the continuing growth of the club, the majority present felt the P.O.C.I. "Popular Vote" judging was no longer appropriate. We all felt 27 cars in our class were far too many. It was suggested that

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(Cont'd on back cover)

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APRIL FOOL'S, ITALIAN STYLE

By Lou Calasibetta

Each and every one of us in this world has a birthday. Strange as it may seem, some people were born on April 1st; I was one of those born on the "Day of Fools", just thirty three years ago.

This year April 1st was a beautiful day in New Jersey. After church and some unexpected lawn duties, I decided to go out for a drive, the first run of 1979 in my '57 Pontiac Custom Safari two door. It was a super afternoon and an ideal day to go to a local Corvette show and swap meet some twenty miles from home.

Cruising into the parking area, a young Spanish couple hurried over to my auto. They wanted to know if the Pontiac was for sale. He seemed hurt when I replied, "Sorry pal, NO!". To my utter surprise, four more offers to buy my unfinished Safari popped up that afternoon. It was a total turn-on to have all those 'Vette lovers look, gape, and run over to my '57.

After the usual parts hunting (Chevy F.I., Nomad, and Belair), my brain relayed a message to my feet to get on the road home. A family get together was planned and I could not be late. Approaching a traffic light, I took notice of a huge car lot filled to its perimeter with all types of landscaping equipment. Next to a little wooden building was a sign on a pole: "Spinelli's Used Cars and Equipment". No big deal, right? Wrong! Resting in the back row between a '65 Caddy and a 50's International pickup sat a 1957 TRANSCONTINENTAL STAR CHIEF CUSTOM FOUR DOOR SAFARI. Taken totally by surprise, I drove onto the lot to see more. The Fontaine Blue and Kenya Ivory wagon was about 100% complete. Except for a little surface rust, one flat tire, and a cracked left rear quarter window, she looked real good. As I pulled up her bonnet, wishing for tri-power, I was surprised by an elderly man who came out of nowhere.

Speaking broken English, he piped out, "I'ma Spinelli. Ifa you wanna the cara, you betta speaks to mya sona-ina-law". (I'm sure all of you get the picture, for a minute I didn't know if I was talking to Spinelli or listening to Chico in an old Marx Brothers movie.) Mr. Spinelli then said, "Ifa you givea mea \$200, its yours". I tried to tell him that it was my birthday and that I felt lucky. He seemed not to believe me, he thought I was teasing him because it was April lst. Spinelli figured I was just fooling him. Trying to explain to him that I really was not interested in taking the car that day was not easy. (A lack of communication.) Finally, we exchanged phone numbers and said "CIAO". Spinelli was smiling in disbelief as I pulled off his lot. Leaving, he gave me a friendly wave and I was finally off for home.

That night, after the usual dinner and a birthday cake, our phone rang. Lucky for me my mother picked up the receiver and low and behold, it was Tony Spinelli. They spoke Italian for about fifteen minutes and my "MA" then wrapped up the final deal for me.

So, P.O.C.I. members, remember it never hurts to learn another language. Look what has happened to me right here in the U.S.A. All I can say is that the Blue and White Wagon has found another home, on the day of fools, once again Italian Style.



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SECOND ANNUAL SAFARI ROUND-UP AT

POCI CONVENTION, PONTIAC '79





Left: 2nd Place winner, Len Sokol; Triple Crown winner, Glyn Rowley; and 3rd Place winner, Greg Kelley.

Right: 1979 Best Safari Award and 2nd Place Award presented to Mr. Glyn Rowley and Mr. Len Sokol respectively.

Bottom: Photo Credits: With many thanks to Len & Edie Sokol and Lou Calasibetta. Safari Row at the convention.





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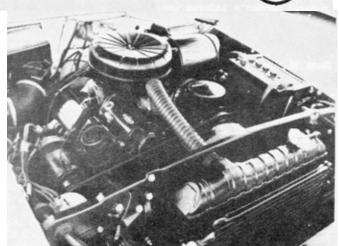
SECOND ANNUAL SAFARI ROUND-UP AT

POCI CONVENTION, PONTIAC '79



Right: Glyn Rowley's Safari's immaculate engine compartment. You say you <u>drove</u> this from California.....shore is shiny!

Below: Right to Left - Kelley's Red and White 2dr '57; Stower's '57; and Sokol's '56 all saying "aahh"....including the spectators!





Right: Here's a closer look at Bob "Pontiac Nut" Brown's Silver Beige and Kenya Ivory '57 Transcon for those of you who claim to have never seen a T.C. at a National Meet. A <u>real</u> silver streak!





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Left: Left to Right - Brown's "Silver Streak" '57 T.C.; the "Triple Crown Winner", Rowley's '57; and Hustad's Limefire and Seacrest Green '57 - a nice trio of '57's!

Safari Search

Cars for Sale

1955 Pontiac Safari: 144K miles, same owner since 1971 averaging less than 2K miles/year. Garage stored for 14 years. Near all original with very little rust and only minor dings. Paint almost through to primer from polishing. Interior fair, no carpeting. Extra parts available. December, 2010 Old Cars Report Price Guide values a #3 - 1955 Custom Safari at \$26,100. Price is negotiable but close to guide value. Contact Louie E. Brown, 316-685-0540 H, 316-393-9362 C, or L EBrown@att.net



Services

1955-1957 Pontiac Safari: Rear upper liftgates. straightened and triple plated to beautiful fit and finish. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Best you will find. Will straighten your liftgate only, if you prefer to use your own chromer. Also available rear liftgate gas struts to help open liftgates after torsion rods are removed. All safari/nomad interchangeable parts including window trim. Please call or email. michaelbakotich@ca.rr.com (310) 528-0482 - Mike



Parts for Sale

1957 Pontiac: Front Brake Drums complete with Backing Plates, Shoes, Wheel Cylinders and Wheel Bearings, \$100 each; also Two Radios with Speaker Boxes, one Maroon and one Green, \$150 each; Complete Rear End Differential with 3.23 Gears, \$100; 5 Hub Caps Good Condition, \$100...... call Bill Hanners @ 239-543-3510, FL.

1955 Pontiac: Parting out a 2 door Chieftain. email Rich Pye @ rpye@rochester.rr.com or phone 585-637-2720 with needs.

1957: hi comp engine core for rebuilding/parts, includes 4 bbl intake & exhaust manifolds, valve covers, block, \$150. 1958 radiator, last used over 20 years ago, did not leak, \$50. Delivery in California may be possible for costs, otherwise, you pick-up. Tom Young, Newbury Park, CA 805 375-1320 pontiactom@ix.netcom.com

Wanted

1957 Safari: Stainless Spear, front of gas door. Trim under the tail lights. Donn Fallenbuchel, (928) 855-5494. **1957 Safari Car Wanted:** If you have any leads on one, please contact Dwight at dwhitmire3153@charter.net or call cell 770-851-1010 or work 770-531-1010.

1955-56-57 Pontiac station wagon, Exterior Tee handle for liftgate on with as many attached parts as possible. Steve Cook jumbodog54@sbcqlobal.net or 314-795-4700

1957 Pontiac (Any Model): Air Conditioning components that mount to the engine, brackets, compressor, condensor, etc. Don't need firewall pieces, but interested if part of package deal. Rich Pye, rpye@rochester.rr.com or 585-637-2720

To place a free ad to sell a car or parts or to place a want ad, send your request to Rich Pye @rpye@rochester.rr.com. Your ad should be related to 1955-58 Pontiacs, and it is recommended to include photos.

POCI Chapter #10

www.customsafari.org

The Custom Safari Chapter is an official international chapter of the Pontiac Oakland Club, International, Incorporated. The POCI headquarters address is: P.O. Box 539 Victor, NY 14564

Annual Dues are \$21.00. Renewals are due January 1st of each year. New member dues are prorated quarterly from January 1st. Applicants must be a current member of POCI prior to joining the chapter. Send payment to Robin Petry.

The Safari News is a quarterly publication produced by the chapter. Volume 1, Number 1 was distributed in December of 1993. A limited number of back issues are available. Write for further information.

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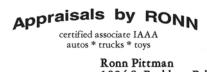
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2011 POCI Convention July 5-11, 2001 Bowling Green, Kentucky







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