

Summer/Fall 2014 Vol 18, No 2&3



**Simpler Times....
Cheaper Gas....
Cooler Cars!!!!**

Custom Safari Chapter
Pontiac Oakland Club International

From Tom's Garage

By Tom Young



Hello folks!

Wichita was wonderful!

Safarians who were able to attend would agree that everyone had a great time looking at some great cars and meeting some very nice folks.

At our annual Chapter meeting, I nominated Lou Calasibetta as our next president. My motion was quickly approved. After the traditional hand shake, Lou took the podium and I assumed the acting responsibilities of the secretary/treasurer.

We started our meeting with 18 people but more folks joined as we discussed both old and new business. Speaking of new business, I made a few commemorative decals for the folks who attended the convention. The designs are shown below. I also drafted up two new Chapter designs that I will introduce to everyone later this year.



It's time for me to sign-off as an ex-President. Lou will provide the necessary support to keep our Chapter viable and relevant. I am committed to support Lou and the Chapter. In the short-term, I am obligated by my job duties. I will continue my job of keeping everyone safe. But by the end of fall, I will finally take my Ranger hat off for the last time and celebrate the conclusion of a 37-year career. I have worked in some beautiful National Parks such as Crater Lake, Golden Gate, Yosemite and the Santa Monica Mountains. My job has provided a life-time of opportunities for adventure and accomplishments that I will never forget. In

retirement, I will finally have the time to work on a bunch of Pontiacs such as my '57 Safari 2 dr as seen before disassembly! I will also continue to contribute to the newsletter and champion gatherings of Safarians. And to everyone's surprise, I might even bring a Pontiac to a car show!



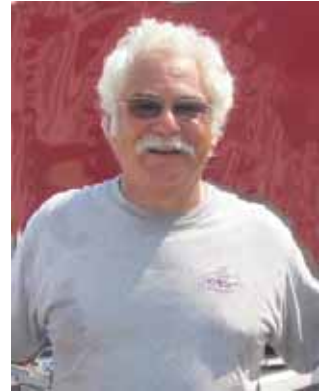
Tom Young, The "Former" Prez

From the President's Garage

By Lou Calasibetta

Well, Here I am again...

By now you realize that I am the new President of the Custom Safari Chapter. It has been many a years since I held this position. Tough to put a date on it, but it was in Orlando, Florida. At that time we were just a new idea in the POCI world. A class just for our beloved wagons. I remember guys like Bud Stowers and John Fitzgerald and John Thropp all there helping me get it done. Strange these friends are all gone, but our chapter is still here as strong as ever. I sure hope these old wagon guys are watching over us.



At this year's meeting Tom Young as usual did a wonderful job as the President. He is a real tough act to follow. Wow what a professional man. Talking about dotting the I's and crossing the T's. His knowledge of the chapter and procedures are up to the best standards that any club would be proud of. Thanks Tom for all of your extra efforts. All I can say is I will do my best to keep the wagon rolling.



warrior class. Let's hope that next year in Kentucky we have more wagons registered in the convention. There is plenty of time to get your wagon ready for the 2015 event. Hey, we earned a class for our wagons, so let's try to fill it up with ribbed tailgates!



So here is my first letter for the chapter. It takes time to get going and I hope I will do a good job as this year's new President. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter as Rich does a wonderful job on it. Also please send him stories about you and your wagon.

*Sincerely,
LOU CALASIBETTA*

Behind the Wheel in the Editor's Seat

By Rich Pye

Hello Everyone,

I hope you all had a great summer. For those of you that have that "non" enviable chore of "putting your car away for the winter", I hope it went painlessly. For those that don't, well I'm jealous.

As a lot of you probably encounter, space to store extra cars is something that I've always struggled with. This year I had my '57 in the car trailer and heard those dreaded words from a friend that went in there to check it out, "Something is running around in there". Needless to say, something turned out to be something(s).....which made a complete mess in my car.....and they stink. So, I moved it back into the barn and now have a fun winter project of cleaning all that up and fumigating it. Hey, why not? I'm pretty bored and sitting on my hands all the time.....NOT!!!!

I'd like to officially welcome Lou Calasibetta back as Chapter President. Lou graciously stepped up to take over for Tom Young. To Tom, a heartfelt, Thank You, goes out. Tom did a great job helping me with insightful articles and other content to keep these newsletters going. As a former editor Tom knew the need to "feed the machine" to keep me motivated. Lou has already stepped up and provided the timely nudges to keep us going and I look forward to working with him.

As you can see in this issue of Safari News, we have an update on the POCI Convention. Sorry it's a little late in delivery from the actual event, but it does keep everyone up to speed on what is going on in the Chapter. One thing you won't see for the first time in a long time is captions on the pictures. I'm still trying to decide whether I like the "raw" pictures or not. I think I do. I really wish I could align my schedule with going to the big events like the convention to get information first hand. Unfortunately, every year they keep moving the dates all over the place and they crash into my kids' busy summer sports events. Maybe we will get a convention closer to my neck of the woods in the Northeast sometime?!?

Something exciting in this issue an interesting story sent in from Rich Gabrielson regarding the purchasing and restoration of his latest Safari. Rich sent this in a little while ago and we've added some updates with new photos. I'd love for others in the chapter who haven't done this in the past or in a long while to share their Safari Story. It's great for the readers and great for me to be able to include them. I am always looking for new and exciting content regarding people's personal Safari stories and knowledge of the cars.

Well I'm running out of space (my favorite words grouped together!), so be on the lookout for the next issue, Winter 2014_15, in the next couple of months as we try to get back in sync with the seasons. I've already been preparing by incorporating an article from Dennis Dana entitled, "Detroit's Color Revolution". Hopefully I'll be able to add in a Safari Story as well!!

Oh, I forgot.....IF you have an ad in the Safari Search for parts for sale or parts wanted, please let me know ASAP if you want it to remain or to be removed. I promise to get that section up to date,



Pontiac's flair for years-ahead styling was never more evident than in the fabulous all-new Safari.

Talk to you in the New Year!

Rich

Custom Safari Chapter Meeting Minutes

Custom Safari Chapter Meeting Minutes POCI National Meeting, June 20, 2014 Wichita, KS

13 Members in attendance: James & Sandy Bowers, Lou Calasibetta, Louie Brown, Lee Hadley, Jack & Jill White, Tom & Summer Young , Carla & Don Dickey

5 Visitors: Jim & Ray Hall (56 Safari), Ron Chalmers & his two son-in-laws, (57 Safari)

Tom Young, President called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Members introduced themselves.

2013 minutes of the chapter meeting: Were printed in the newsletter after last year's meeting.

Tom Young, acting secretary/treasurer presented the treasurer and secretary report: Robin Petry could not attend so Tom summarized the information given to him by Robin.

T shirt inventory: Tom reported that Robin had a stock of shirt that could last up to three years. Shirts left (four 3X, one 2X, three Medium, two Small, no Large or XLarge).

Treasurer's report: Tom reported that the chapter had approx. \$1,800 including cost for printing the last newsletter. Tom said that each newsletter distribution cost about \$230 dollars. He added that convention relates costs are pending too but overall, the chapter account is in good shape for the year.

From Robin: Starting balance as of 4/1/13 of \$885.78; Income since 4/1/13: \$585 (from \$573 dues, \$12 Tshirt) and Expenses \$397.28 (\$70 Website Host Domain, 2013 Convention Best Safari trophy \$50.70, Convention Snacks \$25.64, Convention Printing \$16.82, spring newsletter \$146.25 & postage 87.87 leaving a balance as of 6/3/14 of \$2073.50. Outstanding expenses: Summer/Fall/Winter 2013 and Spring 2014 newsletters pending, Convention Snacks \$19.08 and Chapter display, \$22.04

Membership report: Current number of registered families/members is 62. Tom said that we could be up to 68 soon. Maximum membership in 2013 was 59 registered families/members.

Old Business: Chapter dues waived for this year unanimously agreed as appropriate. Lou thanked Robin for the great idea.

Chapter T-Shirt: The group discussed at the 2013 Convention Chapter meeting whether the current CSC shirt design should be re-ordered or another design explored. The group agreed that another design be explored.

A question about the Chapter traveling trophy was brought-up. Lou believes that Robin has it. Everyone hopes to see it next year.

Custom Safari Chapter Meeting Minutes

New Business:

Tom motioned to elect Lou Calasibetta as the President of the Chapter. Jim & Sand Bowers second the motion. Tom explained the reasons why Lou would be great present, then shook Lou's hand. Lou took the podium while Tom assumed duties of the secretary/treasurer, acting for Robin Petry.

Lou asked members to send photos of their cars to Rich for publication. Tom added that Randy Kerdoon is our person to contact if you want a story written-up by a professional media expert.

Dan Dickey motion to start promotion of the POCI Louisville convention early so that more members could get involved. His motion was second by many members.

Lou announced that on the east coast, the next big meet for Safarians is in September at Rhode Island. More info about the gathering to come from Lou.

The Chapter display will travel with Lou to next years meeting. The past old heavy wood display was built by Marvin. He was thanked for his efforts but the new display is favored because it's made of cardboard, folds easy and is very light weight.

Lou reflected upon the support of long standing members of the Chapter and encourages everyone to support the Chapter by bringing out their cars to shows. Drive them so that others can appreciate them.

Chapter window decals proto-types will be introduced by Tom Young for member review in upcoming newsletter. Tom distributed proto-types to members attending the meeting. He also distributed 2014 National Convention decals, offering 3 different designs. The decals were made specifically by Tom to commemorate the convention. They were given to members and guess who attended the meeting or car show.

Members at the convention to meet Saturday, June 21st at 1pm at Jim & Sandy Bowen's '57 Safari wagon for the traditional Custom Safari Popular Vote. Members to vote for the "Best Safari" at the convention and determine which member drove their Safari the longest distance.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 am.



Convention Photos



Convention Photos



Convention Photos



Convention Photos



My New Safari Story

By Rick Gabrielson

MY NEW SAFARI STORY

I found my first 55 Safari in a wrecking yard back in the early 80's. It had sat beside the San Francisco Bay for over 12 years with the windows rolled up and as a result suffers from some heavy rust issues in the roof and elsewhere throughout the body. My quick fix has been rolls of duct tape in the winter months, (my Custom Safari winterizing kits), and that has actually landed its photo in the Pontiac Oakland Club International magazine Smoke Signals after the Western Regional's a few years ago.

Since I got this car I started collecting parts to eventually restore it one or two pieces at a time. Then eBay came along and the parts became more available and my spare parts collection started growing. I answered an ad in Smoke Signals about a rust free Arizona body and was told it was sold. Then a year later the same ad came on for the same body. I called the guy and asked about it and he was a little rude and said "How many times are you going to call?"

I told him this was the second time, and I was told it was sold the last time. He apologized and said he thought I was someone else. I was in San Diego for a car show with my Orange 1955 Chieftain and told him I would be there the next day. He said fine and off I went.

It was dark the next day when I found his place and he took me to see the car with a flashlight. It looked pretty decent but I told him I wanted to see it in the daytime. He said you're looking at it now and someone else also wanted it and they were on their way from back east. I told him I would think about it and let him know. The next day he was at work and I hopped the fence and it did look pretty good but the frame was bent from a head on collision. I met him after he got home and bought it then. He said he could deliver it to me in a few weeks. A few weeks went by and I called him about the delivery, he said he wasn't going to deliver it and if I wanted it I better come get it and "don't dawdle".



My Safari Story

By Rick Gabrielson

I made a call to a friend in the Desert Renegades club and found out he had sold that body several times and after 30 days would reclaim it as abandoned. I had 5 days left before my 30 were up.

I called My California Highway Patrol buddy and told him I needed him to go with me to get the car home and when we got there the guy was a little surprised. He asked me how we were going to load it onto the trailer since it had no front or rear suspension. I said how about that forklift of yours? He said it would cost \$80.00 for him to load it. I gave him the money and home we came. This fellow has since passed away so his little scam might have lined his pockets at the time but didn't lengthen his life.

Since my doors and tailgate also had rust issues I bought some extra's from Ed Vassar, (1955 - 57 Pontiac specialist), along with a 6 way seat and some factory A/C pieces. Then another fellow added to my A/C collection with parts from an abandoned car he found in the Nevada desert. I had some front fenders from a parts car I bought when we restored the Chieftain. My friend Norm White had an extra hood that I traded for and my collection of parts kept growing.

I was at Ed Vassar's one day and mentioned the bent frame on the Arizona body and he said go look at the frame on that wagon he was parting out. I did and now I realized I had enough parts to build a second Safari from scratch.

I still had my Auto repair business at that time and with 2 two post racks it was not too difficult to swap the two frames from the Safari and the station wagon. My landlord owned a body shop and he wanted me to complete the restoration of his 46 Ford convertible. I thought we could work out a trade for the Safari body work and maybe even a paint job. I scheduled the body to be bead blasted inside and out, but he came 2 days before that and said they needed the car right then. I asked about the bead blasting, and he said not to worry because the Arizona body wasn't that bad and they could take care of it. He had already worked on the fenders and doors and tailgate so I took his word for it.

So I completed his Ford for him, turned a body shell on a frame into a running, driving car. I fixed everything from the convertible top to the radio, installed the engine and tranny. You name it and it was done, anticipating my Safari body coming together. After I was done, my Safari was in bare metal at his shop he asked me should he keep going or what? I said where are we as far as the trade went. He tells me the trade was used up on the doors and fenders. Seems he was running a time card on every minute they worked on my car, and I had just thrown a ball park time on his car because I thought we had a trade going. Turned out that I owed him an additional \$5000 and my car



My Safari Story

By Rick Gabrielson

was still in bare metal on the outside with some body work done on it here and there. He was a little miffed at me because he wanted me to sign a 5 year lease and I was 65 years old and didn't want that long of a commitment at my age. We settled for 3 years, but he raised my rent \$200 for not signing the 5 year lease.

I stopped the job right there and brought the car back to my shop and covered it with a car cover for the next year. Now I'm staring at the end of my lease and if I wanted to ever see this Safari done I better get going. So I pulled the body back off the frame, stripped the frame and sent it out for powder coating along with the rear end, backing plates and a bunch of other parts. I finally got to put to use the parts that I had purchased over the previous 20 years and finished the frame. I installed the rebuilt engine and transmission and tried to figure out what to do about the body.

Then another body shop owner needed A/C put into his 64 Impala and would do the Safari as a partial trade. I told him I would be on a time card for his and I expected the same from them. Once burned twice cautious. I had the body on a rotisserie and we pushed it over to his shop with my landlord watching. My landlord told me that all the body work his shop did would probably need to be redone because I had waited a year while I did the chassis. Well all of that work did have to be redone but only because they bondo'd over metal work that should have been repaired. When I finally had the car bead blasted like I wanted in the first place and the bondo was removed, the floor around the gas pedal looked like Swiss cheese. I figure I paid them at least \$3000 to hand strip the car when I could have had it blasted for \$700.

Then every time the new body shop tried to fit one of the parts, they had to remove the excessive bondo the first shop had used. The doors were built up to a curve when the ¼ panels were flat. I was told you never finish the doors or fenders off the car because you can't tell if they will match when installed. Nothing matched on this car when it was pre-assembled. It took 600 hours before everything lined up, was straight, and had correct gaps and parts fit like they were supposed to. Needless to say my A/C installation wasn't going to go too far on this deal. It took \$21,000 to complete the body and paint from the second shop plus the over \$8000 in cash and trade to the first shop, and I still have to complete the assembly of the car.

I closed my business January 31, 2011 and brought the car home. It still needed glass, upholstery, tires and some chrome work done. In this economy I could not find a qualified buyer for the business and after 30 years just closed the doors and sold off my equipment. I hoped to find the extra money from selling stuff on eBay and Craigslist to complete the car. I did drive it down the street with a smile on my face, but with no glass and a blanket thrown over the front seat. I did not



My Safari Story

By Rick Gabrielson

venture any further. At last count, over 20 1955 Pontiacs have contributed their parts to put this car together.

Since retiring we have moved to Northern California near the Oregon border. I've just finished my shop with a two post lift and will be back working on the Safari shortly. I just got my new wide white walls mounted and I need to repair a small fuel leak in the fuel tank. Next is the glass and then the upholstery and we'll be showing it.

The car still isn't finished, but it is getting closer. Still no glass or interior yet, but making progress toward that goal. I bought the interior parts and had an appointment to get it installed, but I am having problems getting the power windows to roll all the way up. It is a kit I bought 10 years ago and just now installed and they just won't adjust any further. So it is going into a custom body shop here in town and he says he can make them work, but I lost my place in line for the interior. Seems like the closer it gets to being done the more little setbacks I have. My "Bucket List" is to drive around the country and get a photo of my Safari with all the other '55 Safari's I can find.

We also plan to show both of the Safari's at the same time. The old rusty one will have a "before" sign and the new one will have the "after" sign.

Rich and Pam Gabrielson



Safari Search

Cars for Sale

NONE

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 Pontiac: NORS rear wheel bearings, new in box, with updated retainer collars. Pair, \$85 inc. shipping. **1957 Transcontinental:** aluminum side panels & wheel well trim most pieces available in various conditions. Sorry, no short rocker molding extensions. Let me know your needs. **1958 Pontiac Star Chief:** cast chrome door pillar paint divider moldings, set of 4, fair chrome, \$45 set, inc. shipping. Contact Tom Young at pontiactom@ix.netcom.com

Wanted

1955 Pontiac: OEM side view mirror (#519802) ? and a OEM Non-Glare rear view mirror (#521170 or #988647) ? for a '55 Safari. Not sure about the correct part #'s. NOS is not necessary but would like to find something in good to very good condition with minimal pitting.

1956 Safari: Information needed to how to replace rear leaf springs. Contact Cary Birenbaum @ mrpontiac@mindspring.com

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@sbcglobal.net or 314-795-4700

1957 Pontiac (Any Model): Air Conditioning components that mount to the engine, brackets, compressor, condensor, etc. Rich Pye, rpye@rochester.rr.com

1957 Pontiac: Rust free, stock 14-inch wheel rims, contact Tom Young at pontiactom@ix.netcom.com

1950-52 Pontiac: Exterior and Interior Trim, contact Paul Gore

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 pro-rated quarterly from January 1st. Applicants must be a current member of POCI prior to joining the chapter. Send payment to Robin Petry.

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