



Caffeine and Chrome



Gateway GTO Day at Caffeine and Chrome by Brian O'Sullivan



Gateway Classic Cars in O'Fallon Illinois holds a monthly cars and coffee event that they have dubbed "Caffeine and Chrome". The Gateway GTO Association was invited to be the featured car club for the month of July. The featured car club gets prominent parking right in front of the building, goodie bags and a donation to the organization if they bring 10 or more cars to the show. A group of the Missouri side members consisting of Jim Schneider, Andrew O'Sullivan, Tom and Terrie Oxler, Earl Lewis, Will and Donna Bowers, Mark Melrose and my wife Amy and I met up at the McDonald's at Westport Plaza. Things were looking *relatively* good weather wise. The temp was in the low 80's, it was a little overcast and only average humidity for St. Louis (77% haha). Around 8:05 we all jumped in our GTOs and hit the road. We took I70 and other than a bit of traffic it was smooth sailing.

We arrived at Gateway Classics around 8:45 and found a group of four Pontiacs waiting for us. Frank and Cheryl Chapman brought two GTOs with Harry Timmermann and his Lemans and Jack LaPeire had his GTO. We all lined up. After a short while we had a few more pull in including Dan and Annita Jackson, Pat Garvey and new member Jeff Stehman. We ended up with a total of 14 cars representing Gateway GTO. There was a nice variety of other cars at the show with several other clubs. Ultimately attendance was a little light likely due to the forecasted heat.

Everyone brought out their chairs and set up camp in a big circle, as we do. It wasn't as impressive as the gang we had at the nationals, but we held our own. As the clouds cleared out and things began to heat up some of us decided to head inside to check out the show room and free refreshments. Donuts, Coffee and Lemonade! A few different vendors also set up shop selling various items. While we soaked up the air-conditioning we took a look at the collection of cars inside. There were a few Pontiacs for sale including a WS-6 Trans Am that I was very much interested in, if only my wallet would cooperate.



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Gateway Classics had the GTO group take a picture together with a big check for \$150 that will be donated to the club. It was based on \$10 per car. Maybe they counted my R/C car to round our number up to 15. Either way the donation was appreciated. They then invited us inside to get our goodie bags which included a t-shirt, can-koozie, stickers and other swag. The staff was all very friendly and they were happy to have us. The event ran until 12:00PM, but Amy and I only stayed until around 11:00 as we had to be elsewhere by noon. We heard talk of others heading somewhere for lunch but we missed out.

All in all it was a enjoyable time and we will hopefully be kept in the cue to be their featured club of the month again. Even if not, it might be fun for a quick get together if we have any open Saturdays in the future. This also may be a good location if we are ever looking for a party venue as they have a very nice set up for that inside the building.





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Illinois State Fair Display

GTO's at the Illinois State Fair

By
Chris Winslow



Back in May, Paula and I were up in Pontiac at the Pontiac Museum to participate in a car show sponsored by Midwest Firebirds. That club has consistently been a strong supporter of our annual car show there so I wanted to go up and support one of their events. While we were there, Penny Dye told us that the City of Springfield had reached out and wanted to have some cars for a display at the Route 66 tribute area on the state fairgrounds. They were looking for about 10 cars for the event. That was too large of a showing for the Museum to support and Penny asked if Gateway would be willing to take it on.

I was not sure initially if there would be interest in driving to Springfield for a car show in August. So, I was worried that we might not be able to get to 10 cars. Those concerns turned out to be unwarranted as Gateway members stepped as usual and we actually ended up with 11 cars signed up.



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Logistically, it was a tricky thing to organize. We had cars coming from 5 different locations and we all had to meet and go into the fair at the same time. For those of us coming from the St. Louis/St. Charles area, the obvious meeting point was the old Chain of Rocks Bridge parking area. Unfortunately, that is closed due to construction in the area, as is the east-bound entrance onto 270 from Riverview. So, we ended up meeting at the Schnucks off of Bellefontaine road. Gathering there were 4 of our 11 cars. Paula and I, and Brian and Amy O'Sullivan, both in our 2004 GTOs, Tom and Terry Oxler in their 1966 GTO, and Barb and Earl Lewis in their 1967 GTO. We left the parking lot about 7:30 and at that time of the morning traffic was light, so we made good time to Springfield.

The rest of the cars were meeting us at the Schnucks in Springfield near the fairgrounds. This meeting point was based on an excellent recommendation that I received from Melissa Dunbar, with the City of Springfield Convention Team. She knew the area which roads would be one way for the weekend. This lot was ideally suited for a quick hop over to Gate 4 of the fair. Meeting us at that location were a lot of convertibles! There was Alan and Liane Finkenbinder in their GTO Convertible, Dave Sullivan in his Firebird Convertible, Frank and Cheryl in their Judge Convertible, Harry Timmermann in his Lemans Convertible. In addition the Wildebrandts, the Garveys, and the Grissoms met us there with their GTOs.

We made a quick dash from the Schnucks over to Gate 4 where Melissa was waiting to let us in and escort us to the display. Melissa had mailed tickets for everyone to me, but I had not received them so Melissa had replacements for us. (As it turns out, I got the tickets in the mail after we got home. They were postmarked on August 7th. Not sure why it took nearly 2 weeks to go from Springfield Il, to O'Fallon Mo!)



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Melissa led us to the display on the fairgrounds. There was an entire parking area that had been set aside just for us to show our cars and a great Route 66 display right next to the parking area.

After we got set up many of us explored the Route 66 display. It checked all of the boxes. It had Route 66 signs, billboards, a rest area, a classic hotel and drive in sign, a bridge, and Burma-Shave signs. It even had a tribute to the Giants.

Many of us also took some time while we were there to explore the fair. There was lots to see and plenty of things to eat. Paula and I got some huge ice cream cones at the dairy building and also a funnel cake. (Plenty of time to get back on the diets on Sunday!)

After spending most of the day at the fair, all of us except the Finkenbinders and Dave Sullivan headed back south towards St. Louis. On the way we stopped for dinner. Paula had made reservations several weeks earlier for us at the Ariston Café.

We all had a great dinner at Ariston and Earl became best friends with the young lady that was our server.

I was really pleased with how this event turned out. Everyone had a great time and we had super weather. I hope they ask us to do this again.



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