

Gateway GTO Co-Hosts GTOAA National Convention in Springfield, Missouri

by Chris Winslow



Gateway GTO Co-Hosted the GTOAA National Convention this year with our sister chapter the GR-RRR8'R Wichita GTO Club. I think we were all hoping for a smooth event given the way the 2023 convention was ended early, and we got it.

Most of the Gateway members rolled in on Monday or Tuesday and we got right to work. Terry Schott and Ron Wildebrandt got to work executing their plan for the trailer parking. The net result was the most organized and efficient trailer parking set up we ever had at a national convention. Every owner could access their trailer and their tow vehicle and even use the trailer as a garage in case the weather would threaten rain or storms. As it turns out, the weather, which was just a bit on the warm side, especially later in the week, was otherwise perfect. No rain. No storms. In fact most days there were barely any clouds.

The registration got underway on schedule Tuesday morning with Gateway members Terrie Oxler, Diana Johnson, and Paula Winslow working with a few others to keep the process running smoothly.

Outside, there was no tent this year. The Tech area was at the side entrance to the hotel, which had its own cover that was part of the building. (After last year, nobody really wanted a tent this year anyway!) In recent years, the Popular vote Tech has been performed by Bob Alexander and Tom Szymczyk. However, this year Gateway members Lucas Hedrick and Bryan Johnson helped Tom with the idea that they will be taking this over. For this year it freed up



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Bob to work with registration and for next year they will be able to take most of it over from Tom.

We also had Gateway members working in many other areas. Everything from shuttling folks around the convention in the golf carts, to selling T-Shirt and signing up new GTOAA members.

With all of the help, the two car shows, the indoor judged show and the outdoor popular vote show went off without a hitch. All of this led us to the two big events for the week. The Groovy Ballroom Bash on Friday and the Awards Banquet on Saturday.

The Groovy Ballroom Bash theme was the idea of Terrie Oxler and her vision came to life on Friday when we all entered the event. The centerpiece of the evening, however, was the live band sponsored by Gateway GTO, Captain Rat and the Blind Rivets. This is the first live band that we had at a GTOAA parking lot party since the last time Gateway hosted a convention. In short, it was a HUGE success. Tom Oxler had found the band and a number of us had watched videos of their performances before we hired them. We expected them to be entertaining, but they were entertaining beyond our wildest expectations. They played a great mix of songs and were able to draw crowds to the dance floor all night long. This included Rolling on the River so the POSI club could perform their trademark rolling on the dance floor move. There was even a conga line started and led by Gail Schott. Everyone had a really great time and when the band finally finished, most of the crowd was still there. The take away from this is that Gateway knows how to put on a party. The challenge now is for the host chapter for next year to beat it!

The next morning, many of us attended the Chapter meeting. Unfortunately, Gateway did not win Chapter of the Year this year. That award went to our co-host chapter in recognition of the completion of their 3 year project to restore the 1966 GTO of fallen police officer Kunze. Gateway did, however, win 2024 Chapter Incentive Program award.

Of course, the finale for the week was the awards banquet. As the awards were given out, Gateway took home a large number. Here are the awards and winners:

Joe Mayweather - 3rd Place in the Adult Model Building Competition

Steve Hedrick - 1st Place in Popular Vote Class A

Frank Chapman - 3rd Place in Popular Vote for Class D

Rob Vachalek - 2nd Place in Popular Vote for Class E

Jim Schneider - 1st Place in Popular Vote for Class E

Gail Schott - 2nd Place in Popular Vote for Class F

Harry Timmermann - 1st Place in Popular Vote for Class G

Rich Lacavich - 2nd Place in Popular Vote for Class H

Brian Ray - 1st Place in Popular Vote for Class H

David Sindelar - 2nd Place in Popular Vote for Class I

Joe Mayweather - 3rd Place in Popular Vote for Class L

Brian O'Sullivan - 2nd Place in Popular Vote for Class L

Lucas Hedrick - 1st Place in Popular Vote for Class L

Will Bowers - 3rd Place in Popular Vote in Class M



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Don Duryea - 3rd Place in Popular Vote in Class N

Roger Johnson - 1st Place in Popular Vote in Class N

Earl Lewis - Bronze Award in Performance Modified

Doug Wollgast - Gold Award in Factory Original

In all that is 18 awards taken by Gateway. That is an impressive showing.

The final event of the night was the retirement of Vic as our president and the start of our own John Johnson as the new president of GTOAA.

I could not be more proud of how all of Gateway stepped up to make this event a huge success. There isn't another club in GTOAA that has the impact on the organization that Gateway has, and we showed it again in 2024.



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