



# GTOAA Nationals



## GATEWAY GTO DOES THE 2017 GTOAA NATIONAL CONVENTION

By

Chris Winslow



It's hard to believe it is over. 3 years of intensive planning, untold hours of phone calls, emails, creating and recreating document after document. (Don't even get me started on how much time Jim McCarthy and I spent setting up the email blasts). And then, in the blink of an eye, the week was over.

On many occasions, we all asked each other what are we forgetting? What are we missing? In the end, it looks like the answer to that is almost nothing.

There is a lot to cover to address everything that the Gateway team pulled off for the 2017 GTOAA National convention. The starting point for this, without question, was selecting the right venue for the event. The Holiday Inn, (now Doubletree) hotel that we used for the



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2005 convention was too small for what we wanted to accomplish. We needed something bigger, preferably with enough indoor space to house the entire Concours car show indoors. We also needed a parking lot big enough to host a huge Popular Vote car show while still having plenty of room for vendors and swap meet participants. And, of course, the location had to have plenty of activities and restaurants in the local area. The one hotel that checked all of those boxes and more was the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The down side, of course, was its distance from St. Louis, but in the end that was outweighed by everything else. With that decision out of the way, it was time to get down to the really hard work.

A great convention requires lots of activities and speakers so that there is something for everyone. Finding speakers turned out not to be much of an issue. In fact, we wound up with so many speakers, finding time slots for all them became the challenge. As for that activities, the area had lots to offer. We had history tours, a pub crawl, a day at Knight's Action Park, and even trips to the relatively close by Pontiac Oakland Museum.

Of course, the biggest activity of all, and probably the most photographed of the week, was the World's First Indoor Parking lot party. The Gateway team decorated the room to perfection. The band was Everyday People, but it was the women of Gateway GTO that stole the show. The sea of pink poodle skirts on the dance floor left no doubt that the women of Gateway GTO were there in force.



In addition to the ladies of Gateway, there were also a few other notable guest appearances. Elvis appeared for a set with the band. There was also an appearance by the Village People with leader Chief Oxler.

Of course, the main event for the week were the car shows. When we first started planning this event for the Crowne Plaza, we determined that we could get 70 cars inside for the



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Concours show, although we were not at all certain that many cars would actually come out for the event. In the end we spent a lot of time the last few weeks shuffling cars around because we actually had more that 70 cars register for the show. The result was a ball room full of truly impressive Pontiacs.



The Popular Vote car show was equally impressive. The huge parking lot at the Crowne allowed us to spread out the cars and give everyone registered for the show their own assigned spot for the week. The result was Pontiacs as far as the eye could see.



The final event for the week was the awards banquet on Saturday evening. Once again the ladies of Gateway outdid themselves decorating the banquet hall. For those of us from Gateway it was a chance to finally relax and take stock of the remarkable event we had just pulled off.

The success of these event goes to all the members of Gateway with the help of the Heart of Illinois and Windy City members. It took the support and participation of the entire club to pull off this highly successful event. This event will go down as the one against which all future conventions will be judged.



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