

# Lucky 13

Grand Indiana Auto Tour 13 • August 1-4, 2007



Fort Wayne, Indiana • 13

A quote from acclaimed American author E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*: "Luck had nothing to do with it! It took hard work and good management," would be a more apt title for this recap of Summer 2007's Grand Indiana Auto Tour. Just ask hosts Bill & Liz Heidenreich, Jack & Luci Laughlin, Tom & Sharon Laupp, Gary & Sara Mattax, Bob & Mary Richhart. Still, "Lucky 13" sounds better!

Whatever the title, GIAT 13 proved to be yet another great tour. This year's home base was Fort Wayne, IN with participants gathering at the Sleep Inn on the city's northeast side. Fifty-five beautiful classic automobiles were registered along with their drivers, plus 62 passengers, making for 117 total fun seekers. After a warm welcome by the host committee, everyone made a short drive from the hotel to the banquet hall—Ceruti's by name—for our opening banquet. The service was second to none and matched by Ceruti's equally fine food, which the group applauded in appreciation after our short business meeting and, one of my favorite parts of any tour, the annual introduction of old/new participants.

## Thursday, August 2, 2007

Formula Boats in Decatur, IN, (my home town) was our first destination and after a scenic drive through Woodburn, Indiana's smallest city, we passed some of the state's most fertile farm land (and the farm I grew up on, by the way). Planted among the corn fields (pun intended) is this family owned, 600,000 square foot facility where sleek, powerful, and beautifully hand-crafted performance boats are created. The hospitality of the Formula staff was first rate, and GIAT was treated to a fascinating tour. Separated into small, intimate groups, our personal guides explained the manufacturing process from design to finish, pointing out a few boats being made for celebrity customers. For those of us on a modest budget, we could possibly afford one of their 24' Bowriders.

The more well-to-do would probably choose a sporty model, such as the 41' SuperSport 400S with a top speed of 60 miles an hour. Or, if creature comfort is more to your liking, perhaps a 48' Formula 45 Yacht. Whatever your preference, the fit, finish, and quality of these craft were something else.

After a quick drive from Decatur back to Fort Wayne, lunch was served at The Window Garden, a cafeteria-style eatery on the 13th Floor of the downtown Summit Building, where diners can take in a scenic view of Indiana's second-largest city from all four points of the compass.

Once well fed, participants could choose one of four downtown activities: The ARCH Walking Tour which included The Allen County Court House with world renowned faux marble finishes, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception recently restored interior, the ornate 20's-era decor of the historic

Embassy Theatre, and Tower Bank's Art Deco style architecture; The Botanical Conservatory with over 24,000 sq. ft. of interior gardens including tropical and desert rooms; The History Center in the old City Hall featuring artifacts from Allen County; and The Lincoln Museum which houses the award-winning, interactive

"Abraham Lincoln and the American Experiment" exhibit. If these

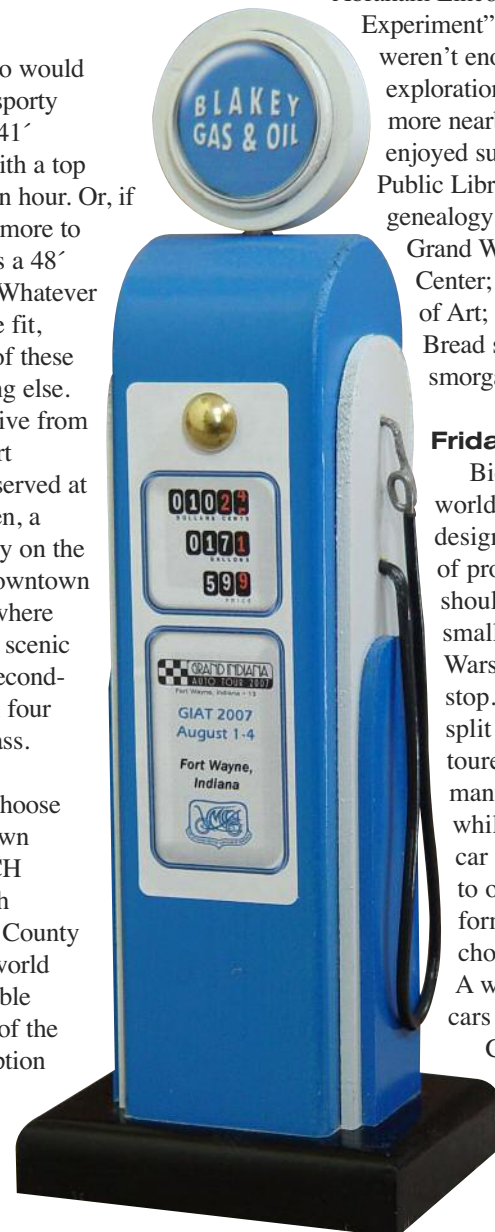
weren't enough to tickle your exploration fancy, then a few more nearby offerings could be enjoyed such as the Allen County Public Library (largest public genealogy library in the USA); Grand Wayne Convention Center; Fort Wayne Museum of Art; and the Sunbeam Bread sign. Quite a smorgasbord of choices!

## Friday, August 3, 2007

Biomet, Inc., a worldwide leader in the design and manufacture of products for hip, knee, shoulder, elbow, and other small joint replacements in Warsaw, IN, was our first stop. Our large group was split in two, one half toured the Biomet manufacturing facility while the rest inspected a car collection belonging to one of the company's former principals. Either choice was a delight.

A wide array of classic cars including vintage

Corvettes and early exotics like Jaguars were fun to see, while a fascinating tour of



*Robert Richhart, of the host committee, hand crafted an official GIAT 2007 gas pump for each registered car/driver.*



*The Old Fort Model A Club always makes a stately showing at any GIAT event with their large number of finely restored/preserved classics.*

Biomet highlighting their meticulous attention to detail in creating medical implants was first rate.

After viewing a collection of local classics (cars, that is) it was our turn to return the favor. We headed to the Village of Winona where GIAT parked along the waterway and offered the public a chance to view our cars while we ate lunch in Rodeheaver Auditorium on the Grace College & Seminary campus. As we ate we listened to a great presentation on the history of Winona which included noteworthy evangelist Billy Sunday.

About two o'clock, those who were interested (myself included) were invited to stop nearby at M L Motorsports to view a Busch Series racing team shop. Although the team was racing in Montreal, Canada, at the time, there were several cars in the

facility and their crew chief gave us a thorough and exciting tour of the place.

Our day was not yet complete, as we had one more venue to visit: Jefferson Point in Fort Wayne, a refreshing, open-air shopping environment. Their staff roped off a section of their expansive parking lot, giving us a safe haven for our classics while our group grabbed dinner and lawn chairs to enjoy a blues concert in Center Court. A few other shoppers saw our cars and stopped by to enjoy our third car show of the day.

**Saturday, August 4, 2007**

While making an early morning jaunt northward through Hometown, LaOtto, and Avilla, we arrived in Kendallville, IN, home of Kraft Caramel's, Flint & Walling, and our morning's destination, The Mid-America Windmill Museum. With a vast collection of over 50 windmills, GIAT was

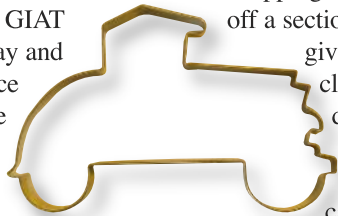


*Mike & Joan Huffman's '31 Cord Cabriolet (top) and Bill & Betty Swope's '38 Chrysler Imperial.*

able to enjoy a beautiful summer morning amidst the museum's many indoor and outdoor displays.

After a relaxing time, we headed east toward Waterloo, then south into Auburn, home of the the famed Auburn, Cord, Deussen Corporation and our lunch stop, the WWII Victory Museum. While the caterers set up, we were able to view the facility which houses impressive permanent displays, a vast wartime vehicle collection, plus intriguing military artifacts all which commemorate the sacrifice made by those who served during WWII.

A hearty round of applause thanking our hosts for all their hard work as another great GIAT was dispensed, and long goodbyes were said. GIAT '07 was a great success and a good time was had by all.



*Left: Dan Brown snaps a photo of Tim & Linda Jackson's '14 Lewis Touring. Right: Bob & Sally Murray's '70 Barracuda Convertible.*



*The Fort Wayne committee outdid themselves with GIAT goodies - with automobile-shaped cookie cutters expertly made by Gary & Sara Mattax, and custom license plates for each car designed by Trish Richhart (samples above).*