

Sept '96 "Open Exhaust"

# THE DAY MY GRANDMOTHER SAVED THE POR

As I step into the Detroit Region's time machine, I set the date on the dial back to early November 1971. Next, the place: Mio, a small town in northern lower Michigan. The time: approximately 11:30pm...

It's the first night of the scheduled three day event named the POR (Press On Regardless car rallye). The POR got its name by the 1948 organizers, for the competitors who would be competing in this grueling event, "...regardless of what happens, you are to 'Press On'." This year's event, 1971, is even listed on the FIA (Federation International Automobile) calendar.

My brother and I are running service crew, which is like a pit crew for racers, for my father, a very successful rallye driver who would later become a four-time winner of the POR. As my brother and I drive into this sleepy little town, we witness blizzard like conditions for the scheduled fuel and service stop. The snow on the back roads would create havoc for the competitors of this 23rd running of the POR. My father is driving in a new English Ford Escort with navigator Bernie Stoltzman.

We arrive in Mio about an hour and a half ahead of the first car. We walk over to the only place that's open at this hour, Walkers Restaurant Bar and Bowling. Our grandmother, Margaret O. Walery (she passed away in 1974) lives outside of town and works part-time here tending bar to supplement her retirement pension. She has left her evening shift a little early to be with her grand kids.

We are standing just outside of Walkers when Chief Rallye Organizer Bob Hourihan, Detroit Region member and past President of the Ralligators, Inc. car club, steps up to greet us. Bob has got a panic situation. Fifty some rallye cars are due in to the Mio fuel/service stop at the Total service station inside of an hour as at last check, the place was locked up tight and the lights were out. Bob had given the owner advance notice of the rallye and the time that we would be arriving and he assured Bob that he would stay open late that night. Bob is already thinking of alternative reroutes to possibly avoid the snow, which may have the next closest gas station. The only problem is that many of these competitors would be quite low on fuel and are betting on the Mio fuel stop for

the needed gas and would not be able to drive the extra distance for fuel. It was that or wait to morning here in Mio. Bob was practically besides himself with indecision.

The answer to Bob's question couldn't have been easier. Go get the owner out of bed. But Bob didn't know how to find him. My Grandmother said that she knows the owner personally (it's a small town, she knew most everyone) and that she would be happy to drive over to his house and get him.

Relief comes over the face of rallymaster Bob Hourihan as his prayers are answered. After a short delay, the owner of the Total station arrives to reopen his business. He apologizes for forgetting about staying open late. Approximately a half hour later, the competitors begin arriving at the fuel stop, unaware of the near tragedy that has been averted by a chance meeting between my grandmother, Marge Walery and rallye or-

ganizer Bob Hourihan.

This was not the only time my grandmother would be involved with motorsports activities. She also played mid-way break hostess for an event my father staged in the early 60's. It was a TSD road rallye, then a hill climb followed by an economy run back to Detroit, all in one weekend.

By the way, my name is Mark Henderson, Detroit Region member and rallist. My brother is Gary Henderson, a past pro rallist, and everyone knows my father, Gene Henderson, who is a long time Detroit Region member and rallier extraodin-aire.

P.S. The 23rd Annual POR ended two days later. Gene's Escort broke a wheel and rolled during the second night on the "Peltz Road M-Stage". The overall winner would be Scott Harvey and Tom King in a Plymouth Cricket. And now you know the rest of the story.

## SAVE THE SOAP!

As you travel this summer, please save the soap and shampoo that are placed in hotel bathrooms. Bring to any general meeting and give to any Board member. In November we hope to be able to provide, in the name of Detroit Region members, several bags of these toiletries to rescue missions and homeless shelters.

THANKS, THANKS, THANKS!  
WE CAN DO THIS ONLY WITH YOUR HELP.

## GRATTAN SHOWCASE NATIONAL

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE CHIEFS FROM  
DETROIT AND WESTERN MICHIGAN AND ALL OF THE  
WORKERS THAT MADE THE SHOWCASE NATIONAL, HELD  
AT GRATTAN AUGUST 10 & 11, ONE OF THE BEST  
NATIONALS HELD AT THAT TRACK.

PATTIE KLIMCHUK, CHAIRMAN  
&  
HARRY CONSTANT, CHIEF STEWARD