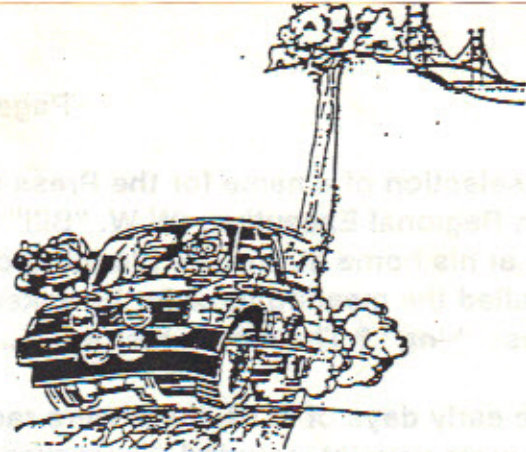


# Friends of POR

A Newsletter, by and for, a group of enthusiasts dedicated to the perpetuity, care, and well being, of the PRESS ON REGARDLESS RALLY, it's workers, and supporters. The POR is the oldest, most prestigious rally in the USA, dating back to 1949, from which date has been held as an annual event. The POR is the trademarked property of the DETROIT REGION Sports Car Club of America, who have sanctioned and supported it since it's inception. The FPOR is a fraternal support group open to all. Dues are \$15.00 annually. A membership form is at the bottom of this page. P.O. Box 337 Pinckney MI 48169. (313) 878-5553 FAX (313) 878-5477

Gene Henderson - editor



**SPECIAL POR EDITION.....**"And the days dwindle down".....As I write this, ten days to the hour before the start of POR '96, I am reminded how many years I have been involved with this most prestigious of sports car events. I entered my first POR in 1959, driving a 1959 Volvo 444, with FRANZ TIETZ as my Navigator. At that time POR was sanctioned as an SCCA National Rally. It wasn't a very successful endeavor, about 30 miles into the event, our rear diff packed up. My local service station had either neglected to fill it or failed to tighten the plug, in any event the plug was gone and the diff fried and seized causing us to DNF. It was one of the first three or four rallies I had run. Running with Franz was a real experience. His German accent was so heavy that I was constantly looking over at the instructions to confirm the instruction, as what I was hearing bore little resemblance to the written instruction. We later taped a clip board on the dash so's I could read them. (this may have been the reason "rally readers" were invented!)

The first "Press On Regardless Rally" was held October 22,23, 1949. The report of the event went thus.... **THE MICHIGAN "PRESS ON REGARDLESS 1949"**

*"At 10:30 AM Saturday, October 22 in beautiful crisp Autumn weather the first car got underway from the starting point at the Dearborn Inn in the first running of the Michigan "Press on Regardless", a tortuous route over secondary roads and country lanes; consisting of three legs and nine unknown and unexpected check points. Others followed at one minute intervals, until the entire field was away on the first leg of the run, a "time and directions trial" to Battle Creek, 150 miles away. At a driver's meeting held prior to the start, constants were briefed by the official of the run who explained the working of a time and distance trial, and by an officer of the Michigan State Police who outlined Michigan Highway Regulations for the benefit of those who were unfamiliar with them....."*

Of the 37 cars starting, that cool October day, there were 6 MG (4 TCs!) a 1930 "MG M", a '39 SS 100 Jaguar, driven by Dave Garroway, a '49 Riley Roadster, driven by R. Davis, a '37 Cord Conv. Cpe., a '36 Duesenberg Conv. Cpe., two '49 Oldsmobiles, a couple of '49 Fords, and a smattering of Austin A40, a Volkswagen, a Miller-Ford etc. There were 5 Classes. A "Sports" Class, A "Touring" Class, and three Classes rated by displacement. Winner of the Sports Class (with 903 points!) was V.E. Gardner in a 1949 Studebaker Spl. 2 STR. "Touring Class" was won by L. Turco in a 49 Ford Conv. (891 points)

*Yes! I would like to join the Friends of POR!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
W \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes! I would like to work on the POR as an* Organizer *Worker*  
Ham Radio *Course Layout*  
Pre-Check *Control Layout*

Dues \$15.00 Annually  
Payable: Friends of POR  
fporit



The selection of a name for the Press On Regardless came about in a rather unique way. The then Regional Executive, (W.W. "Bill" Wood of Woods Motors) was holding a Board Meeting at his home during the planning of what was to be a tour around Michigan when RE Wood called the meeting to order he asked, "What are you going to call this press on regardless thing" ? The rest is history.....

In the early days of POR, there were races, some were held on the Grayling airport. auto crosses were usually included. There was always the inclusion of some form of challenging motorsport activity. In 1961, Scott Harvey and I put on the first 24 hour event patterned after the then famous "Canadian Winter Rally". This was the beginning of what was to be called "The longest, oldest, meanest, toughest rally in the USA" ! POR ran with this 24 hour format, timed to the minute, with some remote sections carrying "average speeds" that were nearly impossible. Winning scores were usually in single digits. In 1967 KARL GOERING and DON SKINNER won the event with 3 points ! (timed to the minute) WAYNE ZITKUS and I were 2nd (Barracuda S) with 5 points, all taken at once when due to being bounced around so much, Wayne bumped his Curta changing the factor which resulted in our arriving at a Control 14 seconds EARLY! This was the only year that "Earlies" were penalized at 5 Points, and "Lates" at only 1 Point ! (An innovation of Rallymaster BOB HOURIHAN) During this period we began including "selectives", not closed stages, just short sections three to ten miles where the CAS was almost "unattainable". When laying out the course the rallymaster would run the selective several times and get their times down to as low as possible, than he would DEDUCT 10 percent from the time, and this would be the "target time"! This was one reason POR had a 50% finishers rate!

If memory serves me correctly the first "Special Stage" (closed) was around 1968, I'm not positive of the date, however, the Stage was "Connors Flats"! Just under 7 miles long. It was a remote two tracker, no cross roads, no houses, and we "closed it" by blocking each end with control cars and used "borrowed" 2 Meter Radios obtained by ROGER TURPENING from a Government project he was working on! We used "Connors Flat" on the '93 and '94 PORs. It is now a "Class A country road 40' wide we set a 45 CAS and it could have been makeable at a 60 CAS. Originally it was targeted at CAS 37 and NOBODY "cleaned it"! We continued this format using our "selectives". Since we always ran at night we had no incidents with civilians, altho we damaged a few competing cars, no one was ever seriously hurt! Our "Risk Management" people would have had a heart attack if we pulled stunts like that today!

In 1973 we went "legit". We obtained permission to close the roads, ran mostly in the daylight, formed the PRO Rally Series, and the rest is history. I must say tho, that those of us who were fortunate enough to have competed in the '61 to '73 era got an "adrenaline rush" like never before or since! To have run the POR was impressive, to have finished the POR was awesome!

In 1972 POR ran 1500 miles in length and covered three days. This event was an FIA World Championship Event, and the first ever won by an American Crew in an American Car! (Henderson & Pogue in a Jeep Wagoneer!) It was also the first victory for a 4 WD vehicle!  
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**FAST FORWARD TO 1993.....**

In the mid-seventies POR was moved to Houghton, Michigan where it continued thru 1993 as part of the SCCA PRO Rally Series. The Detroit Region was unable to recruit a "Chairman" for the '94 event, so it was decided to return POR to the lower peninsula as an "endurance" TSD event replacing the "historic" POR which had been organized by the Friends of POR, a fraternal organization for '92 and '93 as a means of supporting the event and the Workers. This allowed the Detroit Region to maintain the continuity of the event and in fact represented a return to the original roots of POR. The '93 Historic POR had been a 2 day, brisk, endurance style TSD starting and ending in Alma, Michigan and the FPOR Organizers had been successful in obtaining support from Total Petroleum of Alma, who had supported POR thru it's long sojourn in Michigan's lower peninsula. The '94 event was won by SCOTT HARVEY and RALPH BECKMAN in an Eagle Talon. The '95 POR was won by BILL LAITENBERGER and JOHN MacARTHUR in a Subaru Sport Sedan, with Harvey and GREG LESTER finishing a close 2nd.

That brings us up to date and the 1996 TOTAL PRESS ON REGARDLESS. 600 miles, overnight in Boyne City, and featuring approximately 60 controls. Sponsored once again by TOTAL in addition to the BOYNE CITY SAFE COMPANY and several local Alma businesses and the Atlantic Driving School (Gary Webb) who sponsored "special awards". Results are as follows;

1.	Jim Fekete/Jim Shaffer	1996 GMC Blazer	165 points	Class L*
2.	Bill Laitenberger/J. MacArthur	1993 Subaru Sprt. Sed.	189 points	Class E*
3.	Randy Wittline/L. Talcott	1993 Chevy Lumen	189 points	Class E
4.	Eric Jones/Bill Potvin	1964 MGB	453 points	Class V*
5.	Kevin Wesley/Richard Ehernberg	1996 Dodge Stratus	566 points	Class S*
6.	Thomas Camp/Tyler Haase	1972 VW	8220 points	Class N*

**\* Class Winners**

Special Awards:	"Spirit of POR Award"	Dan Kirby & John Depentu
	"Dead Last But Finished"	Ron Shoemaker & Glen Pierce
	"Best Novice Award"	Thomas Camp & Tyler Haase

Dan Kirby and John Depentu won the "Spirit of POR Award" due to their differential failing just after the start in their 1975 MG Midget. They rented a car, drove to the overnight stop in Boyne City. When they awoke to start the Saturday Section they found a flat on their rent-a-car!. A close second for the "Spirit" Award was the team of Gary Webb and Dave Cracchiola who had the transmission go away in their Saab Turbo just before the half-way finish in Boyne City. They drove to neighboring Traverse City that night, rented a car and were ready to start the Saturday Section! The "Dead Last but Finished Award" was a shoo-in for Ron Shoemaker and Glen Pierce who somehow managed to "max" every control in the rally! (they're quite consistent tho, they won the same award 2 years ago!)

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Phil and Dallas Smith were also in the hunt for the Spirit of POR Award. Phil managed to find one of our famous "magnetic pines" doing serious damage to the front end of his 1966 MGB GT prior to the overnight stop in Boyne City. Not wanting to miss out on the fun and needing a ride back to Alma they teamed up with Bill Braund and worked two Check Points enroute back to Alma! Satch Carlson managed to shoot himself in the foot when assuming that the rules were identical to last year and that rules were like alligators. "When you've seen one you've seen 'em all" gathered up some 800 "extracurricular points" thus releasing him from the stress of a top four finish!


There were only three protests which were quickly adjudicated by John MacArthur, Dave Mulder, Jim Shaffer and Fred Cochran serving as our Protest Committee. Most were of the "I know I'm wrong, but" variety.

At the awards we held a brief discussion and vote re the format of POR and how the Organizers could improve the presentation. It was generally decided that POR '97 would move to a Saturday/Sunday time frame to allow easier access for workers. Also a hand vote gave the opinion that a "night venue" would be welcome for POR '97. The Organizers will run this by our Sponsors, Workers, etc. for verification and agreement, so chances are POR '97 will see a Friday afternoon Tech & Registration a 9PM Start, half way finish and breakfast buffet at 7AM. A restart at 9PM on Saturday and Awards Buffet at 9AM on Sunday AM. A few details will have to be worked out, late checkouts at the motels, sponsor considerations food and lunch stops. How to assure car identification at "closed controls", however these are only minor problems and can be worked out. Unless we run afoul of Alma College activities the date will be the same i.e Sept. 20, 1997.

I want to thank all the WORKERS for their time and efforts. These "Unpaid Volunteers" devote hours of their time, pay their own expenses for the most part, all they get from it is a few free meals, a few trinkets, and the heartfelt thanks of the Chairman. I know all you Competitors join me in expressing how grateful we are that they allowed us to enjoy a great week-end and we hope they will return next year.

We are looking forward to 1999 for the "GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY" of POR! We want to make this a most memorable occasion, and we want to invite every one who has ever ran, worked, or participated in this most prestigious of events to put in an appearance. This will be the last hurrah for this Chairman and I want to have all my hundreds of friends and fellow competitors there to help me celebrate it!

Hope you enjoyed yourselves..... see you next year, and bring a friend !

Regards,  
  
Gene Henderson  
Chairman POR '96