

## Planning and Celebrating Region Anniversaries

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Anniversary celebrations embody the PCA motto, "It's not cars, it's the people!" because they truly reflect the devotion, determination, and enthusiasm people have had for one another and the Porsche marque over the years. These affairs should pay tribute to the people who laid the ground work for the region's current success, but should also shine a friendly spotlight on those new members and leaders who will continue to advance the club's success in the future. As PCA gets older and wiser, many of our original charter members are reaching their twilight years. They have volunteered a goodly portion of their lives to the club, and deserve the thanks and fanfare from the current generation for where the club is today. Conversely, as PCA transitions to a new generation of enthusiasts, it's equally important to establish that connection between young and old to form the bond of continuity and tradition that is so important to the Porsche community as a whole.

In essence, anniversaries are all about recognition- the cars, the young, the old,

the glories of the past and the promise of the future. As your region enters into an anniversary year, your board should consider and plan for how it wants to fete the accomplishments of the region, its members and their families. This issue of Regionfocus is a loosely constructed guide for staging a successful Anniversary event. The operative word is loose, because no single region has the recipe for the correct way to stage these events. Every region is different, and anniversary celebrations should reflect the style, culture and traditions of the individual region

Here are a few things to think about as you are getting ready to organize your event.

### **Form an Anniversary Committee**

A milestone anniversary event is no small affair. The sheer magnitude of it can easily overwhelm an individual attempting to pull together the location, displays, cars, banquet details, decorations, collection of historic materials, and invitations. Planning

### **FROM THE EDITOR**

As PCA looks to its 60th anniversary in 2015, many of our regions are now celebrating historic milestones that are no less significant or impressive. For a Region to attain 20, 30, 40, 50 or more years of Porsche fellowship means that several generations of enthusiasts have selflessly given of their time and energy to sustain and nurture the organization to its present standing. Indeed, the Porsche car may be the tie that binds us all, but it is the membership's commitment to the club and to one another that has enabled the growth and success of any region- both in its past and for its future. Region anniversary celebrations recognize these longstanding commitments and friendships, and are probably one of the more important ways a region can give back to its membership.

So here we go.

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should start at least one year out for significant milestone events. Region boards are best advised to appoint a committee to handle the myriad tasks and details that these affairs require to accomplish if they are to be successful. A committee chair that leads a well-staffed cadre of volunteers for each of the tasks will make the entire process flow smoothly. More importantly, a committee is inclusive- a region wants to plan and celebrate its history with everyone on board and everyone contributing in some way. It is really the only way a region can hope to capture all of that history, invite all the right cars, and invite all the personalities that made its history so much fun and interesting. Suggestions for how this committee may look:

**Chair(s):** Oversees all of the tasks and manages the timeline to completion. Responsible for cost, schedule, and execution of the event. The chair will probably be the guy or gal who puts together the overall concept and budget for approval by the region. He/she will also establish the agenda and concept for the banquet/dinner that fetes the region's history.

**Registrar:** Manages the registration data base and payments for all members, guests, and owners of cars that have RSVP'd to the event.

**Invitation Chair:** Sometimes an additional responsibility of the registrar (although not recommended), the invitation chair has the difficult job of

finding the contact information for all past leaders of the club and inviting them to attend the celebration. The invitation chair, like the registrar, should be a 'people person' who will be sympathetic to the special needs and requirements of older PCAers who come- sometimes at great expense and distance- to this event.

#### **Car Show/Concours/Historic Display**

**Chair:** Most Porsche club anniversary celebrations have some kind of car show, concours d'elegance or historic car display associated with the event. (We are a car club, after all.) Your region concours chairman or a designated car show event chair should invite special cars to the event and/or run the car show. If multiple events are contemplated, the region might want to consider having a historic chair, a car show chair, and/or a concours chair.

**Banquets Coordinator:** Anniversary celebrations are centered around a car event and a meal. One region that celebrated its 50th not too long ago chose to have a simple birthday cake at a track event, but someone had to handle the details of that cake! The banquet coordinator is the region's interface to the banquet facility and catering company, working in conjunction with the registrar for head count, the AV guy for presentation requirements, and with the region's historian for displays/presentation of region history.

**Region Historian:** Anniversary celebrations put the region historian

in the spotlight. This is the year he/she earns his/her pay, rolls out the archives, and creates tasteful, representative displays of the region's history. Very often, a region historian will assist in preparing an anniversary program or provide historical copy to the newsletter editor. If your region does not have an historian, you are already behind the power curve as an organization. See Regionfocus Volume 19, Number 2, entitled *Region Archives: An Historian's View* for details.



**Oral Historian/Interviewer:** This person seeks out founding members and gathers stories to either record in written form or in video form or both. It's always interesting to hear the stories of how people got their first cars, how they found new friends, and what their impressions are of club activities over the years. These anecdotes can be printed in the newsletter, on the Region



Website or shown as part of your video presentations during a reception.

**Region Newsletter Editor:** Resources old newsletter articles and photos to assist in providing information and copy for the archive displays or program/yearbook. Very often, a region newsletter editor will produce a commemorative anniversary edition of the newsletter in conjunction with the celebrations. Some region editors run historical features, reprints of historical articles from past newsletters, and other anniversary content for the entire anniversary year.

**Anniversary Program/Yearbook Editor:** An ambitious undertaking that can be quite expensive, the yearbook is essentially a compilation of the history of the region. Some regions like Kansas city and Connecticut Valley have created beautiful hardbound yearbooks at considerable cost for their 50th Anniversaries They were very well received by the membership. Other regions may choose to do a more modest program for the event itself that is a snapshot of the region for that date in time. This type of program outlines the agenda for the evening with some added significant historical footnotes. Whatever your region chooses to do for its celebration, this will require one or two dedicated people working a half year or more on research, resourcing the archives for documentation and photographs, and publishing this for the day of the event.

**Emcee:** If you are having a dinner where awards, recognition and history are intertwined and embellished, designate an emcee for the evening. Someone who in the region who speaks well in front of people should handle this very important responsibility- the Event Chair or a board member may qualify, but you want a stand-up person who has a sense of humor and enjoys working a crowd. The emcee should work closely with the overall event chair in building a flowing program agenda for the evening.



## Develop a Concept

The concept for the event is a matter of region tradition, taste, budget and scheduling. There is no right or wrong answers for how and when your region wants to conduct an anniversary celebration. Pick a special location that will facilitate a memorable event and support the necessary logistics for your region's cars and people. If it's at a hotel or resort, ensure the site's management

will work with you on parking/staging cars in and around the facility and permit signage.

Remember, too, that anniversary parties don't have to occur on the date the region received its charter. Select a date that's most convenient to the most members and a concept will be the most conducive for getting cars out of their garages. If you need an excuse for a party, look for a time of year on the region calendar that's traditionally open. Or, if you know that a certain region event will attract the most numbers of people, hold the Anniversary party in conjunction with that event, but make it extraordinary with an Anniversary theme and events. Region anniversaries are all about special people, great cars and good food.

## Options to Consider for your Anniversary Concept

**Car show/concours:** Some sort of car show or concours is almost de rigeur for an anniversary celebration concept. People love to gather at these affairs and talk cars, and probably a low key car show vice a full up concours would be more appropriate. The more you make the show attractive with special venues or unique displays of cars, the more likely your members will come out in numbers and bring their cars to display. Kansas City Region hit a home run with its 50th Anniversary car show at the World War I Memorial, a spectacular location that truly made



the gathering special. Even if your region's cars aren't all garage-queens or concours winners, every Porsche is beautiful in one way or another. So at the very least, be sure to have a special parking area for members' cars whether you're having an evening or daytime event.

**Historic Car Display:** Having historic cars on display at an anniversary event will truly make it memorable and unique. Porsche Parade historic displays are always popular, and your region display can be the centerpiece of your event. Depending on your region's size, you might try to display an appropriate car for every anniversary year at a car show or concours, or you might just look for a six to a dozen truly special cars to display as backdrops for the event, if available. Consider arranging to have a car-model for every year of existence of the Region, parked in order. Be sure to have each car identified clearly, with an anecdote about how the owner got the car, what was happening historically during its year of introduction and what was going on in the Region that year. Use your members' anecdotes and stories as a way to tie the car year and model to the history of your Region. If you're staging an elegant evening banquet, arrange to have some of the finer examples of club members' cars in parked in the banquet room, in the lobby, or in the walkway leading to the banquet.

**Parade:** A parade of Porsches is part of the club's tradition, and although

in recent years the national Porsche Parades have not held them as part of the schedule (Savannah's will be the first since Hershey in 2005.), a local club Parade is a lot of fun. Recently Peachstate and Heart of Dixie Regions had marvelous turnouts for their respective Parades on their 50th Anniversary Day.

**The Good Old Days:** Some regions enjoy bringing back the good old days as part of the day's celebration. For its 55th Anniversary celebration at golf country club, Potomac Region did a gymkhana in the club's small parking lot adjacent that tested a couple's skills at performing various balancing acts and sporting skills- all the while negotiating the course for time.

**Formal evening banquet:** For this type of event you might choose a special location in a posh hotel, or in an automotive museum that will allow for bringing in a few special cars as decorative backdrops. An evening banquet is an event unto itself. They demand great attention to detail and are typically expensive. If your region enjoys these sorts of soirees, you will probably want to plan for a cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres, champagne, a sophisticated menu, possibly an anniversary cake, et al. Keep in mind that many of the finer banquet locations book as early as a year out. Contact the banquet planner early in the process to lock in your date. Determine how many kinds & what choices of meals



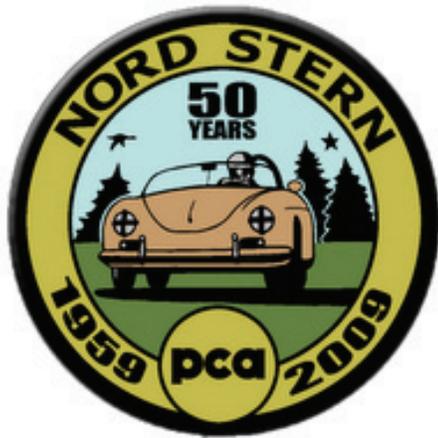
will be available. Include this in your advertising of the event.

Know when you must turn in final numbers of attendees/meals to the hotel or restaurant, and plan your cutoff date for the event accordingly. There will always be people who ask to sign up after the cutoff date, so be prepared for this. Most hotels can accommodate a FEW late signups, but this must be arranged with the restaurant. Don't just assume you can add them to the attendance.

**Club birthday picnic:** Club picnics at a park large enough to have a show and shine of members' cars can be a lot of fun, especially if facilities include activities for families. A club picnic is a far different approach than an evening banquet. Less formal and expensive than an evening banquet, picnics are family affairs that can create good experiences and memories for the region kids who will someday be



PCA members themselves. The region anniversary committee has great flexibility at picnics for meal choices- the event can be pot luck or catered for far less than at a restaurant or banquet facility. Music is optional, but some kind of PA system will be necessary for everyone to hear what's going on.



## Budget

An anniversary should be memorable, but it should also be affordable- you don't want to break the Region's bank. More importantly, an anniversary event should not exclude most members from participating due to prohibitive cost.

At least six months before the event, develop a realistic budget for the Anniversary event with full involvement of the Region board, Submit a budget to the board for approval as soon as the concept is refined and a location and menu are proposed. Detail all costs, to include banquet fees, region subsidies,

promotional items, the cost of mailing invitations, et al. Factor safety margins- your budget should be as comprehensive as possible, but Murphy's Law can change or escalate costs.

Meet with the board on a periodic basis so that they are updated on the event.

The banquet venue will be your largest bill and will have the most significant impact on your budget. Almost all banquet venues will require your region to sign a contract and provide a deposit to secure the location for the event. Coordinate with the Board and the Club Treasurer before you do so as part of the approval process. Be mindful that taxes, gratuities and service charges- typically 25-30% of a meal cost- can quickly make a \$50 meal a prohibitive \$85 night out-per person. Unless your region has deep pockets, an open bar is unaffordable. Go with a cash bar. Remember: a banquet is only as good as its attractiveness to the region membership. If too ornate and too expensive, you will lose your average member, which should be your cost target. Not the guy who has his own private jet.

To offset costs, run more than one event for your anniversary and obtain a multi event subsidy through your zone rep from PCA National. If your treasury can support, your Region may want to subsidize portions of the event, with the goal to defray the cost of participating and increase attendance.

Any subsidy should be coordinated with and approved by the Board.

## Getting the Word Out

Having a well crafted publicity campaign to hype the event can make or break its success. Assigning an individual or pair of members to get the word out early and to invite past officers and members of days gone are imperatives for any anniversary event. Use every communications means at your disposal to publicize the event and encourage the participation of members. Hand-held devices, smartphones, e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter have made getting the word out so much easier and faster than the days of phone calls and snail mail. Provide enough lead time for Region members to calendar the date several months before the event so they can make travel plans. Judiciously remind your members on a regular - though not obnoxious- basis so that it doesn't drop from their view. Rather than using the same statement over and over again, create new ways of describing the event, possibly emphasizing a different aspect of the event in each release (i.e. it's family nature, it's emphasis on historical displays, meet the former Presidents/Zone Rep/EC members, see historic cars, display your car in the car-coral, enjoy a night/day in a special location, etc.)

Advertise in the newsletter and on



the website starting as soon as a year ahead of time. Be sure the event is on the website in a prominent place. Use the PCA region emailer program to create reminders for you membership. Some regions choose to use post cards or schedule reminders, but if you choose to go this route, factor in mailing costs as part of your budget. If you invite neighboring Regions, use the PCA National Website, Porsche Panorama, and your Zone's website above and beyond region newsletters and websites to publicize the details of your event. Provide "camera-ready" ads for newsletters, if appropriate. If your club uses Club Registration or Motorsportreg.com, get the event listed early so that people can start registering and sending in payments.

**Invite Zone Reps, Executive Council Members:** To make your event that much more official and special, invite PCA senior leadership to your event. Invite your Zone Rep to give a brief talk at the celebration. Often times Zone Reps have a historic or social perspective on a region's role in the Zone. Certainly, a Zone Rep has a different insight into the region than a region board member. Similarly, having an PCA Executive Council (EC) member attend lends an air of pomp and circumstance to the affair. Far from being muckety mucks, all PCA Zone Reps and EC members are grass roots officers who have risen to the present positions from regions such

as yours. Almost all of them have been Region Presidents and can appreciate the importance of your anniversary event to your members and to the greater club. All are enthusiasts at heart, and all are interested in the welfare of your region. Zone Reps have more flexibility to travel to your event, simply because they live close by. As a courtesy to the EC who may not reside in your area of the country, coordinate with Vu Nguyen, the National Executive Director, to schedule EC attendance at least three months before the event.

**Invite all of your Past Presidents to the event.** It provides a sense of status and continuity to see a Regions leadership from its inception to the present. Similarly, if there are local businesses who have been constant supporters over the years, it's a good time to pay tribute to them and show appreciation for their support.



### Community News and Information

Have your club secretary or information officer send an article to your local paper to mark the anniversary. Be sure to note its beginnings and the community work

the Region has done, whether it was raising funds for a community charity or picking up trash on a stretch of highway or delivering meals on wheels. A newspaper article at anniversary time can both educate the community about the "people" nature of the club as well as generate new members. Include your anniversary logo on all press releases.

**Proclamation:** For significant anniversaries, designate someone to contact your state's governor or senior official for an official proclamation for his/her office acknowledging the club's longevity and contribution to the local community.

### Possible Activities and Displays for an Anniversary Party Venue

Historical Region Memorabilia Display: This is a great opportunity for the Club Historian to pull together and display newsletters, posters, photos, trophies, and other memorabilia from yesteryear in a single place to remind veteran members about days gone by as well as to educate newer members of their legacy. If the region has accumulated special awards over the course of your history, you may want to proudly display them

**Back in the day display:** A retrospective on what was going on in the world during the year of the Region's founding is always interesting..



Who was president? Who were the celebrities? What was going on in the world of sports? Which movies were popular? And so on. Putting the years of the region in historical context is a great way to frame the photographs and stories within their time. You might want to create a separate display of historical artifacts (magazines, unusual automotive items from the era) or an adjunct display for the region's memorabilia using this technique.

**Region Anniversary Program/Agenda.** For your banquet or event, you'll want to provide a program and/or an agenda for the evening. This book can be its own time capsule using much of the documentation from the 'back in the day' display. It may document in bulletized form what the region did in each year or collectively across all of the years. During the Regions 30, 40, or 50 years, how many autocrosses has it put on? How many socials? How many tours? How many rallies? How many concours? How many show-and-shines? How many issues of a newsletter? How many club officers has it had? How many volunteers have helped out? We all know that it takes a lot of work to put on events, but when you look at the sheer numbers of events over time, the picture of dedication and hard work becomes even clearer.

**Running DVD:** DVDs have replaced slides shows of yore, and scanning old videos, photos and slides into a running DVD presentation is a great way to reflect

the various activities of your Region through the years. If done well, it will be an unending source of entertainment to your membership during the evening banquet. If you have a fest tent for your car show, it can perform the same function- giving people a chance to rest in the shade. DVD histories bring out what's great about your region- but they do take a tremendous commitment in time and energy. A dedicated person or team will need to be somewhat persistent in obtaining photos and videos from fellow members to produce this montage. It requires months of work and a special talent to transpose the right background music over the photos.

**PCA flags, badges, Region Logo:** An anniversary celebration is a great place to reinforce the image of your Region and the PCA. Signs, banners, and posters are a great way to generate and maintain enthusiasm for the Region for years to come. There is a variety of PCA logo material available these days from PCA National to decorate your anniversary venue. Graphics and convention-supply companies can create all kinds of promo-materials using your Region's logo. If they are generic in nature, they may be able to be used over at another event. If not, they make nice door prizes, garage decorations, or even decor for your kids' or grandkids' rooms.

### At the Banquet

**Event Tickets:** Print tickets for meal

selections and raffle drawings for your door prizes. If you have a hospitality chair or registration desk for the event, issue tickets as part of your goodie bag or in envelopes to be obtained at the door. If your event is a picnic, you may want to include any raffle or door prize tickets in a registration envelope, or just hand them out as people come through the gate, although having everything organized ahead of time allows for better control.

Ensure you coordinate your meal color codes with the wait staff. They'll need to know what to look for when they're serving a vegetarian meal, for example. A picture of a Boxster does not necessarily mean Salmon to servers!



**Decoration of the Venue:** The hotel/restaurant may decorate for the event, but check and make sure who will supply what. If they don't – you need to add this into your budget. Also, you may want to consider overlays (runners, contrasting tablecloths, etc.) for the tables. For an anniversary event, a



special decor is almost mandatory to make the membership appreciate the special nature of the event.



An optional but nice touch is to have a small item, such as a Region and/or PCA flag or other promotional piece at each place setting for people to take as a remembrance of the event. If you do this, don't forget to budget for the cost.

#### **Name tags, with join dates on them:**

In PCA we often use our name tags, but for a special Anniversary event have your members annotate their dates of membership to reflect their standing in the region and their commitment to the club.

**VIPs:** You may want to "Reserve" a table or two near the podium for your speakers, past presidents, emcee, etc. Keep in mind that the Executive Council and Zone Reps typically like to sit with the membership. The days when a dais and head tables dominated PCA events are gone.

**Audio-Visual:** Ensure you have an audio system for announcements and your program of speakers. If you have a DJ or band, they usually let you borrow their equipment for such things. Restaurants/hotels can usually provide this, but at a cost. Whatever the case, arrive early enough to assemble and test equipment. A dedicated A-V chair will be an invaluable member of your committee.

**Agenda:** Develop a detailed agenda with our emcee and stick to it! It is very easy for anniversary banquets to unravel into long-winded affairs wherein your attendees start losing patience with too many speeches, too many videos, or too many door prizes. A tight agenda in which speakers are limited to certain times and your committee is in control of the evening works best. Remember, the emcee is running your show, and he/she should be fully aware of all presentations and speeches on your agenda. Similarly, he should acknowledge in some way or fashion special dignitaries such as former club presidents, senior members, Zone Reps, or PCA Executive Staff members. But the bottom line is the job of the emcee is to keep to the agenda and make the trains run on time.

**Door Prizes:** Door prizes should be part of your agenda, not an afterthought. Have the emcee coordinate with the Door Prize Chair (if appropriate) for drawing prizes in a manner that will retain an appropriate level of drama and surprise and that will keep your

audience interested. Door prize giveaways should contribute to the flow and energy of the event, not detract from the event. Nor should they become tedious or artificially extend the length of the event. Save your grand prize for the end to cap off the evening.

**Stand-up sit down:** A grand custom at Parade, use this to your advantage at your region's anniversary banquet. Have everyone in the room stand and then count down by years who has the greatest longevity. As each year is counted down towards your anniversary year, only those members whose longevity permits still stand. It's an impressive way to show and pay tribute to your longest and most dedicated members in a social setting.

**History of charity work:** Charity work is one of the best things we do. PCA members are incredibly generous with time and money when it comes to giving back to their communities. It's often hard work, but it also provides a sense of satisfaction that we're being something more than hedonistic, that we can use our lovely cars to generate interest in something that goes beyond ourselves and serves our community at large. An anniversary is a good time to remind ourselves of how many man-hours we've dedicated and how many dollars we've donated to charity work. Giving the membership a pat on the back for doing something good often leads to even more interest and more activity.



**Tribute to past-presidents, other figures, long time sponsors and supporters:** The Anniversary celebrations are a great time to pay tribute to those people and businesses who have supported the Region over time. Have all the presidents come forward to receive the plaudits of the crowd.



**Speeches and Salutations:** Unless you have booked the hotel through the wee hours of the morning, your region simply can't have everyone who has been anyone speak at the banquet. Set aside a portion of the event for members to tell their stories to the audience. But rather than having an open mike night, request four or five speakers- no more- address certain topics or times of the region. Some regions have asked a president or past officer to speak about one of the region's decades. If the region has turned 50, that's five speakers-plus whatever awards, door prizes, and shenanigans the region has planned for the evening. The key is to use your time and your speakers wisely, limiting most

to five or ten minutes at best. The current Board President will usually speak, and he /she may have recognitions and/or awards to hand out- so build that into your evening agenda.

**Music / DJ::** Music is always enjoyable during a banquet. If having a DJ makes sense for what your region wants out of the evening (background music and dancing, perhaps), then retain someone that will fit your budget. But DJs and bands should not be considered mandatory for these types of events. After all, it's about the cars, people, and Region. Sometimes music can be distracting and constrains conversation.

## Lessons Learned

**Why just a day? Why not the whole year?** A 30th, 40th, or 50th Anniversary is a milestone. Why limit your celebration to one day or evening? Certainly a special occasion "brings out the stars," but be sure to include your anniversary milestone year near the top of your website or at the top of the cover-page or title page of your newsletter throughout the year.

**Don't try to do too much for your signature event.** Trying to do much in one day will make the event seemed too long, too harried and disorganized. Set reasonable goals for your event without trying to make the affair all things to all people. Typically, a nice car show and a memorable meal with a few good speakers will make the entire day worthwhile and satisfying to everyone. Remember, people have to drive to and from the event. And

they have to get babysitters or factor other time demands upon their personal time. An evening event should be four hours at most, including a cocktail hour and good-byes. A family picnic could be longer, if there are enough activities to maintain interest throughout the day.

**Charity:** In these days when so many people need help, doing some sort of charity activity might be worth considering. That said, a charity fund raiser bears careful planning, because a region's anniversary is not about charities, it's about your people and your history. Introducing a charity fund raising aspect to the event could dilute your original intent for the celebration and wind up hurting contributions in the long run to the charity itself. In most cases, raising money for a charity at an anniversary event is a bridge too far. If you're going to include your Region charity in the event, you'll want to advertise early. If it's an organization that you've worked with for many years, you may want to invite its principle/manager or even some members of its board to the event to talk about your long association.

**Community support:** Work with your city or town's chamber of commerce for deals on hotels, tours and information. A good chamber will provide maps, coupons, discounts on services, et al, that fill a goodie bag and add to the charm of the event.

**Accomodations:** Many people will enjoy your evening- perhaps to the point where they'll want to stay over for the night. For these folks and your out of town guests, arrange a block of rooms with special room

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rates. Provide hotel contact information to guests in the registration process. Avoid if at all possible financially

obligating the region via a hotel contract to a block of rooms. The arrangement with the hotel should be free and clear.

## Conclusion

After you have considered all of these details, keep in mind that a Region Anniversary event should be fun for all those involved. Your anniversary committee faces the challenge of organizing details, inviting the right guests, gathering and displaying historical materials, arranging logistics and parking of historical cars. But at the end of the day, an Anniversary event

should be enjoyable for all who are involved. Remember our credo- "It's not the cars, it's the people" who kept us going strong for almost 60 years!

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