

Staying in the Zone

by Sean Cridland

**article as printed in Porsche Panorama
magazine April 2011, p. 42**

circulation: approximately 100,00

PORSCHE PANORAMA

APRIL 2011



PORSCHE PANORAMA

APRIL 2011 • VOL. 56 • NO. 4

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The new 911 GT2 RS takes its place as the most powerful of the 911 line. Porsche werkfoto.

PORSCHE PANORAMA (ISSN 0147-3565) is published monthly by the Porsche Club of America, Inc., 9689 Gerwig Lane, Suite 4C/D, Columbia, MD 21046. Periodicals postage paid at Columbia, MD, and additional offices. PCA membership dues are \$46 for one year, \$90 for two years or \$132 for three years. Dues include \$7.00 per year for an annual subscription to PORSCHE PANORAMA. Postmaster: Send address change to PORSCHE PANORAMA, PCA Executive Office, PO Box 6400, Columbia, MD 21045. Copyright ©2011 by the Porsche Club of America, Inc., all rights reserved.



With regions stretching from the Bonneville Salt Flats to the Big Bend of the Rio Grande, Zone 9 attaches special significance to their annual meeting

Almost every PCA member knows that we're the largest single-marque independent sports car club in the world. With over 100,000 members and 139 regions in the United States and Canada, we're a club that's on the move and makes a large statement. Of course, it's also well known that the PCA motto is "It's not just the cars, but the people." A lesser known fact by many PCA members is that those 139 regions are divided into geographic areas called zones, of which there are 13. Some of the coastal zones have population densities high enough and distances short enough between them that regions interact at zone events on

a regular basis. Zones 1, 2, 7, and 8 readily come to mind in that category. But other PCA zones are large enough and geographically spread wide enough that members rarely interact with regions other than their own and may not even be aware that such things as zones exist. Certainly that has been the case with Zone 9, which is comprised of seven regions: Intermountain, Rocky Mountain, Alpine Mountain, Roadrunner, Carrera, Llano Estacado, and West Texas. The distances between the centers of population for these regions is a minimum of three hours and in some cases a six hour drive. Zone 9 stretches from the Bonneville Salt Flats to the Big Bend of the Rio Grande and would take one



Zone 9 participants concluded their weekend of meetings with a tour of the Chaparral wing of the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum.

JOHN DAVIS

Staying in the Zone

BY SEAN CRIDLAND

Steve Krysil from Porsche Cars North America gave a presentation on what's going on at Porsche, including scoop on the exciting 918 RSR prototype.



JOHN DAVIS

At West Texas Region's 30th anniversary dinner, charters, plaques and recognition awards are proudly displayed.



PCA National Secretary Caren Cooper was on hand to provide support and share knowledge with the Zone 9 presidents and editors.

very long day to drive from end to end. Hence, it is one of those zones in which the regions only interact as a group once a year at the annual meeting for presidents, newsletter editors, and webmasters.

Traditionally the Zone 9 meeting had been held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, thought to be about equally inconvenient for everyone. But when I brought up the notion of zone "consciousness" at the 2010 edition of the meeting, the various region presidents said: "Let's start moving it around the zone." A beautiful and elegantly simple idea! A drawing was held and the West Texas Region emerged as the first host in this new system. I couldn't have been happier. West Texas is one of those regions that has struggled for participation for a couple of reasons. One is that it has no

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Porsche dealer. Hence many of its members probably have more of an affinity to the Dallas-based Maverick Region than their own because they service their cars there. The other is that its already small population is split between Midland and Lubbock, which are about 100 miles from one another. It's hard to get full participation at evening socials, driving tours, or even autocrosses when half the population has to drive two hours just to get to an event.

There are always ways to overcome difficulties and sometimes being thrown into the fire is one of the best ways to get things moving. Once West Texas Region was named as host for the 2011 Zone 9 Meeting, they started rallying their forces. One of the first things on any list of meeting logistics is finding a suitable location. Midland, while no one's idea of a resort town, has one very shiny bright spot for any motorhead's fancy: the Jim Hall Chaparral wing of the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum. The zone meeting would be only a few feet from the full collection of Jim Hall's ground-breaking, trend-setting technological marvels of speed. That alone was enticement for region officials to attend a meeting a long way from home.

But for me, that wasn't enough. I knew that the WTR would need an extra boost to get things moving with the local folks as well. So early in 2010 I started lobbying with both Porsche Cars North America and with the PCA Executive Council to send representatives. I wanted this meeting to be a special one for everyone. Both were immediately forthcoming and enthusiastic. Porsche AG Club Coordination Manager Paul Gregor arranged for PCNA's Steve Krysil to attend. The always friendly and effervescently enthusiastic PCA National Secretary Caren Cooper quickly volunteered as well.

In the meantime, West Texas Region, now with many-year web-master Robert Harrington at its helm as president, quickly swung into action and volunteers started coming forward. Relatively new members Ed and Dana Runyan offered their beautiful home for the opening night social, which became a grand affair, setting a high standard for other zone meeting hosts to follow. The visiting dignitaries of regional leadership from around the zone were welcomed with Texas-sized hospitality. Enthusiasm was already high for Saturday's meeting.

For those of you who don't know what happens at a zone meeting, here are some of the details. A zone meeting is a combination of a retreat, a procedures seminar, and a forum for sharing knowledge. First, it's an opportunity for the presidents, newsletter editors, and webmasters and/or their appointed representatives to meet and visit with their counterparts from other regions. As I mentioned earlier, in some of the coastal zones, this may be a regular occurrence, but for many of the inland zones, the zone meeting may be the only time they see each other the whole year. So

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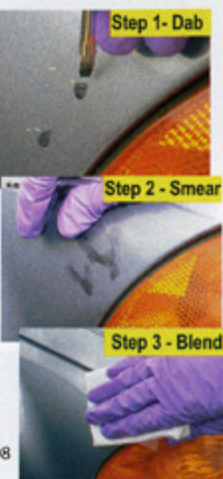
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it's an opportunity to get to know their counterparts and share stories about their experiences. Second, if you've never seen the Region Procedures Manual (RPM), it (along with the Parade Competition Rules) is the bible for how all PCA activities are carried out. As a member, you can access it online at the pca.org website. It's filled with history, procedural rules, forms, and other information and is the grounding for every activity at the regional, zone, and national level of PCA. At the zone meeting, we review the RPM and take the opportunity to remind ourselves of the various rules and regulations we need to follow to keep everything safe, fun, and insurable. In addition, many of our regions are quite expert at organizing various activities such as driving tours, autocrosses, HPDEs, concours, and socials. So the zone meeting gives opportunity for the experts to share their knowledge with the other regions trying to improve their game in those areas.

Often PCA Executive Council members or committee chairs are available for zone meeting attendance as well, either to give special presentations on a topic or simply to keep their finger on the pulse of the club at the regional and zone level. PCA secretary, avid club racer, psychology professor, and ebullient people-person Caren Cooper attended the 2011 Zone 9 meeting to bring everyone up to speed on what's new on the PCA national scene but also to field questions and hear the concerns of regions large and small. Caren attends many PCA events throughout the year and is a wealth of knowledge on all things PCA. So, as a zone rep, I'm always happy to have her nearby to answer any questions the regional representatives may have.

Porsche Cars North America's Steve Krysil gave a great presentation about current news, brand-application and licensing, and what may lie ahead for the cars we all love so much. He also had some great video presentations to wake us up during that mid-afternoon time when we all tend to doze off. As much as we believe that "It's not just the cars, but the

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people," sometimes it's *all* about the cars! And there's nothing like great racing footage and the sounds of various Porsche engines at full throttle to get us all going again! As a result, the Zone 9 participants came away from the day with a wealth of new knowledge, some good reminders of common practices and having made and renewed some great PCA friendships.

But I'd be cheating you if I told you we were only feet away from the famous Chaparral collection and didn't go look around. In fact, it was better than that. WTR President Robert Harrington was able to have Ronnie Low, caretaker and mechanic for the collection, give us a close-up, hands-on tour of all the Chaparral cars in existence with detailed mechanical descriptions of each vehicle, including the strengths and weaknesses of each one. In the 1960s, sports car endurance racing was dominated by Fords, Ferraris, and Porsches. The same was true in Can-Am by Team McLaren. But it was the Chaparral team that did the bulk of innovation during that time, each year introducing a radical element such as composite chassis, wings for downforce, automatic transmissions, ground effects, and body-lounging that would eventually show up on all the major marques and set the tone for racing-car technology for decades to come. The Zone 9 participants spent a very enjoyable two hours touring



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the museum and listening to Ronnie's insights about these legendary cars.

If that wasn't enough, at the evening social after the meeting, West Texas Region celebrated its 30th anniversary with a dinner for the meeting participants and WTR club members at the local Cattle Baron restaurant. Founding President Larry Goldston came down from Lubbock for the evening and brought the original framed charter from PCA and I presented them with copies of all the other documents that are archived in the PCA national office and a plaque commemorating the event. Caren Cooper presented the region with a large PCA flag to fly at all their events and reminded them that a 30 year anniversary meant 30 years of having events, 30 years of organizing, 30 years of volunteering, 30 years of newsletters, and on and on. A great reminder of what the members of PCA do every year across the United States and Canada to make our club the biggest and also the best single-marque car club in the world.

The 2011 Zone 9 meeting in Midland, Texas, showed that whether a region is large or small, the key to success really comes down to work, determination, friendship, camaraderie, and enthusiasm. West Texas Region stepped up the plate for the Zone 9 meeting and hit the ball out of the park, Texas-style. 🌟

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