

HISTORY OF THE MAUMEE VALLEY REGION

by Bill Bauman, MVR Historian

The Toledo area was fairly active in motorsports by 1972, with several sports car clubs operating for many years. With the exception of two Corvette clubs, these area clubs catered to anyone, regardless of what type of car was driven.

Early in March of 1972, many area Porsche owners received a letter from two individuals interested in starting a Porsche Club, namely, Roger Holliday, already a PCA member and co-founder of the Porsche Club of Great Britain, and Lynn Mesnard, enthusiast and Porsche owner. The letter stated that, due to the ever-increasing number of Porsches in the area, a Porsche Club was going to be formed, and an organizational meeting would be held on March 12, 1972, at the Porsche dealership, Will Dennis Inc. Everyone was invited to attend and give his or her ideas for club functions. The showroom was filled with interested Porsche owners, and at this first meeting, a slate of officers was elected consisting of the following: President, Roger Holliday; Vice-President, Bruce Tucker; Secretary, Lynn Mesnard; Treasurer, Bill Straley.

It was found that there were two people present who were already members of PCA, namely Dick Kruppa, then a member of the Mid-Ohio region and a member since 1966, and Bill Bauman, who had joined the Southeastern Michigan region in 1971.

The new officers and a few other enthusiastic Porsche owners gathered at the home of Lynn and Cheri Mesnard later to plan the course for the new club. Committee chairpersons were appointed and plans were made for some activities. Dick Kruppa was appointed Activities Chairman and Hans Friedebach volunteered to be Membership Chairman. The name "Maumee Valley" was agreed upon for the new club - thus making the fourth PCA region in Ohio. The name chosen for the newsletter was "Der Ruckspiegel", which means "rear view mirror" in German.

The boundaries desired for the region were selected and plans were made to contact the other neighboring regions, requesting them to relinquish the counties that were planned to make up the new region (at that time, regions were made up of counties). The selection of these counties was made by studying the marketing trends of the area. It was found that Toledo was the business center for the neighboring Michigan counties and also the main center of interest for Porsche owners.

The first official MVR activity was a fun rally on April 23, 1972, which ended with a smorgasbord dinner in Port Clinton, Ohio. After the dinner, a brief meeting was held at which Dick Kruppa was elected President to replace Roger Holiday, who had been assigned to Europe for several years by his company. Bill Bauman and Chuck Mekbel were elected Activities Co-Chairmen to replace Dick.

The first MVR newsletter came out in May 1972. Since the Region had no editor yet, this was a brief summary of past and future plans for the club, edited as a joint effort of the officers.

In May, two more Chairpersons were appointed: Jim Rawlins became Technical Chairman, and Becky Nowak volunteered to be newsletter editor.

On June 27, 1972, MVR became an officially chartered region in PCA with 45 members. The charter was presented at Oktoberfest '72 in Columbus.

MVR was active every month in 1972, hosting a tech session, a dinner meeting with a neighboring region, another rally, several autocrosses, a caravan and picnic, and a tour to the Can Am races at the Mid Ohio race track. The members also attended other region's events, such as the Oktoberfest weekend and two autocrosses at Indianapolis Raceway Park. One member went to the National Parade at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

New members were added almost every month and after only nine months in existence, MVR had grown to 68 members!

Elections for 1973 officers were held in November. The new slate of officers presented by the Board was as follows: President, Bill Bauman; Vice-President, Dan Kincaid; Secretary, Ann Vetter; Treasurer, Bill Straley.

Incidentally, membership dues were only \$18.00 a year back then!

A brief summary of the 1973-year includes the following:

- The region became incorporated in mid-January.

- A set of bylaws was drawn up and adopted.

- A regional logo and a car badge were designed and adopted.

- The Autocross Champion and Activities Awards were introduced.

- Three tech sessions were held, one on restoration, one on suspension and handling, and one was a new car showing at the dealership.

- Seven autocrosses were held, one of which was an open event that drew 49 entries.

- A tour was held in October and during the winter months there were dinner meetings at different restaurants.

- Membership increased steadily to almost eighty members in that first full year of existence.

The highlight of 1973 was being selected Region of the Year by National, an award which was presented at the Pocono Parade in 1974.

MVR had another active year in 1974. The main sport again was autocrosses, with an average of 20 cars each. Many members went to the Pocono Parade, and the region did very well in the competitive events there. It was especially enjoyable to have so many members of the region present when the Region of the Year award was presented! Mark Donohue was the special guest speaker at this Parade. MVR continued to grow, with 42 new members joining the region in 1974,

During 1975, several new ventures were undertaken. MVR, along with three other regions (Allegheny, Northern Ohio, and Southeastern Michigan) formed an Inter-Regional Autocross Championship (IRAC) series, in which each region would host one autocross in their area. Points would be accumulated at the end of the year, and the region with the most points would be the champion. This was in addition to individual awards being given out in each class at each event. The IRAC series generated much camaraderie and healthy rivalry among out-of-region friends, and was a great bonding agent for MVR's active people to grow in the sport. Forty entries were on hand for MVR's first IRAC event at the Municipal Airport course, the third event of the series.

1975 was the first year MVR hosted Oktoberfest. MVR had attended other Oktoberfests hosted by other regions prior to 1975, and found that these events were not well organized. Promotion for the events was not good, and most times a phone call to the host region had to be made just to get information about the event. MVR being young and enthusiastic, did their homework, planned and executed an Oktoberfest that prompted the regions hosting subsequent Oktoberfests to try and follow MVR's act. The 1975 Oktoberfest included a wine tasting and film party, a night TSD rally, in addition to the traditional Concours d'Elegance and the autocross event. It was truly a hard act to follow!

1975 was also a very competitive autocross year for MVR, with the regional championship not being decided until the very last event, and then being won by only two points! National membership dues were increased to \$24.00 that year.

The momentum carried into 1976, with autocrossing being the region's specialty. MVR won the IRAC series that year, and missed winning the Participation Award (for the most entrants) by only one point!

In 1977 the region finished second in the IRAC series, missing the championship by only three points and the participation award by only two points. Not bad for a small (but powerful) region, up against other regions two and three times its size!

It was toward the end of 1977 that the most active members began to get "burned out". The same people attended the club activities and it seemed impossible to generate new life into the region. Membership dropped way down to a low of thirty-nine and no matter what was attempted to remedy the situation, nothing seemed to work. This slump period lasted for about seven years. There was a glimmer of hope now and then when new people took over, but the region seemed to be barely existing.

During the 1984 year, things started to pick up again and in 1985, many new people got involved and were enthusiastic. The region was active, even though in small numbers. Membership grew steadily, with sixty-six members on record by the end of 1984, and eighty-six members by the end of 1985.

That trend seems to be holding to this day. The Maumee Valley Region as of this date seems to once again be healthy and active!