

A close-up photograph of a car's hood, showing the 'Boxster S' emblem in a stylized, cursive font. Two autumn leaves are placed on the hood: a brown, textured leaf on the left and a bright red leaf on the right. The hood is highly reflective, showing distorted reflections of trees and the sky. The car's body panels are a light blue color.

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PORSCHE

N O V E M B E R 2 0 2 5

Dedicated to the belief that . . . getting there is half the fun.

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Photo by Brian Lewis

It's that time of the year - Fall Foliage and Porsche go together like . . . fill in the blank

Nord Stern is the official monthly publication of the Nord Stern Region, PCA Inc. Articles herein are those of the author's and do not necessarily represent the official position of PCA, the Nord Stern Region, or their members.

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Online issues, past/present are available in pdf format at our website: <http://www.nordstern.org>

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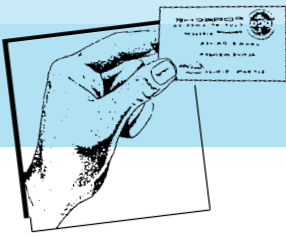


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Michael Steinberg



Addresses available upon request for chairperson/s or Board members,
email: editor@nordstern.org. Please note the copyright symbol in the email addresses MUST be replaced with the '@' symbol to function



WELCOME . . . *New (or Returning!) Nord Stern Members*

We hope to see you at upcoming events!

Jeremiah Johnson

Plymouth, MN

1998 Boxster

Steve Rosaaen

Ellsworth, WI

2001 911 Carrera

Peter Stone

Duluth, MN

2024 911 Carrera

Jeremy Wherley

Waconia, MN

2008 Boxster RS 60 Spyder

Brian Wistrom

Minneapolis, MN

2013 Boxster S

So, Just What Do We Do In Nord Stern??! *A brief synopsis of activities and events offered by your club, Nord Stern, and/or PCA or, just enough info to pique your interest??!!*

AUTOCROSS: A low-speed driving event teaches a person how to maneuver one's car through a course marked by pylons on a closed circuit. Instruction is often available, and drivers compete against the clock. No modifications to one's car are necessary. Helmet required.

CLUBTALK: This is an email-based list server for member subscribers focusing on car issues and discussions and a place to ask questions, get recommendations and comments. Also last minute breaking news on upcoming events and activities. Join Clubtalk at this link.

CAR SHOWS/CONCOURS: Members enjoy gathering and looking over a wide range of Porsche models, most nicely detailed to show them at their best. A generally informal and social setting.

- **All Porsche Show:** Nord Stern annually hosts the **All Porsche Show** in late June. One of the biggest events of the year, often with 200+ cars in attendance. A non-judged, "shine and show" event that attracts members and their families, along with prospective members.
- **Concours:** A setting where Porsches are displayed for general viewing and/or inspection, with competition in many distinct model categories. Experienced judges evaluate the various models based on cleanliness, overall condition, and authenticity.

DRIVES: An organized drive over a planned scenic route, usually to a meeting spot that offers food, beverages, and space to socialize. Venues rotate among popular destinations that offer good amenities for Porsche enthusiasts. Also referred to as 'Tours'.

DRIVER TRAINING (DT): A driver training course designed to teach and enhance high-speed driving skills and techniques on an actual race course. Training includes classroom sessions, on-track exercises, and supervised lapping sessions. Completion of "DT" is a Pre-Requisite for "DE" participation and is NOT to be confused with Driver Education events. Driver Training includes both Novice and Intermediate level options. A current Snell-rated helmet is required at a minimum.

DRIVER EDUCATION (DE): A high-speed driving event on a closed-course racetrack (Brainerd and Road America for example) where drivers are grouped according to prior experience and car capabilities. Lapping sessions allows our members to enjoy the full performance capabilities of their cars in a relatively safe, controlled environment. Instructors are generally available for novices. Prior Driver Training participation is required. A current Snell-rated helmet is required at a minimum.

PARADE LAPS: Typically held during lunch sessions at DT/DE/Club Racing events at closed-course racetracks, this controlled environment with a pace car provides participants an opportunity to take street cars on the track at highway speeds so that they can see what the course is like. Minors are permitted in state approved restraints and with a signed parental release.

PCA CLUB RACING: Wheel-to-wheel competition between drivers who hold PCA club racing licenses. There is a race class for every model Porsche. Safety modifications to your vehicle required. This national program is administrated and overseen by a volunteer, trained national staff. The PCA website has a full schedule of races and information. Prior race experience required and/or specific amount of Driver Education participation. Talk to our Chief Driving Instructor for further information.

RALLY: An event wherein a driver and co-driver complete a predetermined route along open roads following a specific set of navigational instructions. Can be a TDS (time-distance-speed) or a 'fun' rally. Social: Organized gatherings of club members, affiliates and family member to meet, eat, and socialize. Many different venues and activities are selected every year to bring members together.

TECH SESSIONS: Casual educational session spanning a wide range of topics from general maintenance, through Concours prep, performance enhancements, and general car/mechanical knowledge!

VOLUNTEERING: The club runs on volunteers! Meet fellow members AND get the most out of your membership. We exist because members volunteer their time and talents to plan and execute our many events. With NO paid staff, we depend entirely on volunteers to run our club and keep a calendar of interesting, well-planned activities. Whether its track events, social activities, tech, touring, tech sessions, car shows, or others, we have a place for you and many an opportunity to get involved. And we do have a lot of fun, join us!

Preparing for Your Track Day: A Thousand-Foot View

As we recently celebrated our year end at Buck Hill with our symbolic checkered flag party, I thought it would be fitting to offer some guidance to our members who are considering a venture onto the track. You may be a first timer or you may have a couple of weekends under your belt, yet are still learning how to make your track weekends safe and fun.

For many Nord Stern members, the thrill of taking your Porsche on track is a dream come true. Whether you're a seasoned driver or fresh from driver education training, the key to a successful and enjoyable track day comes down to preparation. Think of it as two checklists: one for your car, and one for yourself.

(Please understand, this is a brief review. Detailed check lists are available upon request . . .)

Car Readiness and Inspection

Before hitting the track, your Porsche should undergo a thorough tech inspection. Common items include checking tire tread depth, brake pad thickness, fluid levels, and ensuring that belts, hoses, and battery connections are secure. Don't forget torquing your wheel lugs to the correct spec. Be sure to schedule a tech inspection with a shop familiar with DE events—many offer “track techs”



specifically for this purpose - Porsche Dealerships, Auto Edge, Imola to name a few.

Essential Equipment

Driver education events require certain safety gear. At a minimum, you'll need an approved helmet (check the current Snell rating required for the event) and closed-toe, thin soled shoes, and prescription eyewear that fits into your helmet. Wear comfortable long pants or a race suit. Some events may also recommend gloves, but comfort and focus are your priorities. Make sure your car is empty of loose items—floor mats, water bottles, and sunglasses all need to be stowed away before you roll onto the grid.

Pre-Track Checklist

- Fill your fuel tank (track sessions burn fuel quickly).
- Set tire pressures appropriately—most drivers start slightly lower, knowing heat will increase pressure on track.
- Bring your driver wristband, helmet, and tech form, to registration.
- Check that your numbers are applied in the proper spots and visible.

Continued on page 8

Advertiser Directory 2025

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2025 Advertising Rates

Ad frequency x12

Full pg.	\$120, per month
1/2 pg.	\$85, per month
1/4 pg.	\$65, per month
1/8 pg.	\$55, per month
Inside Covers	\$130, per month (N/A)
Back cover	\$130, per month (N/A)
Business Card	\$55, per month

Ad sizes (maximum dimensions):

- Full page: 7.5" wide by 10.5" high
- 1/2 page: 7.5" wide by 5.25" high
- 1/4 page: 7.5" wide by 2.625" high; 4" wide by 5" high
- 1/8 page: 7.5" wide by 1.3" high; 4" wide by 2.5" high
- Back Cover: 8.5" by 7"

* All ads full color. Preferred formats include: hi-res pdf, High-res jpg, tif, Publisher, Word, most files can be accommodated

* 12 month pre-payment required for ad insertion, billed yearly

I thought for my column this month I'd post, shamelessly, a big kudos to the great committee who once again put together an engaging and fun Fall Color Tour! While perhaps the fall foliage wasn't a full riot, there was much to enjoy. Not the least of it being part of a long string of Porsches driving through Wisconsin hills and dales on our way to Lakewoods Resort on Lake Namakegon nestled in heavy woods. As noted by my significant other and I totally second his comments and couldn't put it better other than we also need to complement our Drives crew, **Rich Rolf, Chuck Barr, Jason Barney, Nick Severson:**

Another great fall color tour . . . Great welcoming party at the Kitchi Gammi Club (Thanks Cid and Jim Holton who are members), great drives (thanks Scott Wilson and Dennis Kruse), good food at Lakewoods Resort (the owner said he'd put in an order for clear skies and great weather!) and a final pizza party at Clyde Iron Works

Thanks to all the volunteer drive leaders, sweep drivers, etc and a particular thanks to Michelle and Jeff Eckroth and Gayle and Jim Southwell (Mr and Mrs super volunteers) for organizing everything and herding the cats!

We were particularly happy to see the number of first time participants plus long timers!

And my personal favorite car was the red '87 Carrera with Luft plates.



(editor's note: photos included in this issue and more to come!)

– Bruce A. Boeder

Porsche Design Unveils the Chronograph 1 – PCA Member Edition

Porsche Design honors the 70th anniversary of the Porsche Club of America with a new edition of the Chronograph 1. Exclusively made for a special community, PCA members now have the opportunity to customize Porsche Design's most iconic timepiece that was originally designed by F. A. Porsche in 1972.

Creating a special sense of community amongst members, this new timepiece features the PCA logo and "PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA" lettering, and optionally a personalized club region name stated on the case back. The made-to-order watch will not only come with a titanium bracelet, but also two sportive textile straps in vibrant Club Blau, one featuring the PCA logo and the other the PCA 70Y anniversary logo.

► Visit: pca.org/news/porsche-design-chronograph-1-pca-member-edition

PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

**HOW TO JOIN PCA AND THEN
NORD STERN REGION PCA**

1. First, JOIN Porsche Club of America (PCA). Please visit www.pca.org for membership instructions.

2. Second, join Nord Stern

- Visit www.nordstern.org and remit dues via Paypal hotlink on the Membership page.
- Or, send check, payable to Nord Stern, directly to the treasurer via the snail mail address below.
- Your membership information with PCA is available for our club's records.

3. To RENEW an existing Nord Stern membership

- Visit www.nordstern.org to pay via PayPal (<https://website.nordstern.org/membership/#JoinTheClub>).

- Or, send your check, payable to Nord Stern, to Scott via snail mail address - available upon request

Address Changes:

Please send any address changes or updates via email to membership@nordstern.org

Mail renewal checks to:

Scott Brown - email editor @ nordstern.org for address

Reminder: Annual Dues are:

\$40 per year (helps defray monthly newsletter costs!)

Nord Stern membership Options:

\$40 per year, or \$108 for three years

LIFE, \$30 per year includes magazine

New LIFE-time Members, \$40/year includes magazine

*** Check your mailing label for your expiration date**

NOVEMBER

4 Nord Stern Business Meeting *
Location: Location: Axel's in Roseville
RSVP to president@nordstern.org
- all are welcome

DECEMBER

2 Nord Stern Business Meeting *
Location: Spasso's in Minnetonka (101 & Mtka Blvd
RSVP to president@nordstern.org
- all are welcome

** Business Meetings are open to all Nord Stern members and we welcome all to join in and enjoy some refreshments and hear what's on tap, note that this year 2025 they are held the **FIRST TUESDAY** of the Month, September - May contact the president for locations, if not noted.*

LOCAL CAR EVENTS, OF INTEREST

These events are NOT organized, NOR sponsored by Nord Stern or PCA, but club members are cordially invited

• MN CARS AND COFFEE •

First Saturday of the month, May - October

• CAFFEINE and OCTANE

2nd Saturday of the month Medina Autoplex, April - October

• CARS AND CAVES •

Last Saturday at the Chanhassen Autoplex, 8 a.m. - Noon

***Please note: Nord Stern-sponsored events are officially designed 'Nord Stern' and/or PCA (Porsche Club of America) activities. Non-Nord Stern events of potential interest to our membership may be added, upon request, and dependent on space availability, to this calendar as a courtesy to the organizer, or an organizing entity, and strictly at the discretion of the editor or Nord Stern president.*

Any event date/s that conflict with a Nord Stern-sponsored event will NOT be published in any official Nord Stern communications.

Good to Know!

H

ad a good question come in today and thought I would share it with the group.

It was asked, *"How can I find the email addresses for the Nord Stern domain on Google, is there a master directory?"*

We have two types of accounts:

1. Physical accounts with their own email address
2. Alias email accounts, using Google Groups, which forward to a set of external emails.

You can easily find both by looking here:

1. Accounts: <https://contacts.google.com/directory>
2. Aliases: <https://groups.google.com/all-groups>

2025 Prez Sez . . .

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Beyond the Car

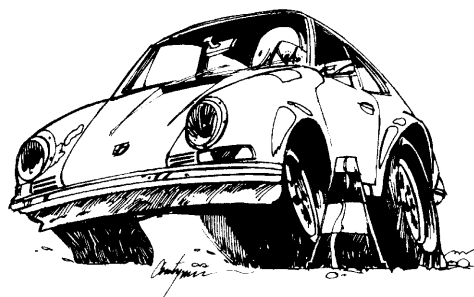
Track days are as much about personal readiness as car readiness. Pack water, sunscreen, snacks, and comfortable clothing for the paddock. Folding chairs, a hat, and a cooler will make your day more enjoyable. Most importantly, arrive rested—alertness and hydration are as vital to performance as horsepower.

Mindset and Best Practices

Approach your first track day with patience and curiosity. The goal is not lap records, but learning how your car behaves at speed in a safe, controlled environment. Listen to your instructors, ask questions, and respect the flags. By preparing thoughtfully, you'll reduce stress and maximize fun.

Track days are the heart of our club's driving experience. With the right preparation, your Porsche—and you—will be ready to take on the challenge.

Cheers!
Prez Steve



by Dave Anderson



This is Jim.
Jim set a new personal record of 192 Smiles Per Hour.
You too can be like Jim.
Join us in 2026.



Photo courtesy of Stan Lim



info@spdactiontravel.com
www.spdactiontravel.com

Scenes from 2025 FIRST FLING

photo by Elveden Trnjanin

Elveden has lots of photos from the track, contact him as he's more than willing to share! etrnjanin@gmail.com.

Get Your Member Badge!

- We want to get to know you!
- Show your Nord Stern pride: Magnetic and Lanyard styles available
- Members, Affiliates, Juniors, Significant Others, order your badge(s) on the Store tab on the club website: Badges feature our Nord Stern logo, your first and last name, and a "personalization line"



**AT JDC-MILLER MOTORSPORTS, SAVAGE MN
SEPTEMBER 4, 2025**

**KUDOS TO THE ORGANIZERS AND TO JDC-MILLER
MOTORSPORTS!**

Thank you to Porsche Minneapolis and Porsche St. Paul for putting on this event. Great work Allie Pepin for organizing it all. Thanks to John and Katie Church for hosting this incredible event and to all the shop guys for an amazing cleaning job. When I walked in this morning, I felt like I needed to go back out to the car and get my sunglasses!

Of course, we are here for a great cause. This event kicks off our “LOVE RACING. STOP CANCER.” effort in support of Children’s Cancer Awareness month. (Yes, you can get the t-shirt for a donation!) Great job, Katie Cummings and the



rest of the St. Jude crew who are here. Make a \$250 or \$500 donation and we will put a sticker on the Porsche 963 for a 6-hour 200 mph ride at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. (editor’s note: It’s great to see the collaboration between JDC and St. Jude - truly in the spirit, too, of Nord Stern over the years supporting non-profits with the mantra of ‘using our Porsche passion and playtime to include support for various worthy causes!’



Hybrid and 918 Session Notes

Porsche has a long history of building on past development efforts, improving them, and applying earlier work to new projects. Clear examples include the 918 and 963, as well as arguably the new 911 GTS t-hybrid.

Our story here starts back in 2004-2005, when Porsche decided to return to prototype racing. They chose to enter the LMP2 class rather than compete with the dominant Audis in LMP1. This effort led to the 2006 RS Spyder. They developed a full carbon fiber monocoque and, after reviewing their current engine lineup and the rules for 2006, decided to build an all-new 3.4-liter naturally aspirated racing engine. The RS Spyder program was a huge success. It dominated the LMP2 class until 2010, securing several



overall race wins. The party ended when the FIA imposed a cost cap of €400,000 on LMP2 cars for 2011, and the \$2 million RS Spyder was sidelined.

The next part of our story tonight is the 918 supercar. It was developed as the RS Spyder program was winding down. Porsche aimed to create a supercar to showcase its hybrid technology and compete with the Ferrari LaFerrari and McLaren P1. For the 918, Porsche again chose a full carbon fiber chassis and an upgraded version of the RS Spyder V-8 for the fossil fuel part of the powertrain. The upgraded engine was enlarged to 4.6 liters and received new cylinder heads that flipped the intake to the outside of the “V” and the exhaust inside the “V.” This produced the glorious exhaust pipes on top of the car you see here. It produces 608 horsepower with a 9150 rpm redline. The engine has proven to be bulletproof in its street application in the 918.

The 918 hybrid system is highly advanced. It features a rear MGU (motor generator unit) that drives the car and charges the battery. A second electric motor powers the front axle and is linked to other drive components only by wires. There are ‘decouplers’ connected to sophisticated controllers that regulate how power is distributed to each axle. The hybrid power adds 279 horsepower, bringing the total horsepower of the car to 887. With the “hot V” top exhaust system, it sounds unlike any other hybrid. Top speed is over 210 mph.

In 2014-2015, 918 cars were built, with 300 coming to the US. We are fortunate that Porsche Minneapolis sold 4, and this is one of them. The base price was \$845,000, with options such as the Weissach package at \$89,000; most ended up costing close to \$1 million. Today, you can’t buy one for \$2 million.

Moving on to the next part of our story, this is the Porsche 963 “hypercar” you see here. For the 2023 season, the FIA introduced a set of rules for global sports car racing that highlighted hybrid technology. To keep costs down, they developed a common hybrid system. All the manufacturers would use the same MGU, housed



in a shared Xtrac transaxle, with a uniform 800-volt battery, and identical controlling hardware and software.

Manufacturers were free to develop their cars around four chassis: Dallara, Oreca, Ligier, or, in the case of our 963, Multimatic. While the hybrid system is common, the choice of engine was quite flexible. Here’s where our story continues. For the 963, Porsche dusted off the engine from the 918, added two turbochargers to the hot V, tweaked a few things, and now we are here. The race engine, which became a street engine, is now a race engine again.

This hybrid system is highly advanced and a crucial part of how the car operates. The rules include energy management for both liquid fuel and electricity. Teams and drivers control their energy use to meet a target for each stint during the race. The MGU and battery technology enable the battery to recharge very quickly, topping off the battery literally in seconds.

The 2025 911 GTS t-hybrid is the latest version of Porsche’s hybrid system. It closely resembles the 963 in function. It also features

the MGU in the bell housing, with electric power passing through the PDK transmission. The MGU is smaller than the race version because it doesn’t need the high regen capability required for racing. It operates at 400 volts, whereas the 963 uses 800 volts. The hybrid system adds up to 53 hp, bringing the GTS’s total output to 532 hp. What immediately stands out when driving the GTS is how discreet the hybrid system is. A passenger would never realize the car is a hybrid. Unlike the other two models, this hybrid cannot be driven solely by the MGU.

Brake-by-wire is a key feature in all three of these cars, as well as in the Le Mans-winning Porsche 919 LMP1 race car, and it posed a significant engineering challenge, especially in the 963, where maximum and highly controlled braking is essential. In all three cars, the MGU provides regenerative braking, slowing the vehicle while converting kinetic energy into electrical energy. This regenerative braking works alongside conventional hydraulic brakes. The major technical challenge is that the rate of MGU regeneration is not linear, so the amount of hydraulic brake pressure needed for maximum braking is also nonlinear. A highly sophisticated controller is used to balance these two systems, giving the driver the brake pedal feel they are used to.

What’s missing in all three of these cars? Starter and alternator. The MGU provides both functions.

So there you have it, amazing technology that transferred from race car to road car and back again.

Now, At the Track (INDY!) With the JDC 963

In conjunction with JDC Miller Motorsports’ association with the St. Jude organization, Hadley (cancer survivor) was their St. Jude patient kid, aka ambassador, at the Indy race. Hadley helps put a face to the fundraising efforts by St. Jude - and by all accounts she does it with panache and charm. All the folks in the group photo are her extended patient family; mom, dad, uncles, grandparents. (page 25) Roger said he was a little nervous about such a large group, but that they were great, and Hadley loved the cars, drivers, mechanics,



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1st Grand Prize: A stunning 2026 Porsche 911 GTS + \$35,000 cash

2nd Grand Prize: A sleek 2026 Porsche 911 Carrera + \$35,000 cash

Fall 2025 Member-Only Raffle Now Open!

The wait is over! The Porsche Club of America is thrilled to kick off the Fall 2025 Member-Only Raffle, your exclusive shot at driving home a brand-new Porsche and pocketing a massive cash prize. The raffle is open and runs until December 12, 2025.

Don't wait. Every ticket you purchase boosts your chances of claiming one of these dream prizes. Log in and click the link above to enter and secure your chance at winning a piece of Porsche perfection. Drive. Dream. Win. Good luck, members!

More information: pca.org/news/fall-2025-raffle



PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA



Was it really time for the Fall Color Tour? Following a very busy Nord Stern summer schedule with Drives, the All Porsche Show, Loonacy Weekend, and Fall Fling, October did arrive and with it one of the club's favorite events. Those in the know signed up early, and some lucky members were added from the waitlist, bringing the total to forty-five cars and nearly ninety participants.

Chaired by **Jeff Eckroth** and **Michelle Weber-Eckroth**, participants gathered at the Pier B Hotel in Duluth, within sight of

the famous Lift Bridge. The Pier B is a great location, with waterfront views and easy access to the Saturday drive route. First, though, the Kitchi Gammi Club welcomed everyone Friday evening for a reception, drinks, and hors d'oeuvres to fortify ourselves for the next day's adventure - and to allow everyone to get acquainted. Friends new and old shared stories and anticipation of the drive ahead.

Saturday rolled out with a bit of fog for our 8:15AM driver's meeting, but we knew it wouldn't last. **Rich Rolfs** and **Chuck Barr** gave the basic instructions, and route designers **Scott Wilson** and **Dennis Kruse** gave us the intel on any "pay attention" spots on the route. We knew we would be encountering traffic for the Bayfield Apple Festival and the usual enforcement. Divided into three groups, we hit the road at 8:30AM.

The first leg, after a quick "gather up" stop at a roadside rest area, covered sixty-six miles on Hwy. 2, mostly four-lane with now sunny skies. The destination was the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, which offered spacious parking but NO restrooms, as the Center was closed. No problem, about eight cars made a quick pit stop just up the road and quickly rejoined. This leg mostly got the group close to the real driving action, which came in the second and third stints.

Stage Two took us on two-lane county highways and the scenery really perked up. The Chequamegon-Nicolet

National Forest provided Maple, Oak, Birch, and an evergreen backdrop to delight our visual experience. The colors were good, if a bit dry looking. All the while, we enjoyed warm temps that hit 90 degrees along the route. Forty-nine miles from the start, the Lakewoods Resort beckoned, with a waiting buffet lunch. Everyone was hungry, and when Group Two arrived, we found Group One already seated enjoying the chicken, pasta, grilled vegetables, soup and salad. I can only assume Group Three got fed, as I had my eyes on the delicious carrot cake for dessert. Not our first time at Lakewoods, and the staff greeted us warmly. Afterwards, we gathered out front and took a group photo with the 70th Anniversary PCA banner. There were a lot of us!



On to Stage Three, where we were promised the best scenery and roads, and it didn't disappoint. A thick, colorful canopy enshrouded the tour, and the Southwell's fell in behind the Cirillo's, followed by the Drakuliche's, all in Turbos. Nick kept up a good pace, and in the spirit of maintaining tight gaps, we pressed on. There were many interesting cars on the tour, all the way from a long-hood 911S Targa to a 992 GT3 RS, with a few Macans, Cayennes, and even an Audi TT Roadster for variety. It's a big tent, you know? Destination: Cornucopia, WI, right on Siskiwit Bay and Lake Superior. Now, Cornucopia Beach is just past the boat storage area at this stop, but no one went swimming, more likely some of the group bought the smoked fish on offer at the fishery. Luckily, the winds were not as high as last year, and no one reported being sandblasted.

Time to move on to the Fourth Stage, a sixty-eight-mile jaunt back to the Pier B. Somehow your author became tour

Annual Nord Stern Elections are coming soon!

courtesy Tom Sabow, Secretary

It's that time of the year for elections for Leadership positions in Nord Stern. This year we will be electing a President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Secretary Tom Sabow's two year term will end in December 2026. The Slate of Candidates is as follows:

- President: Derek Laumbach
- Vice President: Scott Quick
- Treasurer: Scott Mallory

Electronic ballots will be available on October 15th, with notification via PCA enews email. Primary and Family Active

members are both eligible to vote. Voting will end on October 31st (Halloween!) and results will be posted by November 15th.

Any protests of the results should be communicated to secretary@nordstern.org by November 22nd and will be resolved by December 1st, with final results.

Please be watching your incoming email for PCA enews around this subject!



www.nordstern.org

VOTE

TIME TO VOTE

- **President: Derek Laumbach**
- **Vice President: Scott Quick**
- **Treasurer: Scott Mallory**

Electronic Voting opens 10.15.2025



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The Photographer gets Photographed!

photo by Tom Karn

A fun shot of Michael Steinberg working on a photograph project with Tom Karn! It isn't often that we can 'catch' Michael in an action shot! Thanks, Tom, for sending in YOUR photograph of one of Nord Stern's favorite photographers!



The 'New' Year is just around the corner! Dues will be due for 2026 - Renewal notice will be Digital so 'mark your calendar!'

by Your Membership Team

Wondering if your dues are expiring? Check your mailing 'label' on the back of the Nord Stern newsletter and you will see a 4 digit year (2025, 2026, etc) or a specific category (like 'Life' or 'Adv' or 'Comp') which will let you know where you stand! Dues are remaining the same - see page 7 for details and 'how to renew.'

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

2026 Nord Stern Dues!
\$40 1-yr or \$108 for 3-yr
Life \$30 1-yr



Renew to keep receiving your newsletter!



<https://website.nordstern.org/membership/#JoinTheClub>



The Hills Are Alive . . .

Being a member of Nord Stern allows contact with some very interesting people. One of these being Kris Skellenger, one of our Driver Training instructors. Besides this part of Kris' hobby, he runs a few automotive-related businesses, including SPD Action Travel. SPD offers a number of European tours, mostly centered on enthusiast sites such as prominent races, museums, factory tours, and adrenaline inducing driving tours. Add in some cultural and historic elements, and you have offerings appealing to both driver and passenger.



Kris and Corinne Skellenger lead the Tour.

My family active member and I signed on early for SPD's Alpine Drive, scheduled for late July. "We're not getting any younger" was Gayle's quick response when I proposed the idea in January. The itinerary looked great, including a visit to Stuttgart and the Porsche Museum, and driving our choice of Porsches through Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland. The driving would be among the most revered Alpine passes any enthusiast knows: Grossglockner, Stelvio, Furka, and more. This was no trip down I-35 to Des Moines!

The cool thing was, this tour was being marketed primarily to Nord Stern members, so we would know many of the people involved. "It's the people!" Most Porsche models were available, and we'd be picking them up right at the Museum.

Fourteen Nord Sterners signed up, and all arrived at the Le Meridien hotel in Stuttgart on Monday, July 28. We met in the hotel bar to get acquainted and share final details of the tour. The next day we bused to the Porsche Museum for a visit and pick up our rentals from Porsche Drive. Most models were available up to GT models.



One by one, seven Porsches came up from the underground parking and were parked on the forecourt of the Museum. Five 911s and two Panameras would fit the bill for the fourteen members and Kris and copilot/spouse Corinne.



At the Museum, '71 Le Mans winner.

We were supplied with Google Maps downloads, which went right to the cars' main screen via CarPlay, and Kris would lead the tour. Leaving the Museum, the first leg would include autobahn mileage (ask Tom Sabow) and first stop, Ruf Automobile. Here we were greeted by a well-spoken Californian, Scott, who showed us around the sales office



Alois Ruf made time for our group.

and led us on a tour of the whole campus. Ruf is located in Pfaffenhäusen, right on a roundabout, the buildings spread around the perimeter. We visited the upholstery, engine, paint and bodywork areas, and finally the main assembly shop. Ruf builds thirty cars a year, all bespoke, and two techs are assigned to each car as it moves along. The car looks like a G-body 911, moderate flairs and a ducktail. Under the skin is a tube framed chassis with a robust carbon fiber “tub” for the passengers. Turbo engine, A-arm suspension and rocker actuated shocks. Top speed 198mph where “driving resistance and engine power are in balance”. Good enough for me. Alois Ruf made an appearance and posed with us for a group photo. Nice! Next, dinner and on to Salzburg.

The Kaiserhof Hotel outside Salzburg was our first overnight accommodation. Modestly sized, clean, we all hit the rack right away after a long day, and to be ready for breakfast and checkout by 8:30AM. This set the tone for the trip, every hotel had a great breakfast buffet, and we hit the road. A short drive took us to Berchtesgaden, and the shuttle to Kehlsteinhaus, the “Eagles Nest”, atop a major promontory.



The Kehlsteinhaus, the “Eagles Nest”.

This is where German leadership strategized for WWII and recreated among themselves. The Allies captured this site in May, 1945, and it has been a major tourist site since 1952. Historic displays depict what went on and do not candy coat the activities or results. Most of the group enjoyed lunch on the patio and explored the vicinity, enjoying spectacular views.

So, we had driven into Austria, back into Germany for Berchtesgaden, and then back into Austria to drive the Grossglockner High Alpine Road. Yes, it’s beautiful in Austria, nice roads, and the sound of flat six power carried us on. Alpine driving includes bicycles, motorcycles, cars,

trucks, and tour buses. All claiming their piece of the narrow road and with more speed differential than an IMSA race at Daytona. Both my hands were on the wheel and attention was high. The road to the top of any of these passes are a constant series of switchbacks, which for me involved downshifting to second and then going up to third and fourth before repeating. I kept the car in “Sport” mode which included the sport exhaust, and followed Kris’ line. The guy can wheel a car.



Tom Sabow and Stan Lim ready to depart the Gribelehof.

Every pass has some sort of restaurant or small hotel at the top, even multiples. A person does appreciate some refreshment after a spirited drive, and we partook. Often we arranged the cars for a group photo, and likewise the participants. Now, since we all had the map to the day’s destination, we were allowed to drive off on our own for special sightseeing. Don’t need refreshment? Drive back down twenty kilometers or so and race back up! The top



8: The road to the Stelvio Pass

of the Grossglockner, above the tree line, was shrouded in clouds with the highest peaks poking through, very atmospheric. Soak it up and then head to the Gasthof Gribelehof for the night. On the way, we stopped in Zell Am See, home of the Porsche family vacation home, for a little

Continued on page 21

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Alpine . . .

continued from page 19

R & R. We spotted a few civic buildings with the Porsche name, the only obvious evidence.



The Boeders enjoy the Miramonti Park Hotel.

The Gribelhof was, again, a smaller hotel on a hillside property. A chapel graced the grounds, and the hotel was decorated with religious artifacts. Quite interesting, and I was on my best behavior for the evening. Before dinner, I roamed around with my camera taking it all in. Dinner was on their patio, and we enjoyed the crisp air and local beers. I noticed that the Gribelhof seemed a notch better than the Kaiserhof, certainly a better location. This became a daily occurrence to me, better hotels at each succeeding stop. Wunderbar!

Moving on to Italy, there was a distinct carryover of Austrian architecture and names in the very north. The mountains, the Dolomites, had a different look to them than the Alps we had seen so far. Craggier, less vegetation at the top, and composed largely of limestone and dolomite rock, many WWII battles occurred on this terrain. Hiking and skiing are the main recreational pursuits. That, and winding out a 911! A happy circumstance was realized even before this point. My co-pilot Gayle was not suffering from the usual motion sickness from the energetic driving. Credit that to a “Relief Band” and prescription patch, ask her about it when you see her. (

The tour used two phone apps to make things easy. WhatsApp for text communication and map downloads to the group, and Zello, used as a “walkie-talkie” while on the road. Happily, use of WhatsApp has continued within the group

even after the tour has been over, as people post photos and commentary.

On Friday, August 1, we headed to the Stelvio Pass. I had wanted to drive this pass since missing the chance ten years ago due to weather. Snow in May at the top is a regular occurrence, and that was my timing. This time, we had rain early in the day, lifting as we began the ascent. As the Southwells were usually in the second car on the tour due to spotty data from T-Mobile, we saw a lot of the bumper of Kris and Corinne’s car. Kris had told me to ride his bumper if I wanted to go faster, and I used the Stelvio for that purpose. Kris rose to the occasion, and we raced upwards through about six switchbacks, second, third, fourth gears, downshifting for each new climb. Great fun as the traffic allowed for it. Other times, we’d be followed by small groups of motorcycles, and Kris would wave them by, adding to the excitement. This was not Hennepin County!



Cobblestone roadway to the Gotthard Pass.

At the top, there were a few restaurants and small hotels, and we repaired to the Genziana Hotel for lunch. Outside, the weather caught up, and heavy winds and rain ensued, scattering the motorcyclists and bicyclists who sought shelter. We enjoyed our lunch and then hung by the lobby fireplace to keep warm. Grappa, anyone? Once it cleared, the souvenir stands beckoned and commerce happened, no tariffs. The descent to Bormio went smoothly and the weather cleared. The Miramonti Park Hotel beckoned, and dinner

in the old town area capped the day.

Everyone on the tour took lots of photos, but none more than Stan Lim. Stan partnered with Tom Sabow in a Carrera S Cabrio, and when not driving, Stan was seen kneeling on the seat, taking shots of the following cars, or hanging around the passenger side. A pillar capturing those in front. His big honking Nikon did the job, maybe we’ll see more in the Dropbox folder? The other great thing is that we were a very compatible group, everyone enjoyed the company that group lunches provided and the chance to share our touring adventures.

Saturday we drove the two and a half hours to Lake Como via Strada Statale 38. The Gist and Wieneke families went straight to Mennagio in their Panameras, to allow access to Bellagio and other attractions, while the other half arrived at Hotel Tullio in Gravedona ed Uniti for a relaxing afternoon at the pool and lunch on the patio. After the

pool, Gayle and I walked into the town and explored a bit, then joined a larger group for dinner near the hotel. Life was good! We had a lovely room at ground level, and the bartender introduced me to a fine gin.

On to Switzerland and more mountain driving. Sunday would include three passes: Gotthard, Furka, and Grimsel. The Gotthard, at 6,909 feet, was partly cobblestone, so cornering speeds dropped a bit. The real star, for me, was the Furka Pass, as I had seen photos of the abandoned Belvedere

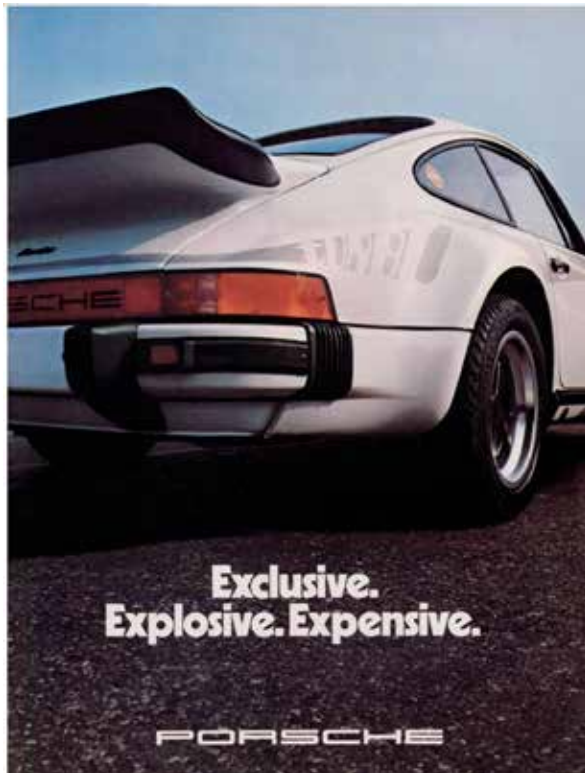
Continued on page 24

Happy 930 Day . . . A few words about the original 911 Turbo

To fully understand the significance of the Porsche 911 Turbo Carrera (930), you need a bit of context: The OPEC oil embargo of 1973-74 was like the comet that killed the dinosaurs. In almost an instant, we went from abundant, cheap gasoline to shortages and fuel that was twice as expensive. It ushered in what the automotive



site *Jalopnik* termed “The Malaise Era,” a decade when increasing emissions standards and a greater need for fuel efficiency combined to all but kill performance cars in North America. The 930 stood as a beacon, an anomaly, a throwback to the tire-smoking 1960s and a giant middle-finger to The Malaise Era.



Porsche wasn't the first to use turbocharging to force-feed induction and multiply horsepower. Aircraft in WW2 used both exhaust-fed and mechanical turbo and superchargers



to increase high-altitude performance, and GM dabbled with turbocharging in the 1960s, but their engineering was crude, lacking fuel-injection, a true waste-gate, or an intercooler. Porsche truly seemed to crack the code with the 917/30, a truly monstrous Can Am race car powered by a twin-turbocharged 5.4-liter flat-12 that made well over 1,000 horsepower. Along with PDK, practical and efficient turbocharging is probably the greatest gift bestowed on Porsche's civilian cars by its racing program. Club Technical Director Manny Alban adds: “It's worth remembering that the 930 was built to satisfy FIA Group 4 and eventually Group 5 racing. If it wasn't for the 930 production car, we wouldn't have had the famous Martini 934 and 935.”

Later tea-tray spoiler with room to fit the intercooler.

The very first 930s weren't fully developed, and the initial run of 1975 model year cars didn't come to the U.S. While they're collectible today, the early 3.0-liter cars are easily identified by their smaller brakes and puny 15-inch wheels shod with old-school Pirelli CN36s in place of the 16s and P7s that came in 1976. *Car and Driver* was appropriately



impressed by its first 1976 test car, calling it a rocket that needed to be treated with extreme respect, capable of delivering performance figures not seen since the 1960s. For the record, *Car and Driver*, which had a reputation for being hard on press cars, then got their 930 to go from 0-60 in 4.9 seconds and 13.5 through the quarter-mile at 103 miles per hour. Although the term “F around and find out” wasn’t around then, those without the requisite skill or good sense to treat the car with respect found out to their detriment that the car would bite back. It developed a reputation as somewhat of a plastic surgeon and pro athlete killer, although in truth, the highest-profile accident, the fatal crash involving Philadelphia Flyers goalie Pelle Lindbergh, was due more to alcohol than the 930’s tricky handling.

Amazingly, the first series of 930s (1975-77) didn’t come with an intercooler. This was added in 1978 when the 3.3-liter engine was introduced, and the US model name changed to 911 Turbo, dropping

Carrera. For the record, only the original 1975-77 rear spoiler can properly be called a “whale tail.” (Later spoilers were “Tea Trays.”) Sadly, North American buyers only got the improved 3.3-liter car for two model years (1978 and 1979). The Turbo was gone from the U.S. and Canada by 1980. The demand for gray-market cars made Porsche rethink this and the G-body Turbo came back from 1986-1989 (with Cabriolet and Targa body styles) and many of the 3.2-liter Carrera-style improvements to things like ventilation and other details. 1989 cars are the most desirable. The final model year is when Porsche engineers finally figured out how to make a 5-speed transaxle that could stand up to the Turbo’s power and torque. Whether you call it by its original moniker, the Turbo Carrera, by its project number (930), or simply “Turbo,” it’s easily one of the most charismatic Porsches of all time.

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Below: The Belvedere Hotel on the Furka Pass



Hotel many times on the web. At 7,969 feet it was the highest we hit on the whole trip. Everyone wants photos of the Belvedere, as it was the backdrop of some footage in the movie “Goldfinger”. You can look it up on YouTube, where you’ll see a sequence where James Bond shadows Goldfinger and is then shot at by a woman in a Mustang. Next, the famous scene where Bond’s extended wheel knockoff lacerates her tires and side panels. “Some kind of defect” Bond offers. I wonder if Sondewunsch can make this mod to a modern 911? The Rhone glacier is adjacent to the pass, much diminished in the last century. On to the Grimsel Pass, at 7,100 feet.

Our destination for the night was the Grand Hotel Geissbach at Lake Brienz, a one hundred fifty year old hotel placed high above the lake. This was the only “old school” hotel we visited, and it was quite the place. The long history runs through several owners and the rise and fall of Swiss and world history. Closed several times, it was resurrected by a coalition wishing to save what became acknowledged as a heritage site, and returned to glory. The natural beauty of the site, with a 1k meter waterfall and a funicular that descends to Lake Brienz set it apart. As it is a bit isolated, our entire group enjoyed a four course meal in the elegant dining room, at which we celebrated Kris’ birthday. A great night! (pic above)

stout, at 7,461 feet, but the Klausen I found more interesting as it had been the site of the Klausenpass Rennen Hillclimb, starting one hundred years ago. All the names of the era competed on the unpaved surface, including Tazio Nuvolari, who was pictured on the wall of our lunch stop at the peak. And I indulged in an over the top strudel for dessert. Nice!

That afternoon, we headed to our last stop, the Belvoir Hotel above Lake Zurich. Most of the group took a side trip to Lichtenstein, drove through the first city, and looped back. The Belvoir was a gem, very modern and great service. Unfortunately, the bar was closed for remodeling. Make a note for next year.

Tuesday, our final day on the road. This



Pat Scherven and Gayle ready to return to Stuttgart.

Lake Brienz. This was a favorite for many in our group, and we stopped to take in the grandeur of the mountains and the hang gliders that launched from them. On to the Susten and Klausen passes. The Susten was

Zurich, and on to the autobahn for the run to Stuttgart. The 992 Porsches display the posted speed limits for any given area on

continued from page 11

organizers and in return they couldn't resist her enthusiasm. The family toured the museum and the pagoda which Roger had never been in. What an experience and opportunity. Precious was Roger's description of this delightful child - and that sure shines through in the photos!

As an added bit of fun: not surprisingly, driver names on the car are highly regulated in the rules. Font, size, flags, etc. We got permission to put Hadley on the car, so we did both doors with her name above the regular driver's. However, during a driver change practice, Driver Nico Muller broke part of the door. While we had another door, it didn't have Hadley on it. So, the solution was to have Hadley write her own name on the car. It was perfect!



Photos Above R - L: The gang on the podium, Hadley's handwritten signature on the JDC car, Hadley printing out her name, author enjoys a fun moment 'on the podium' which am sure was quite exciting, and Hadley takes her position for opening ceremonies!



P.S. Roger also mentioned that they sent care package of some stuff from the race, including the wrap off the car with the driver names on it mounted on a piece of aluminum. It was addressed to Hadley and a pretty big box. The grandpa told him last weekend that when it arrived, Brittany, the mom, couldn't stand it and opened it up before Hadley came home from school and then re-taped it backup for Hadley to open!

And how did they do? Qualifying 12th in a very competitive IMSA GTP, to an 8th place finish at in the challenging 6-hour Battle on the Bricks at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Alpine . . .

continued from page 24

the video screen dash, and our Zello phone apps allowed car to car communication. Kris kindly announced the “unlimited” sections, and most were eager to stretch it out a bit. The three lead cars cruised at 140mph for about ten minutes, and the others were not far behind. I got my money’s worth from the rental.

Back at the Porsche Museum to turn in the cars. The Museum had been very busy over the time of our tour, as it was holiday season in Europe and special programs invited students to visit the Museum. Parking the cars in the lower level ramp, we were checked in and the cars examined for any damage. Just as thoroughly as on departure. We came away unscathed, but had to pay an overage for excess mileage. Worth it! We lunched again at the Boxenstopp café before heading back to the Le Meridien hotel and flights home.

What a trip! We enjoyed a creatively curated tour, the camaraderie of our fellow travelers, great food and accommodations, and the thrill of driving a Porsche on scenic and challenging roads. Our idea of a great time!

photos on this page by Christie Boeder



6 out of the 7 Porsches on our Alpine Tour! Just another spot with incredible scenery.



Did Jim mention all the wonderful food we enjoyed?! After all, it was a major workout cranking our P-cars around all those switchbacks!



Look closely as that’s Stan Lim in the red 911 hanging out taking many a wonderful photo - and no, he doesn’t have his seatbelt on!



Street art in Lichtenstein to prove that we did add a 5th country to our itinerary and yes, it is small!



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Color Tour '25 . . .

continued from page 14

leader at this point, I think Derek Laumbach was happy to roll in second position, and we headed out. In the past, the fourth leg has been sometimes “drive on your own” with no leader. I have enjoyed this, as it allows me a chance to do some two-lane passing, rare for this Metro guy. Now, I was leading the pack, and the twelve cars in our line were behind a conga line of eight vehicles, led by a pickup towing a travel trailer. Best just to hang back and enjoy the Brule River State Forest and views of a chilly Lake Superior.

Arriving at the Pier B, we expected a few people to gather in the bar and swap impressions of the tour, but most headed to their rooms to rest a bit and get ready for the evening. Final stop, the Clyde Iron Works, a re-imagined industrial site/ event center/brewery that serves up some

tasty pizza to go with the beer. This was all part of the FCT plan, extend the event and give members a chance to connect and develop the camaraderie that keeps the club alive. This was well attended, including a contingent from Fargo-Moorhead and new members David and Stacey Reed. The encouraging part for me was seeing our younger contingent (most everyone is younger than me) end up closing the party down, with a group of ten or so laughing, sharing stories and generally enjoying themselves at a high level. Good to see!

So, there you have it, two hundred sixty miles of driving, three meals shared together, fine roads and beautiful scenery, all in

the glory of driving our Porsches. Friends made, plans for the next event, smiles all around. No wonder this event fills up so quickly every year!

Photo below: Tom Wilbur, Jay Hilden, Sarah Hanson, and Derek Prchal admire Tom’s ‘72 T. Tom had no trouble keeping up with the rest of the group with this lightweight air cooled car.



Attendees:

- Derek Laumbach, Andy Golfis, Roger Johnson, Jason Barney, Tom Sabow, Scott Quick, Todd Smith, Tom Karn, Jim Southwell, Judi Sievers, Andy Barker, John Blackburn, Paul Thai, Gary Amendola, John Velure, Scott Mallory, Pat Scherven, Ben Rogers, Kris Skellenger, Molly Nygaard

Call to Order:

- Meeting called to order by Derek Laumbach at 6:33p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

President, Steve Albers:

- no report

Vice President, Derek Laumbach

- No report

Treasurer, Scott Brown

- No report

Secretary, Tom Sabow

- Election timeline reviewed for 2026 officer positions
- Information is published in this issue of Nord Stern

Board of Directors, Steve Kemp, Tom Karn, Jeff Eckroth

- Bylaws will be voted on in an upcoming election

Advertising, Mollie Nygaard

- Renewal notices will be sent out be next week. Two of our current advertisers are still delinquent

All Porsche Show, Phil Saari and Jim Southwell

- No report

Autocross, Andy Golfis

- DCTC may be repaved for 2026

Club Race, John Velure

- July 25-26, 2026

Dealer Relations: Roger Johnson, Steve Albers, Tom Karn, Jeff Eckroth

- JDC/St. Jude event: despite rain raised some good money
- At St. Jude Gala: Nord Stern received a nice shout-out for our fundraising efforts

Driver Education, John Blackburn

- Reviewed survey results
- 2026 track dates:

- April 25-26 BIR First Fling
- June 22-23 Road America (aka Cheese Fling)
- July 25-26 BIR Loonacy and DE
- Sept. 19-20 BIR Last Fling

Driver Training, Ben Rogers, Scott Brown

- 9 students for Fall Fling
- Thank you, Auto Edge, for sponsorship!

Drives, Touring, Chuck Barr, Rich Rolf, Nick Severson, Jason Barney

- On the docket for 2026 will be the following drives: Vino in the Valley, 45th Parallel, and possibly a PCA style photo rally tour

Fall Color Tour, Jeff Eckroth

- No report (follow up article and photos in this issue)

Historic Archives, Roger Johnson

- No report

Insurance, Jeff Carlson

- No report

Membership, Carolyn Veno & Michael Steinberg, Amanda Zander

- No report

Newsmagazine, Christie Boeder

- Keep sending notes and photos, much appreciated

Nominating Committee

- No report

Photography, Michael Steinberg

- No report (check this issue for a shot of this Nord Stern photographer of note)

Registrar, Andy Barker

- No report

Safety, Paul Thai, Tom Sabow, Gary Amendola

- Snell 2015 helmet expiration is extended out to June of 2026

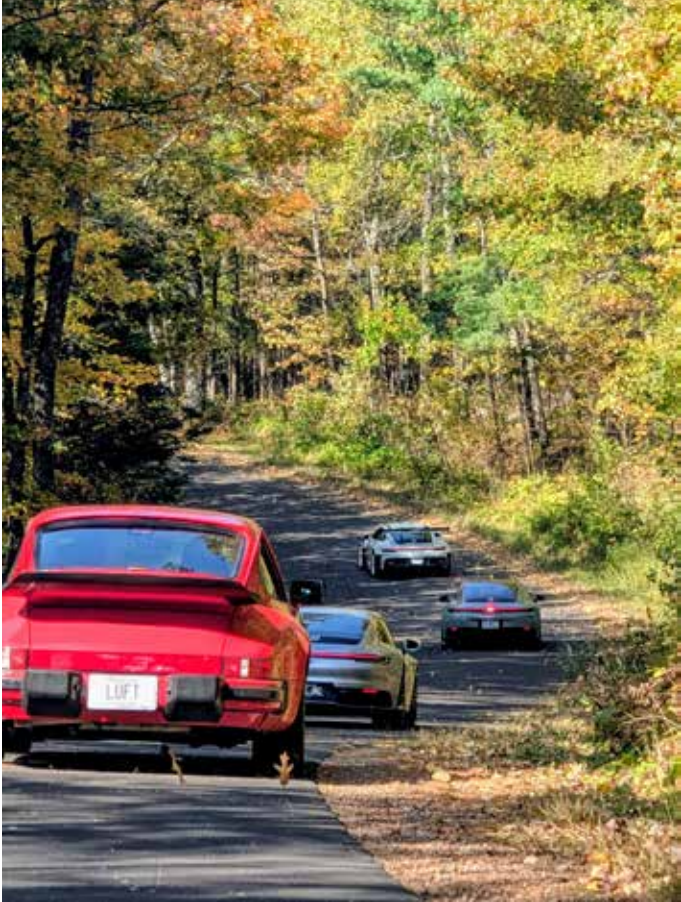
Social, Karen Laumbach

- Checkered Flag Party was held at Buck Hill on Saturday, October 11th, 39 registered with a total attendance of 60 members.

Smartly Through the Woods . . . Fall Color Tour '25

photos by Sarah Hanson

Editor's note: I loved this series of photos from first-time FCT participant Sarah, it truly was magical to wind up, down, around and kick up the swirling fall foliage! Thank you, Sarah, for sharing and capturing the essence of these fall color tours.



Members of the region are welcome to place ads of a non-commercial nature at no charge for two months. \$10 for non-members. Submissions must be received by the 15th of the month prior to publication date: editor@nordstern.org.

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each rim. P285 30ZR18, P245 35ZR18. Two of each. \$1000 for set, not including shipping. Good condition inside and out. For details, contact Perry Parendo, 651-230-3861 or perry_par2002@yahoo.com

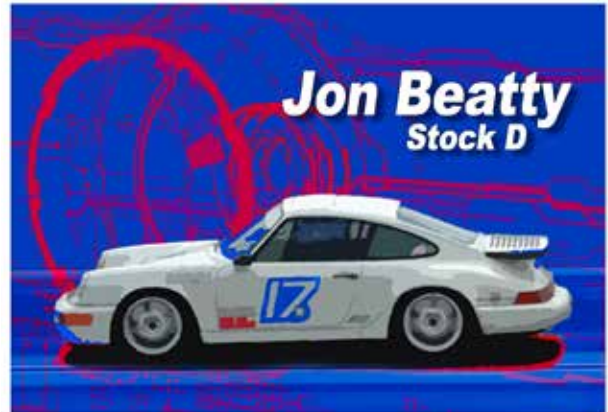
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Meeting Minutes . . .

continued from page 26

Social Media, Judy Sievers, Misty Martianos, Christie Boeder

- No report

Tech & Shop Relations, Derek Laumbach

- No report

Volunteers, Jim Southwell

- Thank you to all the volunteers who stepped up on 2025!

Webmaster/Tech Dave Anderson & Andy Barker

- Andy is available for help with Google Workspace

Next Meeting: November 4, 2025

Location: Axel's in Roseville

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:57 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Sabow, Secretary

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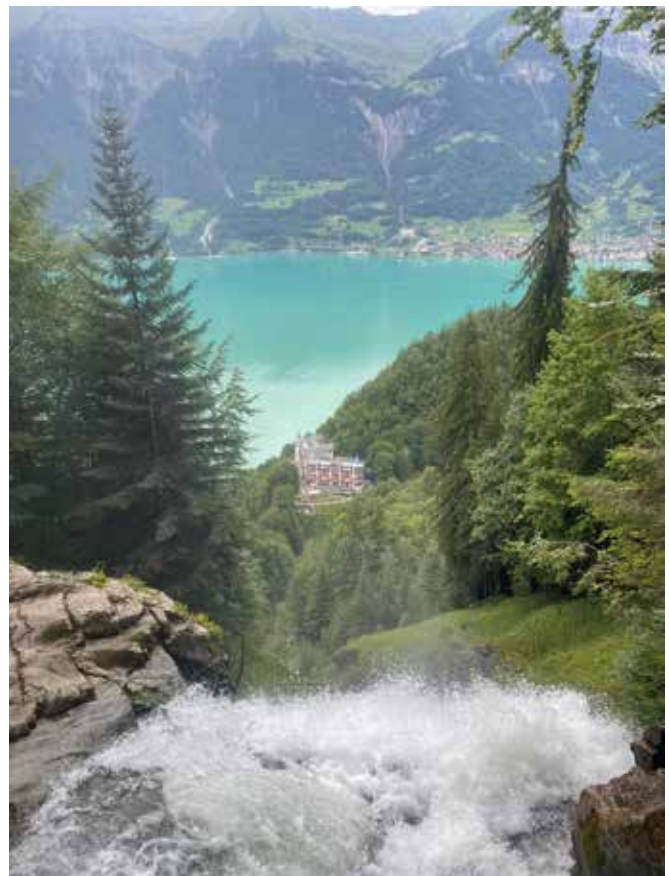





Photo by Jeff W from the top of the Falls at the historic Grand Hotel Geissbach on Lake Brienz - unbelievable scenery, and the oldest funicular (!) in Europe

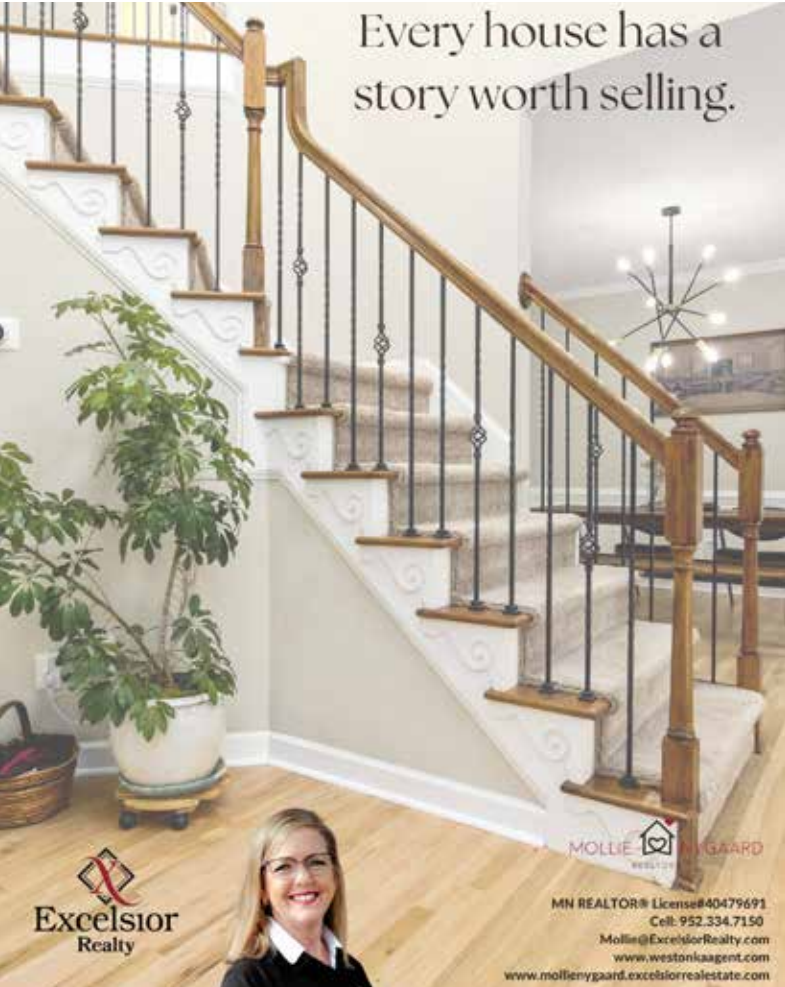
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We're back. We did it. Roughly 4,000 miles in exactly two weeks. Seven states, two provinces. In Le Monstre, a battleship-gray 19-foot camper van based on a turbo diesel Mercedes Sprinter platform, jacked up with four-wheel-drive and a front-end winch.

What did I learn? Let's just say I had recurring flashes of doing the trip in one of my cars – the two dogs in the back seat, a few suitcases in the trunk, a warm bed each night. But no. As expected, we challenged ourselves, our patience, our sanity. And we learned something. It's a lot simpler if you know what you're doing.

Take the vehicle. And think giant erector set. Oh yes, we had an orientation. Which turned out to be exactly what the word means – we got oriented. That doesn't mean familiar, as in “we got familiar with the rig.”

We tried to avail ourselves of the high-tech portable induction cooking device. Wedged vertically into a slot under a counter. We wiggle-wiggle-wiggled it out, plugged it in and a pilot light came on. And, uh, that was that. For the life of us, we just couldn't get it to heat up. So we called Beau, the van's owner. And he said, no problem! There's a manual in the . . . We found the manual. Hungry, tired and not in the mood.

The power went out, in the middle of the night. We called Beau. He said I should download some app, scroll to a certain site, ensure that two separate electronic switches were in the on position and . . . The second time it happened, I was proud of myself – I turned the power back on, without any help.

No wi-fi in the van. Beau said it had to be at our end. Yeah right. I tried to reboot. No dice. I told Beau, uh, I really don't think so -- my laptop and both of our cellphones had no problem getting wi-fi at campsites that offered it. Mostly slow wi-fi, but still.

Funniest electronic moment; pulling up to the campground in Banff, I asked the lady showing us our spot if they had wi-fi. She swiveled around and spurted out, “This is the wilderness!”

Running the van down the road. Now this particularly concerned me. Would I get comatose, chugging along, mile after mile, at well below posted limits? Would I relive those somnambulant moments from the '70s, when the national speed limit was 55? Does that ring a bell? Are you old enough to remember those days of endless soporific

daydreaming down the road? I know I do.

But no! The thing rocked! A bit of trickiness off the line, as the turbo spooled up. And then, well, 75+ was good all day. As long as you didn't have to stop, or turn.

Like a semi. Maybe faster, but still requiring a cranial rewiring of what enthusiastic driving is . . . Into the zen of mastering a big rig mentality. Quite satisfying, if you forget the “whole trip at speed, with a warm bed each night” alternative.

I must say, Le Monstre was small enough to maneuver through a supermarket parking lot. I have no idea what the giant Newells and Airstreams and Winnebagos do. But it wasn't our problem.

And then, and then, bicycling with the grandkids around Stanley Park in Vancouver, with lunch on the water. Banff. Just jaw-dropping. The Canadian Rockies do deliver. We hit Glacier National Park next and, well, sorry but it's like a first trip to Europe. Go to London, then Paris. Because if you do it in reverse, you'll be disappointed in London. Glacier was like that, compared to Banff. And this is from someone who thought she was jaded by mountains, living in the shadow of the Colorado Rockies for 19 years.

Lowlights. It started the very first day. At our first rest stop, west of Vail. We did our thing, the dogs did too, and it was time to move on. But Lily, my 40 pounds of love, just would not climb the two metal stairs under the sliding door. I went to pick her up and . . . She squirmed out of my hands, and her harness, and proceeded to prance down the exit ramp, me yelling obscenities after her, with the hyperkinetic Martian, Molly the Boston terrier, close behind. They got to not more than 20 feet from the Interstate. We were agog, shocked, fogged with fear . . . Until, all of a sudden, Lily turned, headed toward a small pond, and began pooping. Whereupon, adrenaline-charged, I yanked her up in my arms and toted her deadweight the half mile back to the van. Janelle did the same with Molly.

Our relationship. Let's just say we brought new meaning to the term “hangry.” It became the norm, literally every night. But we did grope our way through the miasma that we created for ourselves. We're still talking, still together.

So, yeah, we certainly pushed ourselves, certainly redefined our comfort bubble. But, perhaps most important, we made memories. It's mission accomplished, I think.



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