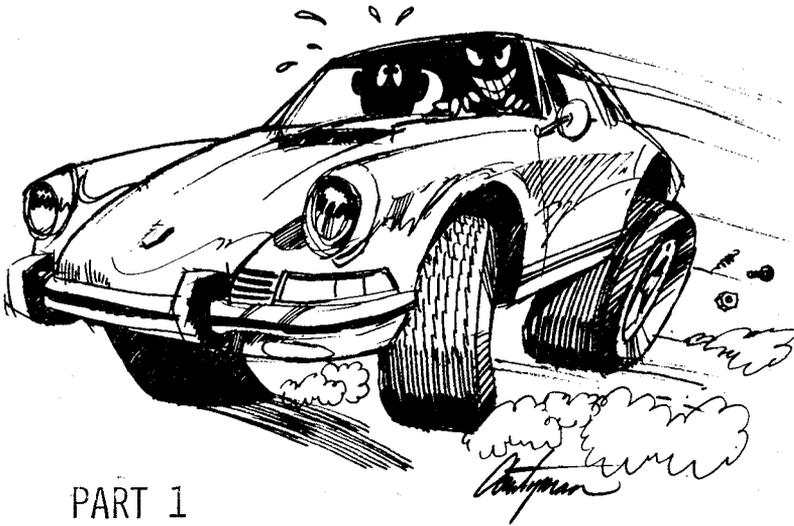


RALLY FEVER



PART 1

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After looking unsuccessfully through the standard reference works for a definition of the word "Rally," I came across the following by David Hebb: A rally is a trip in a car occupied by two persons who do not know where they are going but are just following instructions.

Although this column will be oriented toward the novice, I expect that there will be something of value in this and future columns for every NNJR rallyist. Since I'm Rally Chairperson this year, you can count on finding helpers that will be worth some points to you.

First, you should know that there are three types of rallies popular in this country:

- (1) TSD (time-speed-distance)
- (2) Gimmick
- (3) Performance.

All of these require basic course-following skills, but Performance rallying, in addition, includes flat-out special stages usually run at night through the weeds on logging roads, and if this is your bag, you should be writing this, not reading it. For NNJR members, I will concentrate in this series of articles only on TSD rallying, although the basic course-following principles apply also to Gimmick rallies.

RALLY BASICS

A rally is not a race. Rallies are run on public roads at legal speeds, and while you may occasionally find it necessary to hurry somewhat, you must do this at your own risk. Getting a traffic ticket is grounds for disqualification in some events, as well as spoiling your afternoon.

The object of a rally is to follow instructions which will take you over a prearranged route at designated speeds. In order to find out how well you are following instructions, your time of arrival at certain points ("check-points"), is noted and compared with the known

(to the rallymaster), time that you should arrive at the checkpoints. The difference is your error, and at the end of the rally the smallest accumulated error wins. Most rallies these days are timed to the 1/100 of a minute, although some are timed to the second. Penalties assessed are 1 point per 1/100 (or 1/60) minute, whether early or late, usually subject to a maximum of 500 points (5 minutes error), per leg. The art and science of following the instructions is what makes a rally different from a Sunday afternoon drive in the country.

When you register for a rally, you will receive a number to identify your car, and a set of general instructions. Your car number is important because it involves time. If the instructions say, "Your starting time is 12:00, plus your car number in minutes" and you are car #9, you must start at 12:09 exactly. One feature of this starting system is that with cars started at one minute intervals, it will be unusual to see another rally car, other than at the checkpoints, during the course of the rally, assuming everyone stays on time.

Read the general instructions (GI's) very carefully because they contain the ground rules for the day's event. I cannot stress this point too strongly. The GI's should contain a brief description of the event, a glossary of definitions which will apply, a list of priorities to be used in course-following, the method of timing and scoring, provisions for requesting time allowances or making protests, and the like. Make sure you have all the pages, which should be numbered "1 of 4, 2 of 4," etc. and that the copy you have is legible (this applies to the route instructions as well). Once you leave the starting line, a missing page is your fault, not the rallymaster's. Some rallies will mail you a set of GI's if you preregister. It is wise to take advantage of this because it is easier to read and discuss the GI's at the kitchen table with your partner than at the start line while you are also trying to set your watch, copy posted changes to the route instructions and are engaging in general b.s. with your fellow competitors.

It is probably possible to write a book about GI's alone, and they will be further discussed in future articles. For now, the rule to remember is to NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING. If there are points you do not understand, ask questions before you start. Once you leave the starting line, you are deemed to have accepted the rules and regulations, and their interpretation is your responsibility.

Five or ten minutes prior to your starting time, you will receive your route instructions. Look for the car that has your number minus one, the car that starts a minute ahead of you, and follow him to the starting line. By this time, you and your partner should have made all necessary pit stops, have your seat belts fastened, and be mentally prepared for the forthcoming adventure.

