

Rally – “Where Are We?”

Unlocking the fun in driving

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Published in Jaguar Journal, May/June 2020

It’s a pretty sure bet that you, like most JCNA members, enjoy driving your car on open roads, either alone or with others who share the same passion for our hobby. If you are like me, scenery, fresh air and exhilaration bring us back to the road time and time again. Sometimes, I just take off and “follow my nose” wherever it leads, coming home in time for dinner. It’s also not unusual to join with others on an impromptu ride on a sunny day or participate in an organized drive with our club.



Shortly after joining the Delaware Valley Jaguar Club and JCNA, my wife and I participated in our first rally in about fifteen years. Those earlier contests were gimmick rallies run with friends in Pittsburgh or scavenger hunts during high school. At the encouragement of

the late Kurt Rappold, we put our toes in the water at a three-day, 500-mile time/speed rally conducted according to the Great Race format. This was a full immersion baptism! Along with four other driver/navigator teams from our club, we ran in this rally conducted by the Northeast Rally Club. There were about forty cars, including a 1916 vintage Hudson Hillclimber, a 1936 Plymouth police car, up to a current model year sedan and everything in between.



Surprising even ourselves, we turned in a respectable performance as newcomers. Sure, we got off course a few times – as did many of the others driving in the event. Comparing notes about where the

mistakes occurred and what we did to get back on course was, to say the least, entertaining. Despite our occasional deviations from the instructions, we always made it to back to home base, where an abundance of food and beverages was provided while people shared stories about their cars, fun they'd had at other rallies and a few tales of unplanned roadside repairs. We had an amusing weekend of friendly competition and have come back for more nearly twice per year since then.

WHAT IS A RALLY?

From our initial experience we learned that a rally is not a race. It is not hard on your car; it is conducted only on paved public roads and you do not need a special rally car to enjoy these events. In fact, all that's needed is a car with a working speedometer, a stopwatch, a clock with a sweep second hand and a navigator. If you can follow MapQuest directions (remember them?), you can follow rally route instructions! Rally instructions provide 'turn by turn' directions along with the speed to drive at steps along the way. Don't worry about special rally computers, calibrated speedometers, helmets, fireproof clothing or roll-cages – they are not required!

Rallies are extremely large board games where public streets are the board, your car is the playing piece, and the driver and navigator are the players. No matter your order of finish, there's always a party or celebration at the end of the route!

Webster's Dictionary defines a rally as "an automobile run of sports cars, on public roads, designed to test driving skills." Nearly a century ago 'Jaguar' cars and owners participated in rallies in the days of the pre-Jaguar Swallow brand. The SS100 and the Appleyards' XK120 NUB 120 were amongst the most successful teams in rallies such as the Mille Miglia, Tourist Trophies, the R.A.C. Alpine Rally/Trials in the UK, Rally of the Acropolis, the Tulip Rally, Tour de France and the list goes on. Those were the days when folks drove their cars to events, rallied them and drove home. MK VIIIs, MK IIs, C-Types and D-Types, E-Types and XKs were regular participants.



THE JCNA PROGRAM

Fast forward to 1978 and the AGM in Los Angeles hosted by the Jaguar Owners Club of Los Angeles. At the Hyatt Regency Hotel at LAX, Fred Horner oversaw JCNA, Mike Cook was the Jaguar PR manager and assisted Fred with running the clubs. Both gentlemen were rally enthusiasts. During that AGM the clubs were organizing and finalizing the foundations of the JCNA Concours d'Elegance program. The idea of a JCNA rally program was discussed as a new option to include those members who were active rally participants. Rallying in those days used a mixture of SCCA rules, R.A.C. rules and other formats. Rally clubs were extremely popular, running everything from Monte Carlo stage rallies, time/distance/speed rallies, hare and hound, poker, gimmick and picture rallies. Some of these were even run at night, rain or shine.

It was decided, then, to organize a JCNA rally program that could be used by all the JCNA clubs for USA and Canadian competition. During 1987, a core group of rally enthusiasts organized a rally committee

and approved a time/distance/speed format for the USA and Canada clubs. History credits Ronald and Diana Cataldo for developing the TDS rally guide for JCNA. Mike Cook was also very involved in this effort to bring rallying to JCNA clubs. In 1988, the Austin, Texas, AGM adopted the new JCNA rally championship program immediately for a one-year trial period, based on the SCCA TDS rally format rules.

The clubs that immediately began organizing and running rallies were the Canadian XK Jaguar Register, Jaguar Owners Club of Los Angeles, San Diego Jaguar Club, Jaguar Club of Florida, Jaguar Owners Club of Oregon and the Nation's Capital Jaguar Owners Club. In 1989, JCNA records show that five rallies were staged. Later, the Monte Carlo format was adopted and approved for JCNA competition. Clubs staged rallies ranging from 50 to 250 miles, some including overnight stays during the event. As time went on, rallying became more difficult because of population growth and the value of our cars. Today the JCNA Rally Committee is tasked with rejuvenating this once-popular event with new vigor and ideas. Rallies are fun and are sociable club events. Meeting other driving enthusiasts, experiencing the full performance of your car, and enjoying the camaraderie of fellow club members is the goal of the JCNA Rally Committee.



Lucas Brothers Great British Car Rally

As you see, rallies have been enjoyed by many JCNA members for over thirty years. Rally competition is one more way to have fun with our cars and friends in our clubs. These beautiful vehicles also serve as 'billboards on wheels,' providing promotional exposure to potential new members and may pique someone's interest in experiencing the beauty and pleasure of a Jaguar. If you enjoy meeting and talking with new people, our Jaguars are wonderful catalysts for impromptu talks with others about our cars and our clubs.

READY TO RUMBLE

Les Hamilton and other JCNA leaders are concerned with the steadily declining participation in JCNA-sanctioned rallies. Earlier this year, I was asked to chair the Rally Committee with the objective of revitalizing participation. Six JCNA members have volunteered to pitch in and help with this effort:

- John Corey – Capital Region Jaguar Club of New York
- Bill Davis – San Antonio Jaguar Club
- Harold Kelly – Jaguar Car Club of North Florida
- Rick Martin – Jaguar Owners Club of Oregon
- Mark Mayuga – Jaguar Owners Club of Los Angeles
- Rosemary Price – Jaguar Club of Southern Arizona

After getting organized and discussing our own opinions of reasons for the low participation, we elected to survey all clubs in JCNA to gather perspectives and recommendations from as many members as possible. The response rate was excellent and broad enough for us to draw some meaningful conclusions. Twenty-seven clubs responded, representing approximately 40% of JCNA members. Key findings and recommendations from the responding clubs are as follows:

- Over recent years, fewer than 1% of individual JCNA members have competed in JCNA - sanctioned rallies. The great majority of clubs do hold a variety of pleasure drives.
- Only three or four clubs now conduct or participate in rallies.
- Primary roadblocks to greater rally participation include lack of knowledge/familiarity and perceived difficulty – for both drivers and organizers.
- The top two recommendations are:
 - (1) Provide training and education to a broad audience to demystify rally by providing a straightforward understanding of procedures, rules, requirements and their relative simplicity and
 - (2) Promote rally throughout JCNA and the local clubs to encourage organizing and participating in rallies.

A rally seminar was on the agenda for the now-postponed AGM (see page 5) to discuss rallies in general and to review the specifics of the JCNA sanctioned rally program, to encourage local clubs to “give it a try,” either as an informal fun rally or an easy sanctioned event. This seminar will now take place at the rescheduled AGM. Members of the rally committee are always available to help answer questions and provide advice.

This article is the first of a series in the Jaguar Journal where the program will be explored to provide a simple, straightforward explanation of rallies and, hopefully, demystify them enough so that people understand that rallies are not difficult to organize and that no special training or equipment is required to have a fun day with your cars and friends. Topics to be addressed include descriptions of the different rally types (time/speed, time/speed/distance, etc.), scoring, planning a route, conducting the rally and staffing. We also plan to include articles sharing experiences at events like the recent San Antonio Jaguar Club Rally to Luckenbach and this summer’s ‘Jaguars at Saratoga’ rally.

It may be that newer members are less familiar with road rallies than in earlier years, or less interested because they are discouraged by first seeing full-race style rallies on TV. Before concluding that road rallies are passé, we must grow the number of people experiencing JCNA road rallies, then get their thoughts on ways to make them more enjoyable to a larger group of people. In future, modifications to JCNA rules will be considered based on the experience and input of participants and, equally important, feedback from those who choose not to participate.