

# FEATURE ARTICLE VERSION

## Behind The Crest: Frank Connor's Porsche Journey

For West Michigan PCA President Frank Connor, Porsche ownership has never been about collecting trophies or chasing the next acquisition.

It has always been about driving.

And community.

And joy.

If you ask Frank which of the three Porsches in his garage is his favorite—a 1985 air-cooled 911 Coupe, a 997.2 911 GTS Cabriolet, and Raeni's (Frank's wife) 986 Boxster—he'll tell you they're purpose-built.

Each has its place.

The GTS is the long-distance grand tourer and former track companion. The Boxster holds its own special story, even serving as a kind of therapy for Raeni during the stress of teaching through Covid.

But if Frank is heading out simply for a drive?

He reaches for the air-cooled 911.

"I can't drive it without smiling," he says.

It's the smell. The sound. The analog feel. The way an air-cooled car engages every sense.

And in Frank's view, cars like these are meant to move.

"Cars shouldn't just sit around," he says. "That's not good for the car... and it's not good for the soul of the owner."

That philosophy seems to run through his entire Porsche story.

### A Different Path to Porsche

Unlike some enthusiasts, Frank didn't grow up with Porsche posters on the wall.

His automotive roots were in American muscle.

A '68 Mustang. A '70 Nova with a built Corvette motor.

He loved cars—but in his younger years, a Porsche nearly lost out to a Jeep CJ5.

Seriously.

Back in the late 1970s, Frank had narrowed his next purchase down to two vehicles:  
a Porsche 914...

or a Jeep.

The Jeep won.

Porsche would have to wait.

Life moved on—family, practical cars, responsibilities.

As Frank jokes:

“I did midlife wrong. I sold my motorcycle and bought a tractor.”

But the enthusiast spark never disappeared.

Years later, after seeing BMW’s Z3 and enjoying ownership of one, Frank began searching again  
for something more.

He drove everything:

Corvettes.

Maseratis.

BMWs.

Then he drove a Porsche.

And that was it.

“Objectively,” he says, “it was just better.”

Not marginally.

Clearly.

It took nearly a year to find the right car—a 996 Carrera 4 Cabriolet—but once he did, he was  
sold.

For good.

## **The First Drive**

Frank still remembers the first test drive.

His son—6’5” and a fellow car enthusiast—was with him.

The dealer insisted on riding along... in the tiny rear seats of the 911.

Top down.

Summer evening.

Flat six singing.

Then came the drive home from Lansing after buying it.

That one stayed with him.

“Absolutely loving it,” he recalls.

And like many Porsche owners, Frank says that sound—the flat six at speed—takes you somewhere special.

### **Joining PCA... Immediately**

Unlike many members who discover PCA later, Frank joined almost as soon as he bought his first Porsche.

And he got involved quickly.

Gilmore.

Early club gatherings.

Color tours.

Deutsche Marques.

Then a key turning point:

being welcomed personally at a fall color tour by members John and Marshall Walters.

That simple greeting mattered.

“It made it easier to go because you knew somebody was going to say hi.”

That, Frank says, captures the spirit of the club.

Welcoming.

Warm.

Inclusive.

And ultimately, that sense of belonging led him into leadership.

### **Why PCA Matters**

Frank has now served as chapter president for five years.

Ask what makes the club special, and his answer comes quickly:

“The people.”

Not the cars.

The people.

As a psychologist by training, Frank speaks thoughtfully about something many people feel but don't articulate:

Men often struggle to build meaningful peer groups.

As retirement approached and family seasons changed, he recognized he needed community.

PCA became that.

He even intentionally asked himself:

“Is this my new peer group?”

The answer became obvious.

“This clearly was.”

That, he says, is what makes the chapter work.

Yes, the drives are fantastic.

The track weekends are unforgettable.

Parade is extraordinary.

But the real value?

Friendship.

Camaraderie.

Belonging.

## **A Club Without Pretense**

Frank is especially proud of something he feels defines West Michigan PCA:

It isn't elitist.

It isn't political.

And it isn't about what model you own.

“It doesn't matter what Porsche you have,” he says. “You're welcomed.”

That includes first-time owners and longtime veterans alike.

The chapter, he says, is intentionally a place where outside divisions stay outside.

When members gather—  
it's about the cars,  
the drives,  
the friendships.

And sometimes...

it's about debating bore scoring instead.

### **Purpose Built—Even in Leadership**

Frank's leadership started not as president but in Street Survival, a driver education program for teen drivers.

Helping teach accident avoidance and car control became an early way to give back.

Eventually, that service grew into broader chapter leadership.

Today he also wears another hat:  
Driving Tour Chair.

Which fits.

Because driving is still at the center of it all.

Ask Frank about favorite roads and he lights up describing M22, Lake Michigan shoreline routes, Leelanau County, and Tunnel of Trees.

Michigan, he believes, offers some extraordinary roads.

Especially in a Porsche.

### **Dream Porsche?**

With money no object?

Frank reluctantly admits...

a 918.

Though he jokes he might be too terrified to drive it.

### **Advice for First-Time Porsche Buyers**

Frank's advice is practical:

Do your due diligence.

Buy the best car you can afford.

Budget for maintenance.

Get a PPI.

Understand the generation-specific issues.

And don't let internet myths scare you away.

"These are exotic cars," he says, "but they're very reliable."

And perhaps most importantly:

Learn to say **Porsche** properly.

(He insists.)

## **Advice for New PCA Members**

Simple:

Show up.

Come to a drive.

Come to a tech session.

Come to Parade.

Put a toe in the water.

And if you have ideas?

Bring them.

"This is a club you can help shape."

That might be Frank Connor's deeper message—not just about PCA, but about community itself.

Don't wait to be invited.

Show up.

Participate.

Belong.

And maybe go for a drive.

Because, as Frank would probably remind you...

Cars weren't built to sit still.