

“At Your Service!” Reflections of a Zone Rep

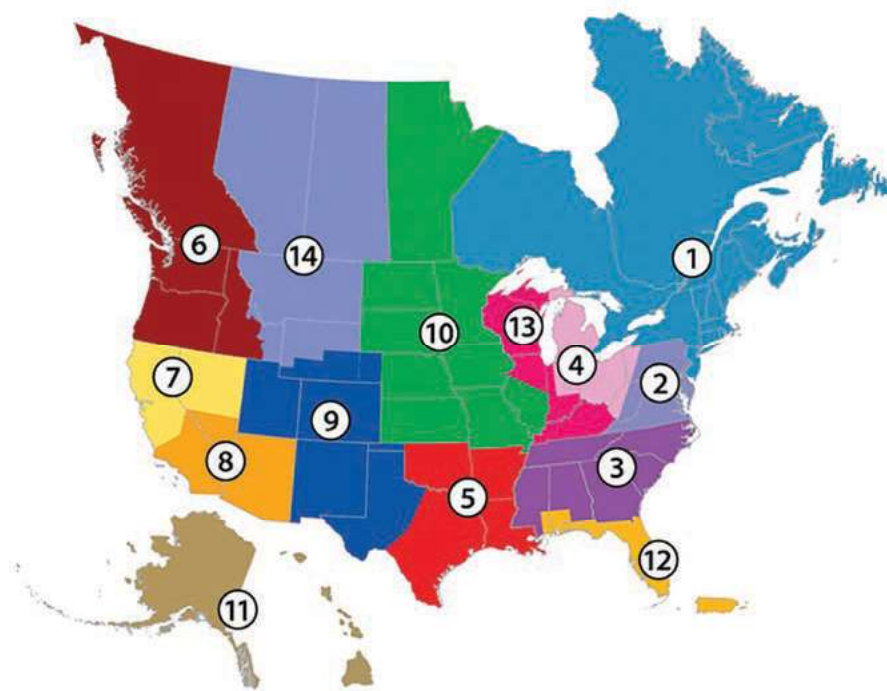
by Jack Stephensen

“Hi, I’m Jack Stephensen, your Zone 13 Representative, and I’m happy to meet you.”

I don’t know how many times I’ve said that as I travel around our Zone, but my statement is usually followed by a quizzical look and the inevitable, “What’s a Zone Rep?” Actually, that’s a great question, and I’m glad you asked, since for some time after I joined the Club, I didn’t know, either.

To begin, you’ll need some background about how the Club is organized. The Porsche Club of America (“PCA-National”) is a national organization that is currently made up of 145 individual Regions that cover the 50 states, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Each of the Regions is chartered by PCA-National but operates under its own by-laws. The individual Regions are then grouped into Zones. Under this system, our Region, the “Porsche Club of America, Chicago Region,” is a member of Zone 13, which is made of Regions that stretch from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, through Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and into Kentucky (https://www.pca.org/region-directory?field_zone_tid=462). At present, there are 14 Zones that make up PCA-National.

Currently, Zone 13 has a combined membership of over 6,100 members, organized in Regions ranging in size from 150 members (Southern Indiana) to 3,300 members (PCA-Chicago).



So, what is the purpose of a Zone Rep? To quote from “The Zone Rep Guidelines” (Dec. 2016),

the Zone Reps are a bridge or liaison between the National and local organizations, working on behalf of the Regions and their members to enhance the membership experience, and to avail the Regions of opportunities offered through PCA. . . .

The Zone Reps . . . communicate the Region’s interests at the National level as appropriate[,] . . . [and] communicate and clarify National issues, discussions, and policies/procedures to their regions. The Zone Reps are responsible for assisting the Regions in any way they can (advice, counsel, and guidance, not micro-management) and should help to ensure the general welfare of each Region in their Zone. As a communications conduit, Zone Reps inform the regions about changes in National procedure or policy, and, in the other direction, keep [PCA-National’s Executive Council] apprised of any issues, problems, or the general “mood” of the Club that is relevant at the National level.

What this means as a practical matter is that your Zone Rep is the interface between your Region’s management and events, on the one hand, and PCA-National’s responsibility for adopting national policies and procedures —event safety standards, junior drivers, or insurance coverage procedures are fine examples—that affect all Regions but which could have unintended consequences, whether regional or national, if not carefully thought out, or handled differently from Region to Region. The Zone Rep is the communications link that keeps this system working.

Consistent with these responsibilities, I travel frequently to events held by each of the eight Regions in our Zone, and make it my duty to meet with and speak to as many great Porsche Club members as I possibly can. My responsibilities also include



Porsche factory star Patrick Long and three-time Le Mans class winner Tom Kimber-Smith at Road America's Porscheplatz to meet with and answer questions from fellow Porsche fans and PCA-Chicago Club members.



lending assistance in organizing and staffing Porscheplatz and Club Race events hosted within our Zone (<https://www.pca.org/porscheplatz-frequently-asked-questions>), both of which are held at Road America, in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. These are both great events to attend, and you'll no doubt be receiving a number of requests (some from me!) to volunteer at both of them.

Like other Zone Reps, I also participate in monthly conference calls during which the Executive Council (the "EC") reports on national-level Club matters. The EC updates the Zone Reps about any issues, programs, or evolving directives under consideration, as well as providing reports on upcoming events. The Zone Reps, in turn, pass this information to the Region Presidents and Region membership. At separate gatherings, the Zone Reps also have an opportunity to discuss among themselves any issues or matters that may be common to the Zones as a whole.

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One of the key administrative responsibilities of a Zone Rep's job is to host each Zone's annual Presidents' Meeting. All the Region Presidents are expected to attend these meetings, or to send another Officer to attend if the President him- or herself cannot attend. The goal of these meetings is to bring the Region Presidents together to discuss both the successes and the challenges that every Region faces, and to share thoughts and ideas in how best to address them. One member of the EC also attends each Zone's Presidents' meeting, with the broader goal of strengthening the bonds between Regions within each Zone, as a means to ensure an even better experience for our individual Regions' members.

I hope this brief article helps to explain the role of PCA-Chicago's Zone Rep. I also hope that as some of you move into leadership positions within the Club, you'll consider volunteering to serve the Club in this key administrative role. As a former PCA-Chicago Club President, it has been an honor for me to continue to give back to the Club from which I have received so much, so thanks for the opportunity! 🍷