



2018 East Coast Holiday

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Mid-October found hundreds of 356 enthusiasts arriving in Ocean City, New Jersey, home of the Flanders Hotel and the 2018 East Coast Holiday. Named after the Belgian fields that inspired “In Flanders Fields,” the famous remembrance poem of World War I, the hotel is supposedly haunted by the ghost of a woman whose boyfriend died in the trenches of Europe. Named Emily, she has been known to wander the hotel’s hallways in a long white dress and bare feet, appear in photographs, and fiddle with light bulbs and door knobs, though not (we hope) carburetor linkages or valve adjustment settings.

Ocean City’s brisk weather lent a Halloween-come-early feel to the proceedings. There were some clouds, a good amount of sun, and a little rain, but nothing one could call unpleasant.

Holiday attendees had the run of the off-season beach town and definitely captured the attention of the civilian population. Local

business owners and restaurateurs were no doubt pleased to have the business of we Porschephiles. Holiday organizers Ellen Beck and Bob Gutjahr arranged a wide range of events, supported by an excellent guidebook, to help 356ers choose their own adventure, explore the island, and follow their interests, from vintage racecars to art, wine, and the nearby casinos of Atlantic City.

The Holiday—the 75th such Registry event to date—sprang to life on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 17, with registration, the first Goodie Store opening of the weekend, and the first of many opportunities to visit the hospitality room for drinks and snacks. But the first big event was a guided caravan on Thursday morning to visit the Simeone Foundation Museum in Philadelphia. Your author hitched a ride with Tom Olson, who had driven all the way to New Jersey from Washington state in his Oslo Blue coupe; a 65-mile jaunt to Philadelphia and back was nothing.



The Flanders Hotel.



The caravan to the Simeone Museum departs Ocean City. Pete Bartelli of Venice, FL, the Holiday’s sponsorship chair, leads this trio.



Dr. Fred Simeone and his 917 LH, which joined the Porsche party in the parking lot outside the museum.



After all their hard work, you'd better believe that Co-Chairs Bob Gutjahr and Ellen Beck were going to cut a rug at the Thursday welcome reception.

Later, at Saturday night's awards banquet, Tom was discovered by process of elimination to be the most worthy recipient of the Holiday's long-distance award. Despite insisting that he is currently "trying to get rid of stuff, not get more stuff," Tom happily accepted his trophy—one of dozens of finely crafted trophies awarded to Concours winners and other honorees.



The 1964 C Coupe of Glen and Mary Getchell takes a turn at the Blindman's Autocross. John Kreuz and Eric Wahlberg drove to a fourth-place finish.

After attendees spent a couple hours wandering among the museum's varied collection of cars and enjoying a sandwich for lunch, Dr. Fred Simeone treated Registry members to an in-depth presentation on the collection's 1970 917 LH. The car was presented with its massive fiberglass engine cover open, exposing the car's legendary flat-12 engine. Then the car—designed especially to top 200 mph on the Mul-sanne Straight, mind you—was fired up and put through its paces as the museum's back lot would allow. The museum's test driver did spin the tires a few times to get the car's engine up on cam so it could sing for the crowd.

Thursday evening featured the official welcome party back at the Flanders. A wide and plentiful range of food greeted the revelers, along with drinks, music from a live band playing a nice mix of oldies and classic R&B (with horns!), and of course, door prizes!

The 24 Hours of Le Mans has one. Japan's famed Suzuka Grand Prix circuit has one too. And on Friday, the East Coast Holiday's Blind Man's Autocross claimed a place among these world-renowned events with its own Ferris wheel looming over the 5th Street parking lot adjacent to the Ocean City boardwalk. Drivers found it surprisingly difficult to conquer the short course with only the instructions of a "trusty" navigator to guide them. Several navigators were seen turning imaginary steering wheels, to no avail. One sighted driver completed the course in 17 seconds, but the efforts of many a blindfolded driver could be measured in minutes. In the end, the #51 car of Bill and Tom Tate took home the trophy with the best time, with Curt Dansby and Nancy Gritter in second, and John and Grant Montgomery in third place.

While the blind autocrossers were making the cones quake, a literature and toy swap meet was well underway back at the Flanders. Judging from before-and-after photos, plenty of parts, toys, tools, and literature changed hands.

The afternoon was given over to tech sessions in the Flanders ballroom, starting with John Paterek and Lewis Hauser's entertaining restoration shop stories, followed by Cliff Murray's insightful advice about planning a 356 engine build. Rainer Cooney, a living embodiment of the characteristic known as "Yankee ingenuity," capped the session with mind-boggling descriptions of the innovative tools and techniques



The Lit and Toy Swap Meet.



John Paterek (above, 356 restoration) and Cliff Murray (above right, engine building) held tech sessions on Friday afternoon, along with Rainer Cooney (550 Spyder restoration).



The Boardwalk Promenade. At right, Diane Morrill and Karen Johnson give Bob Mulica and Susan Tannehill an enthusiastic cheer.



Bill and Debbie Cooper's '56 Outlaw was among the concours participants who gathered at the local airport for a rainy start on Saturday morning.

he uses to recreate and restore bodies (no English wheels allowed), tubular frame members, and other parts of original 550 Spydres.

Next up was the Bathtub Boardwalk Promenade. This slow cruise for about 140 cars down the Ocean City boardwalk served as a practice run for Saturday's concours, though not as an opportunity to test the at-limit handling of one's 356 on the wooden surface.

Saturday brought the main event of the weekend: the display and concours judging of approximately 120 cars on the picturesque Ocean City boardwalk. The day started early and wet for the concours participants, who staged at the municipal airport in preparation for their journey onto the boards. The gentle morning shower cleared by the time the cars took up their positions on the boardwalk, however, and did not return.

Within a short while, the weekend crowds arrived. Many of the storefronts along the boardwalk opened for business as well (if you didn't grab some salt water taffy from Shriver's, you truly missed out). Soon there were thousands of people walking, biking, and jogging up



Once on the boardwalk, a quick clean and dry was in order. George Kehler's efforts paid off with a first-place award in the Pre-A Coupe class.



Dave Miller's Typ 64 recreation got a prime spot near the entrance to the Music Pier, where Saturday's presentations were held.