

Canadian Street Rodding Hall Of Fame names the 2008 inductees.

There is no denying that hot rods and custom cars have been around since the earliest days of the automobile. But it was the rebirth and maturing of car clubs and associations in the late 60's and early 70's that fueled the street rod movement.

Often the emergence of these groups was due to the ideas and work of an individual or a small group of people with similar interests. Such is the case with 2008 Hall Of Fame inductees, the Pacific International Street Rod Association (also known by the acronym PISRA), based on the lower mainland of British Columbia.

Their story goes back to the late 60's when aspiring street rodder Gary Lang built a t-bucket. He certainly enjoyed the car but it was a little lonely. He believed that there were other people dealing with the same issue so in a moment of inspiration, he placed an advertisement in a Vancouver newspaper asking those interested in pre-'49 street rods to meet. He was overwhelmed when 25 individuals showed up for that first gathering. Incidentally, many of these street rodders are still active in the hobby and continue to be members of PISRA.

As a result of that meeting, about 50 people motored to Swan's Point for a Sunday street rod picnic. The year was 1970 and it marked the unofficial rebirth of street rodding on the west coast.

Later that fall, under Gary's direction, a weekend rod run was held at Cultus Lake with a dozen cars in attendance.

The following year Gary met two other industrious rodders, Bob Wharton and Gary Picard. At the next car show in Vancouver, they set up a booth and worked to compile a list of people interested in street rods. That list totaled over 200 names from both British Columbia and Washington State.

As a result the name chosen for this fledging organization was the

'Pacific International Street Rod Association'

This was in part to acknowledge the unique situation of members in two countries.

Bob and the two Garys united the vast membership via a newsletter that continues today.

In 1972 the first Birch Bay, Washington run was held and later Gary Lang lead a group of Canadians to the 'Old Timers' run in Tacoma, Washington. That year also marked the first official weekend rod run, later to become known as 'Family Affair', based then in Abbotsford and drawing some 45 cars from both sides of the border. "Family Affair" was destined to become one of the most publicized and well known street rod events in Canada.

In the fall of 1973 the club elected its first executive: **Jim Flett**, a charter member of the Southern Ontario Street Rod Association and the first managing director of the Canadian Street Rod Association, had moved west and became the chairman,

Gary Picard was elected co-chairman.

Other members of that first executive were:

Barb Gazso – treasurer and membership,

Doreen White – recording secretary,

Betty Blackburn – corresponding secretary,

Dave Gazso – tour director and,

Bob Wharton – editorial director.

Under the guidance of this group PISRA grew and prospered. In 1974 they again presented the Birch Bay, Washington and Family Affair rod runs and added a swap meet that would also become an annual event.

In 2001 PISRA celebrated their 30th anniversary. To commemorate this very special occasion the membership built a 1928 Ford coach based on their club logo.

This street rod was raffled off and at the annual club banquet a very happy Lynn Lutz of Chilliwack, BC drove home in her new / old car. All the funds generated were donated to one of PISRA favourite charities, the South Fraser Child Development Centre.

Unfortunately, 2001 was also the last ‘Family Affair’ rod run. A shrinking and aging membership base combined with sky rocketing costs had taken the fun out of hosting a

major weekend event. But they certainly went out on a high note.

An important part of the club's influence in the car hobby and specifically street rodding was in the early involvement of lobbying the provincial government to ensure legal recognition of our hobby.

Through their hard work and dedication came the founding of the Specialty Vehicle Association Of British Columbia.

Over the years PISRA has become a leading organization with few peers. They continue to be active in the Specialty Vehicle Association Of British Columbia and are members of the National Association Of Antique Automobile Clubs Of Canada. They participate as a club in various events throughout the northwest and have partnered with other clubs in the 2010 Cross Canada Tour. In addition they have joined with two other clubs to host the Coastal Swap Meet, which is the largest in western Canada.

Another measurement of their success is the number of clubs that they have helped establish. These include:
The Vancouver Island Street Rod Association in Victoria, BC,
The North Cascade Street Rod Association in Mt. Vernon, Washington,
The Okanogan Rodtiques in Summerland, BC, and
The Fraser Valley Rods in Langley, BC.

Quite a legacy from a group that was founded in 1971 with two main goals:

- 1: Uniting street rod enthusiasts
- 2: Promoting safety in the maintenance and operation of street rods.

Nearly 40 years later PISRA is still a going concern and continues to reflect street rodding in Canada in a most positive way.

PISRA is the 41st inductee into the Canadian Street Rodding Hall Of Fame.

The Canadian Street Rodding Hall Of Fame was started in 1994 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Street Rod Association.

The Hall of Fame recognizes individuals, groups, and corporations who have made significant contributions to the growth and improvements of street rodding in Canada. The alumni represent all facets of the hobby across Canada.

Would Rob Petty, the current chairman and Ron Wenger, one of the original members of the Pacific International Street Rod Association and Jim Cowan, Canadian Street Rodding Hall Of Fame chairman, please come to the front?

Please join me in welcoming to the Canadian Street Rodding Hall Of Fame, the first club or association to be inducted, the Pacific International Street Rod Association.

CONGRATULATIONS!