

# ORGANIZING AND LEADING A CHVA NATIONAL TOUR

**PREFACE:** There are no hard-fast rules--only guidelines. The goal of the CHVA Tour is: Make it as enjoyable and interesting as possible.

1. Anyone who is a member of CHVA can run a National Tour. If you have never helped run a N.T. you should arrange to consult often with someone who has. Close coordination with the CHVA Board of Directors, especially the National Tour Coordinator, is necessary. It is also advisable to have a co-leader, who is familiar with all aspects of the tour, in case fate causes you to be unable to go forward with it.

2. If you live in (or are very familiar with) an area that you think would make a good N.T., jot down your thoughts, contact the National Tour coordinator and discuss the matter. You will need at least two years to put it together properly. The tour could have a theme, such as Presidential Homes, follow an old wagon trail or named highway, etc. Hub tours can be good, too, if there are enough attractions for several day trips.

3. Date and location approval by the National Board is required, so when you have decided on a potential itinerary, submit it to the National Tour Coordinator who will then refer it to the National Board for approval.

4. It is the general consensus of most that in order to have good attendance you must have dates firm and an itinerary complete far enough in advance that it may be advertised in the A.E.V. magazine a year before the tour. Announcement and tentative plans should be in the A.E.V. even sooner.

5. Start and finish: A well-planned tour should start and end in an area or city with enough to do for early arrivals and late departures. Most participants, especially those traveling a great distance, will allow an extra day or two in case of car trouble.

6. Driving: Route should be kept as scenic as possible. Avoid main highways. Limit maximum driving time to two or three hours at a time, with breaks every hour or so. It may be necessary to split the tour into two or even three groups separated by 10 minutes or so. Older cars should be kept to the front to set the speed. Each group should have a pre-determined leader, tailgunner, and possibly a "relay" man equipped with CB radios to keep everyone together in high traffic areas. Each group should operate on separate CB channels. Groups should be pre-determined by the tour leader and can be given names fitting the theme of the tour. Start each day with a drivers' meeting for last minute instructions. Avoid left turns, especially where lights are involved or getting out of parking lots. Many local police departments are very willing to help folks out of parking lots and escorts out of difficult situations. It actually helps them by avoiding our group from causing traffic jams. Leaders should drive the routes at the same day and time the tours is going to detect dangerous intersections and congestion. Additionally, it is helpful to drive the routes shortly before the tour to detect road constructions and other problems

along the proposed route.

7. Meals: It is a good idea to start the tour with a banquet-type meal, and end in the same manner. All others can be "on your own" but stops must be arranged so that adequate facilities are available. However, the more meals eaten together, the more fun it can be, as participants get to know one another. Churches and civic organizations can arrange meals, and catered box lunches at attractions can be arranged. Noon meals are usually done in an area where there are several fast-food options, as these are less time-consuming than sit-down restaurants. It is a good idea to reserve a room in a restaurant for some evening meals, so that those who wish may eat together. This also provides an opportunity to play tour games, hold drawings, etc.

8. Lodging: All rooms should be reserved in a block well in advance (six months or more) with the final numbers adjusted as the date grows near. Tours average about 50 rooms. (west coast tours may draw more participants) Also, it is a good idea to arrange for an overflow motel in case of a large registration. Be sure to get rate quotes in writing and signed. Since motels do not agree on definitions of single, double, child, and adult, rates should be quoted as follows: 1 person; 2 persons, 1 bed; 2 persons, 2 beds; etc. Also, at what age is a child considered an adult, and the price difference. Most motels will set a deadline for holding the price on the block of rooms, and this information needs to be included. Motels should be reasonably priced, and it is a good idea to check them out personally, viewing each type of room so that there are no surprises. Motels should be conveniently located to the activities in the area. Most motels offer group discounts, and will even comp a room or two if enough rooms are sold. Be sure to ask!

9. Activities: It is almost as bad to have too many activities as too few. The ideal half-day is one activity of 1 to 1 1/2 hours plus 2 to 2 1/2 hours of driving. Two activities of shorter duration, with less driving can be done also. A good rule of thumb is: one major activity in the morning, and one major in the afternoon. An evening activity (after supper) is great, but should not be arranged for successive days, as people get tired. All events should be optional, and anyone not wishing to participate may do something else instead. Often, proceeding to the next stop is a good alternative. Car games are a must. Kids should be kept in mind on this. It helps to pass the time and encourages friendships as people begin to compare solutions with each other. Trivia games, etc. can be found on the internet.

10. What to do: Activities are about as varied as people, and variety is in order. First and foremost, a car show would be the most enjoyed activity, with an auto museum placing second. Here are some others: antique shops, restored pioneer towns, breweries, wineries, distilleries, power plants, ocean liners, gardens major local attractions, amusement parks, factories, railroad museums, colonial homes, race tracks, national parks, government buildings, state capitals, boat trips, train rides, historic homes, auto salvage yards, casinos, etc. Don't forget some free time! About midway through the tour, a half-day of free-time is a good idea so participants can do some shopping, laundry, etc. An optional activity might be scheduled at this time that only a few would be interested in. Visit attractions personally, so that there are no

disappointments. Be sure that the attraction can handle a group of our size, and ask for discount admission rates. A board meeting needs to be scheduled during the tour. This should be at a motel with a meeting room, and could be scheduled during the free period.

11. Eligibility: Anyone who is a current member of CHVA may join the tour, and membership is not required of guests or family members riding in the same car as a registered participant. Liability insurance on the vehicle is required. All vehicles are eligible for participation. Modern iron is not eligible for tour prizes. When touring, modern iron remains to the rear of the caravan, but ahead of the tailgunner.

12. Registration fees: CHVA National Tours should be self supporting, so a registration fee is necessary to offset the expenses incurred by the tour leader. This is usually \$100.00 per registration for the entire tour, or \$15.00 per day for those attending only part time. With these funds, tour expenses are paid such as: dash plaques, trophies, tour leader's out-of-pocket expenses, phone calls, side trips, etc. The cost to the participant is negligible, due to discounts, etc. It is a good idea for the leader to pen a separate checking account for the tour. Registrations can be deposited in this account, and activity admissions paid out of it. There is money available from the CHVA National Treasury for deposits, etc., if needed. This money would be paid back at the end of the tour.

13. Sponsors: As tour leader, there is nothing wrong about asking hobby-related businesses for sponsorship. They could contribute products, buy trophies, or donate toward the purchase of tour plaques and other items. Some of the companies which have contributed in the past: Hemmings Motor news (cash), J. C. Taylor (cash), McGuire's Auto Polishes (wax and polish), Penn Ball Bearing (gift for each car), friends of the hobby in unrelated businesses. Also ask for sponsorship from the motels and restaurants patronized by the tour participants, and especially those who have not given discounts. You might contact each of the national officers and each of the regions to assist in solicitations.

14. Tour Book and Packet: Each participant, upon arrival, should be presented with the tour packet. The items in the packet can be as varied as your imagination allows, but must include: Tour book, maps, special instructions, tickets and passes, and an envelope for gas tickets (record). Some suggested items: brochures of attractions on the tour, promotional items, games for kids and adults, crayons, and coloring books for the kids, discount coupons, etc. Tour guides for each city visited, applicable state maps, and the like are also a good idea. The Tour Book is a must. It is made as follows: Start with a loose-leaf binder. These can be purchased at a discount store or office supply store. You may even be able to get them donated. Life insurance companies and banks, as well as office supply stores would be good places to ask for them. The book should include all the information need for the tour. Suggested format:

Section I: Page 1--Welcome-to-tour-note, written by the tour leader(s) with credits and names of any assistants.

Page 2--Short history of CHVA

Page 3--Special instructions, safety inspections, driving instructions,

trouble instructions, etc.

Section II: Following the basic information should be driving instructions broken down by day: starting and arrival times, and locations, points of interest, history of the areas being driven through.

Section III: At the end of the tour book should be pages listing all the names and CB handles. Include a CHVA Membership application. This is a good time to recruit new members. also include any tickets or coupons for admission to events. The past few years, tour leaders have been printing business card sized "tickets" for each event. The participants can give them to the receptionist of the attraction, and then they have an accurate count for the tour leader to pay for them all at once.

The tour Books can be as valuable a memento as the tour plaque, so put some thought into them. Instructions should be clear enough that one could run the tour without a tour leader.

15. Duties of Tour Leader: You have an idea of a good tour. You are willing to take the time to put it together. You write it up, decide on a date, present it to the CHVA National Tour coordinator who gets approval from the board. Now, where do you start?

a. Plan: A complete day-by-day itinerary with locations of motels, attractions, events, etc. keeping in mind the instructions. Now contact each one of these to see if they are willing to participate. Most attractions have websites and can be contacted initially by email. Estimated numbers should be used. The A.E.V. should be notified at this time of the basic location and dates. Contract all prices in writing.

b. Registration Packet: About one year in advance, a basic itinerary should be published in the A.E.V. At this time you should be prepared to start accepting registrations. Make up a number of registration packets with registration forms, including all activities and cost items, and motel lists, including prices and deadline for reservations. These are to be mailed to anyone inquiring about the tour. it has become customary to charge a \$5.00 pre-registration fee to get the registration packet. This offsets printing and mailing costs, and is deducted from the final registration cost. A deadline of 30 days or so before the tour should be set, so that final counts can be submitted to attractions and meal hosts.

c. Awards: A plaque is given to each registered participant at the end of the tour. These should involve some thought and effort. They can include a picture of the participants(s) and vehicle, show a map of the route, etc. A few door prizes can be awarded each morning at the drivers; meetings. At the end of tour banquet, awards can be given for oldest car, best of each decade, longest distance, men's and ladies' choices, overall favorite, etc. These can be as individual as the tour itself. More door prizes can be awarded at the final banquet. Door prizes are more for fun than value. solicit businesses for donations, appeal to fellow members for homemade items, etc.

d. Leading: It is advisable to get help in planning and running a tour. (It also avoids many problems in case of illness, etc.) Helpers can be used for planning, check-out, and

registration, and are a must during the tour. When it is necessary to split the tour into more than one group, the number of helpers increases. Each group will need a leader who is familiar with the route, a tail-gunner, and a relay man. Each leader should be responsible for seeing that all members of his group leaves together, and that none get lost, thus arriving together. It is important that departure times are kept, to prevent participants from getting careless about schedules.

16. Misc.: Tours have traditionally been Saturday to Saturday. There has been discussion to start and end in the middle of the week, to make scheduling time off from work more convenient, when allowing for getting to and from the tour. Tours are generally 7 to 9 days in length. However, this is all entirely up to the tour leader.

Weather: No one can predict the weather. However, if your tour is to be in an area known for heat, it might be better to schedule it in the spring or fall rather than the middle of summer. Likewise, avoid traditionally rainy seasons, extreme cold, etc.

Promotion: Contacting other car clubs in areas you will be visiting is a good way to promote our club. In addition, contact Chambers of Commerce and Convention/Visitors Bureaus in cities that have them. This a good will gesture that can be beneficial to all involved.

Good clear maps are very important. Goggle maps (and others) have the option of "dragging" your preferred route onto the initial routing suggested by Google. Therefore, maps and directions can be fine tuned and printed much easier.

Once again, these are only guidelines. Tours can, and should be, as individual as the people leading them. The main goals are fun, friendship, and fellowship in the old car hobby.