



Conclave 2025 | Branson MO

NEWSLETTER #10

HOW WE ROLL

You might be wondering, particularly if you are a first timer, how we all manage to stay together over a roughly 2000-mile drive. The answer is a five-part process as explained below. **Even if you are a veteran**, please read this document as there is a lot of new information, particularly in the Garmin section.

PART 1: CARAVANNING

First, we do attempt to drive in a modified caravan. Our cars will be divided into five **“flights”** or groups of about six cars each. **Each flight has a Flight Leader.** The leader will be out front (and you do not pass the leader!). You will be assigned to a flight based on your experience. Newbies will be mixed in with veterans. We try to keep friends together.

Each flight also has an experienced **“Tail End Charlie”**. That person performs some very important functions, including keeping the “cats” together, watching for anyone who might be having a “mechanical”, and most importantly helping our flight pass slower vehicles on multi-lane roads. When Tail End Charlie sees that the Flight leader is being held up by slower, passable, traffic, he swings into the passing lane to cut off any other vehicle behind from intermixing with our group. Then each other car in the flight swings out and we pass as a group.

Staying together requires each driver's attention not only to his driving directions, but to the cars in front of and behind him. It is critical not to become so engrossed in the scenery that you fall behind the pack. **The Flight Leader must be able to see all his Flight in his rearview mirror at all times.**

If possible, all the flights will stay in loose visual contact. Great Plan.....and it works about 50% of the time!

PART 2: TURN BY TURN DIRECTIONS

Each car will receive a substantial booklet prior to the trip which will be the **"Turn-by-Turn" directions**. A sample page is at the end of this document. This document performs several functions:

- Tells you for each day the time we are leaving, how many miles we will cover and generally what to expect.
- Gives you information enroute about where we are, what you are seeing, historical insights and other interesting "stuff"
- Tells you where and when we will stop for breaks, the estimated time of these breaks, where we will park at our next destination, whether the road has tolls, and other safety related info.
- **And most importantly gives you detailed driving directions**, as the name implies, "turn-by-turn". Distance to the next turn, direction of the next turn, description of the next turn, road signs to look for, etc.

You will not be able to drive and use the turn-by-turn directions at the same time. Hence the role of your **Co-Pilot**. Your Co-Pilot is essential to keeping the driver informed about all things directional (as well as reading the descriptive material).

You might be tempted to say, **"I don't need all that, I'm just going to follow the car in front of me"**. That works fine..... until it doesn't. Then you are hopelessly lost. Separation cannot be avoided (traffic, stop lights, lapses in concentration, etc.). You must always be responsible for your own navigation.

PART 3 – GARMIN NAVIGATION

And that brings us to Part 3 – **Technology**. While not absolutely required, we strongly urge you to purchase (and/or update) a Garmin brand (and only a Garmin brand) Navigation system. Each participant will receive a “download file” for their Garmin which does the following:

- **Provides Turn-by-Turn directions** for each day’s drive with both visual and audio prompts. You simply turn the unit on, select the proper Day, drive to the start point, and follow the directions (well sort of, see below).
- **Provides what Garmin calls “Waypoints”**. These are your “get out of jail cards”. If you become hopelessly lost, you select the Waypoint for that night’s hotel (or maybe an upcoming lunch or tour spot) and the Garmin takes you directly there. Not necessarily by the group route, but by the fastest way.....but at least you will get there.

Q&A ABOUT GARMIN

Q: I don’t have a Garmin **which one should I buy?**

A: The current series is called **DriveSmart**. There are several models, mostly different sizes. I have a DriveSmart 76 which I find a good size in the Healey. There are bigger ones and smaller ones (the 76 has a 7.0” diagonal screen).

Q: Where **can I buy one and what do they cost?**

A: You can buy directly from Garmin (www.garmin.com), at Best Buy, on Amazon, or used on eBay. Used ones are often good buys as people purchase them for a single trip, like ours, and then sell them near new. Do some research and then search the web. Figure around \$200 new and \$100 used. But beware, there are several look alikes, at cheap prices. I cannot guarantee my software will work with any brand other than Garmin.

Q: Do I need the more expensive model with the **“Traffic”** feature?

A: No, it won’t work without a special subscription, and then only in metro areas. And there’s no traffic on our backroads routes anyway.

Q: What **accessories** do I need?

A: If you buy a new unit, it will come with the suction cup mount and the cigarette lighter power cord. That's all you need. If you buy used, be sure those are included. If your car is **positive ground**, email me and I will explain how to power your negative ground Garmin. Don't plug it into the car until you do.

Q: **What about Maps?**

A: All Garmin's sold in the US come with US, Canada and Mexico maps installed. New units usually have "lifetime" maps, which means you get free periodic updates.

Q: What if I have a **Garmin Nuvi**?

A: The Nuvi is an older generation, now at least ten years old. I cannot guarantee compatibility with my route files. Time for an upgrade, you are missing out on a lot of cool new features anyway.

Q: So, with my Garmin, **I don't really need the paper Turn-by-Turn Directions?**

A: Not true. As with all technology, the Garmin is not infallible. Creating the turn-by-turn directions for our trip involves several steps starting with plotting out routes using Google Maps and then "translating" those directions into a file format that the Garmin can read and display. There are often "**disconnects**" where the Garmin does some nutty stuff (like taking you off road!). The best plan is to follow the written directions while using the Garmin to give you a visual reference as well. Using the two together has never let us down.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR SOLO DRIVERS

On this Tour we have several solo drivers. Obviously, they can't read the Turn-by-Turn Directions while driving, so they will have to rely solely on their Garmin's for navigation. Even more reason to practice a bit before the Tour.

Solo drivers should make a point of reading through the day's written directions each morning to familiarize themselves with our schedule, stops, scenic highlights, etc.

NOTES FOR THOSE WHO ALREADY OWN A GARMIN

Some things to consider:

1. **Be sure your Maps and your Garmin are up to date.** Plug into your computer and open the *Garmin Express* App. It will scan your unit and let you know what needs to be updated. Usually software updates are free, but Map updates are paid (unless you have lifetime maps).
2. **Check that your unit charges.** One traveler took his out of hibernation recently and found that the battery would not hold a charge. Replacing the internal battery is possible. Contact me.
3. Be sure you have the **ORIGINAL Garmin charging cable/cigarette lighter adapter.** I have found Garmin's do not like third party charging cables and sometimes refuse to acknowledge them. If not present, order a new one from Garmin.
4. Before installing my new download, **clear all your old SAVED TRIPS and WAYPOINTS**, otherwise your menus are going to be cluttered and confusing. We will use the same "Day 1" and "Waypoint 1" system we used in the past, so you don't want multiple Waypoint 1's!

AND FOR EVERYONE

- *Do not ship your Garmin or any other electronics or valuables in your car.*
- *I suggest that you "carry-on" your Garmin, so if luggage is lost, you still have it.*
- *Get a little practice with your unit, new or old. Become familiar with the features. The more you use it before our trip, the easier it will be for you.*

SPECIAL NOTE, VETERANS TAKE NOTE

On this trip we will rely much more on Waypoints rather than Routes. Normally there is only one way to get from Point A to Point B, so Waypoints will get us all there on the preferred route. And as we know, Waypoints work from any starting point, so if you get lost, recovery is easy.

PART 4 – STAYING CONNECTED WITH THE GROUP VIA WHATSAPP

As you can imagine, **staying connected with the Group during our Tour is critical**. I will need to communicate schedule changes, route corrections, and other vital information in real time. You will need to be able to reach out to me (or your Flight Leader) if you have a mechanical problem or decide to “go solo” for a leg of the trip. Flight Leaders will need a way to communicate with their Flight Members if someone “goes missing”.

For these reasons, **we will set up various “Communities” on the messaging app called *WhatsApp***. We picked this app because it is worldwide and encrypted (and free). No one can “penetrate” our Group.

If you use any kind of messaging app then you will easily be able to use WhatsApp. It works just like iMessage and other popular text-based apps. But first we need to get you set up.

1. First, **if you do not already have *WhatsApp*, you need to download it** onto your phone. It’s free in all the app stores.
2. If you are new to ***WhatsApp***, you will need to register the first time you open the app.
3. **Finally, you will need to “connect” to our Group**
4. There will be two Communities: **the Full Group** and **your Flight Group**. You will get an invitation to “join” these Communities.
5. **Full details on how to join and use the WHATSAPP feature will be sent out when the groups are all set up.**

PART 5 – GETTING THE FINGER

Yes, you will likely get “the finger” somewhere along the road, but not in the way you might think. When WhatsApp messaging isn’t possible (no cell service) or otherwise ineffective in getting an on the move message to your Flight Leader, we use simple sign language.



One finger up: ***“I need to stop at the nearest place WITH SERVICES”,*** i.e. gas station, rest stop with restrooms, etc. NOT URGENT.



Two fingers up: ***“My “need” is more urgent, please stop at the next safe place”,*** i.e. may be a pull out, cross street, etc. Two fingers can also be used to request mechanical assistance, fuel, etc.



Fist up: ***“Urgent, mechanical issue or out of fuel. Stopping now, please render assistance”.***

Unless you are the flight leader, you will need to “forward” your hand signal to the car(s) ahead of you to get the flight leader to take the requested action. You do this by flashing your lights until you have the attention of the driver ahead, then send your signal. That driver will pass the message forward.

It’s all a bit crude, but it works.

SAMPLE TURN BY TURN DIRECTIONS PAGE (from an old trip)

DAY 8: Sunday, May 26

POWELL RIVER TO WHISTLER

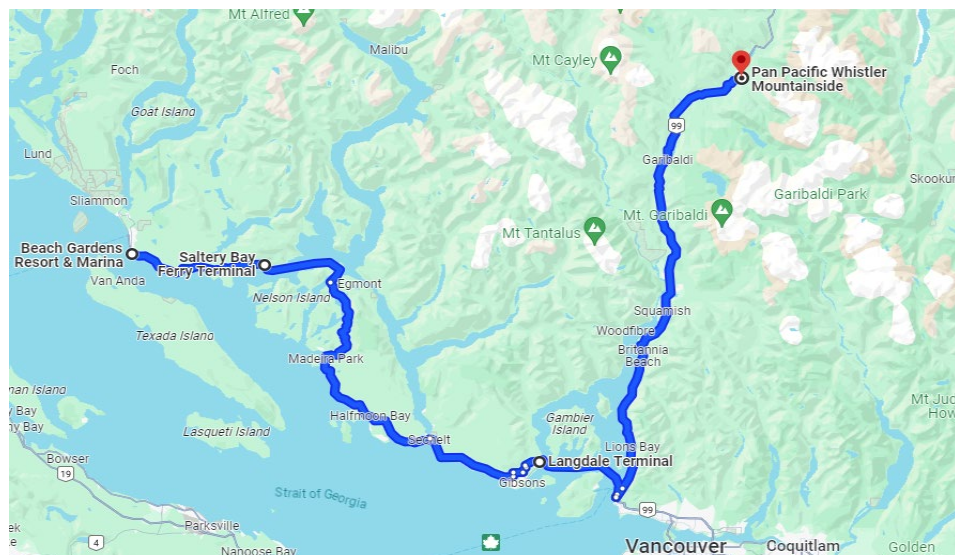
DRIVING DISTANCE: Hotel to Saltery Bay Ferry Terminal: 27 km, 0:25 hours
DRIVING DISTANCE: Earl's Cove Ferry Terminal to Langdale Ferry Terminal: 81km, 1:20 hours
DRIVING DISTANCE: Horseshoe Bay Ferry Terminal to Whistler: 102km, 1:20 hours

*Today we will drive from Powell River to Whistler on two great driving segments. The first is along the **BC "Sunshine Coast"** south towards Vancouver, including two ferry rides (see below). Upon arriving at the Horseshoe Bay Ferry Terminal, we will take the famous **Sea-to-Sky highway** north to Whistler, where we will spend two nights at the posh Pan Pacific Mountainside Resort. A box lunch will be provided which you can enjoy on the second ferry ride.*

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

7:00 - 8:00 - Breakfast at the Hotel
Don't forget to pick up your lunch box (included)
8:00: Depart hotel for Saltery Bay Ferry Terminal
9:25 - 10:15: Ferry to Earls Cove
10:30 - 11:50: Drive to Langdale Ferry Terminal
13:15 - 13:55: Ferry to Horseshoe Bay
14:00 - 15:15: Drive to Whistler
15:15: Arrive Pan Pacific Hotel Mountainside, Whistler
Dinner on your own

Note on Gas: We will be driving 210km (130 miles) before arriving in Whistler. We will not have a refueling stop. Be sure you have enough fuel before departing.



SELECT: **GARMIN WAYPOINT #08 - Salter Bay Ferry Terminal**

DISTANCE from last direction	TURN	DIRECTION	TOD approx. time of day
0	DEPART	Left onto Caribou Road back to the main highway	8:00
170m	RIGHT	Onto Thunder Bay Street/ Hwy 101 (main road)	
26.7 km	ARRIVE	Saltery Bay Ferry Terminal Green sign "Ferry Traffic"	8:30

Ferry Instructions

This ferry does not take reservations. First come, first served. We will figure out the payment system when we arrive. Each party pays for their own passage

RESET **GARMIN WAYPOINT #09 - Langdale Ferry Terminal**

	DEPART	Leave the ferry and continue on the Sunshine Coast Hwy There is only one road	10:15
54 km	RIGHT	Arrive is the town of Sechelt, turn Right to stay on Highway Green sign "101 South, Gibsons, Vancouver, ferry icon"	
21.2 km	LEFT	To stay on Sunshine Coast Highway / North Road Green sign across the intersection "<--- Ferry"	
1.9 km	LEFT	Onto Stewart Road (a 45 degree turn)	

**CAUTION - there is only a road sign here for Stuart Road
No indication of the ferry!**

550m RIGHT Take the 1st right to stay on Sunshine Coast Highway (stop sign)

CAUTION - No indication of the ferry or highway name!

2.3 km ARRIVE At Langdale Ferry ramp
Green sign "Ferries Vancouver"

11:50

Ferry Instructions

We have reservations on this ferry for the 13:15 sailing. We'll come to the ticket booths and present our tickets. Then line up in the assigned lane(s).



Note that there is a café in the ferry terminal building after you park

More details on how to use the Turn-by-Turn directions will be forthcoming in a future Newsletter. (The above instructions use kilometers for distances since we were in Canada. Our Tour directions will be in miles)