

The Alternative Line

by Joe Holzer for CNY-PCA Redline Report Copyright 2025 <http://www.holzerent.com/pdfpages.htm>

Technology Uber Alles – Maybe Not

I know there are a lot of CNY-PCA members who used to enjoy my diatribes. As noted therein, most were tongue in cheek, and designed to laugh more at our foibles than any ‘pearls of wisdom’ I might profess. But in reviewing my records for preparing this, I noted that the last time I actually wrote something with genuine expectation it would become published was 2017, which was eight years ago. So I am dusting off a few iconic comments and logos, and updating a bunch of stuff, to better work with the systems as are being used for CNY-PCA and for myself. And I will cover a few subjects so the Editor has some choices ;-)

Those who know me well recognize that I am a patient tech pusher, who tries to adapt what works to his needs. Stands to reason; don’t reinvent what already works, which simply wastes your time. However, throughout evolution there have been many useful ideas which have also had to overcome some real stupidity which a bit of forethought could have prevented. One ‘buzzword’ being WAY oversold in the lexicon is “AI”. Which I have often stated can just as readily mean ‘Absolute Ignorance’ or ‘Artificial Information’. When I was a young engineer, ‘JIT’ was the latest thing, suggesting balancing deliveries and need at plants so as to minimize inventory carrying costs. But until SYSTEMS were developed and honed for ruthless efficiency, like the Amazon overnight delivery, it was often more dependent on unreliable transport or handling, or the still common quality failures which earned THAT moniker ‘Junk In Transit’.

AI is based on the premise that enough samples from the universe will allow a pretty accurate approximation of whatever image is actually sought, and it can be potent. But it is also subject to misuse, and even Abuse, as for example, trying to focus too well on something for which you have inadequate samples, or extrapolating from too small a universe to draw a meaningful interpretation. I have been well reminded of these pitfalls in a series of problems I personally have observed with my own personal healthcare of late. Some of you know that I have neuro-endocrine tumors throughout my abdomen, for which I receive continuing treatment, monitoring, and care at both the CNY Providers and those at my Florida home where I spend five months each winter. Anyway, those familiar with the medical process, as summarized by the ‘EOB’ you should get detailing who paid what for things, will recognize these truths; a) If it can be screwed up, it will, and will cost 25% more effort than really needed to ‘git-er-dun’. b) You are your ONLY advocate for YOUR care, so followup is by no means automatic. c) ALL users of data have their own way of doing things, and your intuition has no relationship with their processes, except it seems to have a weird inversion facility. d) Whatever is likely to cause the most harm, like the random fall of buttered toast, will invariably fall butter side down on the surface most likely to be damaged thereby. Think ‘Murphy’.

The latest insult was discovering that a UTI I had last April, which was treated by ‘best guess’ by my PCP, which enabled me to drive back up the three full days from FL to CNY might have been a fluke. However, it enabled me to get to HOA in East Syracuse where they had somehow insisted I be despite three continuous days driving. So it was little surprise when the inner-ear fluid imbalance which caused me to have vertigo caused me to collapse there like a sack of potatoes, ripping open a leg wound (not good for a type 2 diabetic) which I continue to fight, and causing me to have to disappoint Dennis and the Street Safety team when I had to bow out of in-car coaching the following weekend. Yesterday I got another “Bad News” shot that the UTI I am currently fighting came back with a culture which resists traditional antibiotic treatments. Net result will likely end my further participation in in-car coaching. Neither I nor the club can afford such liabilities, and another notch in the “things I used to love” gets hammered by my health. But then I will be driving back down to FL again in mid-Nov. More on that below.

My Brief Porsche History

I come from a lower middle income family as it was known at the time, so my interests in Porsche seemed inconsistent with that background; a door to door salesman Dad with six kids. Neither of my parents had much mechanical talent. I was a good mechanic, but not a very dedicated student. As such I had sloughed off much of my undergraduate time, but with summer school and other maturing, at least I graduated with my class, which in 1973 was important (think Viet Nam, where my number had been 105 – and a likely free pass to SE Asia). Since seeing my first 911, I had told my Mom I would someday own one. I doubt she gave it much thought in 1963, but a few years later she got a shadow box with a model 911 Targa for me. For whatever reason my radar was really unaware of 356, and of course NO racing machines were open for consideration. I have never sought to explain it, but my appreciation grew over the years. I had been raised on Detroit Iron, and adapted. I married in Fall '73 and wound up in Liverpool, but decided to get some advanced management courses toward my MBA. I was often asked why, but the only real answer was it was the path I saw as necessary if I were to get self-actualized. After trying to get promoted with Rollway, only to be dashed by their selecting Ken Lehr, I accepted a job with Nestle in Fulton. The night beforehand, though, Rollway decided they needed my machine development skills, getting 95% of new OEM equipment value for pennies on the dollar with their WWII era manual machines for making big bearings. So they offered me a whoreship and I took it, in return for their paying full shot on my MBA. When I again approached with that in hand, they still felt they needed my machine and control talents, so we parted not happily, but on acceptable terms, and I went to Shade Roller in Ogdensburg as Engineering Manager. Fast forward to March of 1981 and Lynne (now my ex) agreed it was time to look for a 911S Targa, and I found a '77 in Ohio and we flew out to get it.

Once that happened, Lynne started making Mommy noises and wanted to return to school. My compensation was always at least half again hers, and she had been offered a spot with the Visiting Nurses so could live in Liverpool while I commuted back for weekends from Ogdensburg. Through the I-81 snow belt. Thankfully, I had my 1978 Datsun 810 Wagon, a rarity with a 5 speed as my winter rat. And in the good weather I drove the Targa. Still doing much as I had before, making machines replace labor, but I branched into consumer tear-down for sizing and user installs on woven woods, vertical blinds, and consumer adjustable shades which competed favorably with offshore sources. A few more job moves suggested I would be best to hang out my own shingle online, and so when I got laid off by Kodak after giving them a patent protected RO cost savings, plus specialty filtration, then Gaylord after just providing them 17 years of exclusive sales of Se-Lin, a product used by academic libraries with OCLC and patents, I struck out on my own. Things were rough at first, but I made a data scraping software for use with OCLC to handle periodicals, then landed a role as an independent with TRW, then Duracell from that. Which took me to the wilds of Indiana. At that point Lynne decided I needed some motivation, and so I found my gorgeous '95 993 Cabrio Tip, and started to really enjoy the back roads.

Fast forward a number of years – our daughter is then a senior teen, and Lynne thinks I should put her through two years of Russell Sage to get her NP certs. Then she made the cardinal rule sin and decided to convert our home to see patients. Having some idea how to shelter tax money, I was unprepared when she announced in 2009 she wanted a divorce, bankruptcy, and to move to Syracuse. So much for teamwork. And all MY efforts at building her business within the first two years to a six figure practice to support our lifestyle would prove to return no value whatsoever to me. In my last run group in 2013 at WGI I had my only accident, and State Farm decided to weasel out with a claim it was “on a track” despite having assured me beforehand it was a non-compete event. So with few resources left to my name I did what I could to make the 993 road worthy, and after having a shyster in Hastings rip off all my other property, it sat parked for 2.5 years in a friend’s garage during COVID (I could not get in and out due to my hip, which

has since been replaced) in return for her using one of my Subies. Let's just say she had an interesting approach to parking areas, which seriously still hurts my insurance rates.

So finally in August 2022 I found the chance to swap it and clear up my automotive complexity to a single solution; a 2016 Macan S for a fair price (the 993 had cosmetic issues, but drove itself to MD for the deal, and he had a buyer for it before I even got there). And I love the Macan. I can get in and out, it drives like a Porsche, and is adequately loaded with a few surprises, like heated and cooled seat cushions up front, and cream leather which can tolerate FL weather (over 80% of US bound Macans have black interiors, definitely NOT smart for FL.) As an SUV, it can haul a lot my 993 would never have fit, so it is good for travel. I added a Class 3 travel hitch and bought three spare remotes rather than being stuck with ONLY the original key fob for less than half what ONE of those would have cost OEM. And, of course, I met Dawn Clark and moved into her Chittenango home in April 2019. And we share a home in Inverness FL in a great Senior Park where we go for five months every winter, and are taking sea cruises. And my daughter, Jess, now a PhD, still has my '77 Targa with the '88 Motronic 3.2 which replaced the 2.7 CIS when I blew it up at WGI. Jess had come home the day after she was born, ensconced in the stainless roll bar unique to the Targa, so was able to watch EVERYTHING Dad did. "Do wowwies, dad" became her mantra, which pretty much stopped her mom's attempts to control my driving.

Shameless Plug

Some of you are aware that I made a presentation at the Fayetteville Free Library July 12 2025 based on a video I came across reporting on the Porsche AG effort in the Chilean Andes Atacama Desert, one of the driest places on the planet (usually, as the video so amply disputed) over more than three years to try to set a new record for "Highest Point Driven To On Earth". The video, referred to as "Edith" ultimately spoke about the eventual development of two Porsche 911's with considerable modifications from anything you are likely to actually drive, at least anytime soon. In short, they utilized Porsches' PFM3200 efforts with Mooney to assure a high altitude automated fuel control from the '80s as well as the more recent work by Porsche in Chile to make vehicle gasoline from water and recovered atmospheric CO₂, something Porsche understands represents extending the usability of their customers' cars irrespective of legislative efforts which have usually been knee-jerk grasping at the latest technologies whether the marketplace was ready or not, as for example the attempts to eliminate the continuation of Internal Combustion Engines, the basis for most of the world's infrastructure for both personal and business transport, in favor of not-yet-competitive things like electric vehicles.

Anyway, I made a labor of love for my own granddaughter to be able to read much of my published writing by following the link shown at the top right of this document as written, which will take you right to that page of my personal website. The article you are reading now will be added to that page display as well. But that will allow many of you who might be missing my writing style over lo these many years to review them in a single consolidated place. And at the bottom of that page you will see the "Edith" link to download the video so you can watch it on most viewers. Definitely worth the effort to see how Porsche applies even seemingly unrelated work to help develop the very cars and technologies for which we love the brand so well. As a personal aside, my GF Dawn owns a 2024 Subaru Crosstrek which has "electric steering", as does my 2016 Macan S. I defy you to actually drive prior hydraulic pump steering vehicles vs their newer more efficient electric steering models – the "dead spot" at center for the Subie is annoyingly obvious while totally imperceptible in the Macan, and the video includes some explanation how they worked with the two climbing cars to get their steering systems, also electric, to reduce "bump steer" which every vehicle feels to some degree from the driven surface features, but could be a very severe risk if driving the knife-edge on some high peak.

Interesting to put it mildly. And you can be sure you will eventually find it in a Porsche you will be able to buy and track yourself. Why I LOVE Porsche, even though I am afraid my track days are now behind me.

But I still love to drive as an end unto itself, which is why I will continue to drive back and forth to FL and CNY so long as I continue to be able. And as suggested above, Dawn and I have cruising plans, during Thanksgiving week we will be touring the Western Caribbean from Tampa with Dawn's sister Diane and my daughter and her family, as well as another pair of couples living in our park in FL. Then the three of us hope to visit Diane's Great Granddaughter she has yet to meet in Alabama enroute to visiting New Orleans and Pensacola on the way back. All around the healthcare demands of all the medicos, that is. May the road rise up to meet you... ;-)

Joe Holzer, the Idea Man ;-)

