

Miata Fast Track



MARCH 2005

Issue #134

AROUND THE BEND

Beware of Expensive Imitations

Spring is in the air. March is a great month for topless driving, with perfect temperatures, beautiful skies and wildflowers galore. Let's get out there and have some fun.

Get In. Be Moved.

Thanks again to Van, Sharon, Scott and Nancy for helping organize last month's Coastal Cruise. We had a blast.

Get involved. Do something for your club.

Ron Branam is doing a superb job organizing the Poker Run. You won't want to miss this event, which includes the special treat of another Friday night dinner with the Bonds. Many folks have volunteered to help, but there's always room for more. Please attend our March meeting to discuss the final details, and don't forget to get your raffle prizes in to Ron.

Lisa and I will host a tech day at our home on April 16. If you've got any projects in mind, or just want to hang out with the gang, please plan to attend. Past tech days have seen many successful mods installed, numerous cars washed and waxed, and a lot of beverages hoisted. We'll provide a main dish for lunch, so if folks bring their own favorite drinks and a side dish to share, it should be a party.

Join for the car... Stay for the people.

Treasurer Bob says it's dues time again. This club runs on a shoestring budget, with your dues mostly covering the cost of the web site, insurance and newsletter. Those things make our events possible but, if you need more incentive, remember that your membership card gets you significant discounts from supporting vendors. If you haven't already done so, bring your dues check to the next meeting or send it to SJVMC, P.O. Box 27395, Fresno, CA 93729-7395.

We're dedicating this year to having fun with our cars, and our Miataphile friends. Please come out to share the joy.

We'll see you on the road.

Don

From your Editor...

Another well organized and fun Coastal Cruise is in the SJVMC books. I solicited comments from members and their thoughts and observations on the event are on pages 4 and 6 of the newsletter....Thanks to Graeme, Dale and Sherri, Bill & Gaye Koepp and Bob "Papa" Raus. Thanks also to Don and Lisa for the exciting roads, eats, and ordering such a beautiful Saturday to Zoom-Zoom our Miatas between here and the coast.

Our next premier event is almost on us, the Poker Run Charity Event. Ron Branam, on page 3, gives us an update and a request for some help to make this event run smooth. Give him a call, participation just adds to the fun...

SJVMC

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES February 17, 2005

Attendees

Members: Don & Lisa Asperger, Dennis Stumpp, Roy Arnold, Ron Branam, Jim Barker, Bob & Lor-Rae Raus, Tom & Linda Hayward, Ron & Katherine Carrillo, Greg & Ro Almeida, Scott Moore, Mike & Jeanette Derr

The January 2005 minutes were approved as was the treasurer's report.

Old business

Poker Run 2005 – The application for a Mazda sponsorship has been submitted. Several vendors, including Lithia, have provided donations. Ron Branam requests that members submit their raffle donations to him before the event. Goodie bags will be assembled following the next meeting on March 17, coordinated by Bob & Lor-Rae Raus.

A tech day will be held at Don & Lisa Asperger's house on April 16.

New business

Katherine Carrillo volunteered to organize a run to Coalinga for dinner in either early April or early May.

On May 21 club members can participate in a parade at the Kingsburg Swedish Festival. The cost is \$15 for the entire club. Ron & Katherine Carrillo have offered to host a barbecue at their home following the parade.

Bob Raus volunteered to organize an overnight run in mid-September. We will go over Sonora Pass, spend the night in Lee Vining and then return by way of Tioga Pass.

On March 7 the third generation Miata will be unveiled. Ron Branam volunteered to contact Lithia regarding a roll-out event similar to the one that was held for the Mazda Speed.

Ron Branam reported that he is unable to organize club participation in the Concours d'Elegance this year. Jim Barker offered to check into it.

Tom Hayward will order another batch of large door magnets (20 magnets @ \$30 a pair). The club approved a motion to front the money. Any magnets not immediately sold will go into the club gear inventory.

Dennis Stump volunteered to check into purchasing hatpins to commemorate events.

Committee reports

Newsletter – Jim Barker requested input on what members want to see in the newsletter.

Club historian – Linda Hayward needs pictures from last year starting with September's Kernville run. Jpg files can be sent to Tom Hayward but please contact him first.

Past events

Playoff Party

Coastal Cruise

Willow Springs – Don Asperger reported on his and Lisa's experience at the Phil Wicks Driving Academy

Upcoming events

March 18-20 – Poker Run (Ron Branam)

April ? Dinner run to Coalinga (Katherine Carrillo)

April 16 – Tech Day at the Aspergers’.

April 22-24 SOCALM Three Rivers Run (Contact Bill Bryant bbryant@tvrc.com for information)

May 7-9 – SDMC Search for Madonna Run

May 21 – Kingsburg Swedish Festival parade (Katherine Carrillo)

June 11-12 – Kernville redux; Contact Alice at the Kern River Golden Trout Resort, (760) 376-6033, for reservations.

July 16 – Club birthday party at Tom & Linda Haywards’ place.

September ? – Sonora Pass Run (Bob Raus)

October 1-2 – Gold Country Trip (Sheri Bond)

Ro Almeida won the pie.

Lisa Asperger, Secretary

Poker Run Update

By Ron Branam

This is it! This is the month!

Registrations:

As of 2/28, we have 34 cars registered. We have registrations from as far away as Eureka, San Diego and Las Vegas. Registrations slowed down during the month of February. We only received 12 registrations during for the month. This is normal. I’m expecting a lot of out-of-town registrations between now and the event. If you haven’t sent me your registration yet, **please do it now**. It would be much easier to process your registration now, before the rush. **Please do not wait until the 3/17 meeting.**

Raffle prize donations

At the meetings I requested that you bring these to me whenever you have them ready. **I was wrong; please do not do this!** I realized I wouldn’t really have a way to get them to Oakhurst. **Please bring your raffle prize donations to Oakhurst on the day of the event!** Or, if you prefer, bring them the Friday before. Shirley and I will have a room at the Shilo Inn and we can store them there. If you have a donation, but you can not attend the event, then by all means let me know and we can make arrangements for it to be picked up or delivered to my house.

Assistants and Equipment

If you haven’t volunteered for helping out yet, your assistance is very much needed. I still have some un-filled and under-staffed positions. The most critical is doing the card draw at the lunch stop. It would be nice to have two people for this, but one will suffice. Performing this much-needed function will not prevent you from going on the run. You just start early to be at the lunch stop early. After all the cars have had lunch and drawn their card, you can continue the run. **Please think about volunteering!** (I found the original list! If you don’t know what that means, you weren’t at the February meeting.)

Don’t forget the social hour at Dale and Sheri’s house in Oakhurst on Friday night. This is where we get to do a lot of socializing and meet Miatafiles from other clubs. I’ll see you there!

Publication Information

The first issue of the Miata Fast Track is free. Membership entitles you to participate in all events, including drives, assembles, meetings, parties, gatherings, conventions, technical sessions, etc., newsletters, and allows you the opportunity to meet some nifty people.

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the San Joaquin Valley Miata Club (SJVMC). The information presented represents the opinions of the individual contributors. No representation is made regarding the accuracy or reliability of any information contained on any of these pages. Neither the Mazda Corporation, the Miata Owners Club, the San Joaquin Valley Miata Club, the editor, or any of the individual contributors accept any liability for the consequences of using the information presented in this newsletter.

USE THE INFORMATION IN THIS NEWSLETTER AT YOUR OWN RISK MEMBERSHIP:

Send \$25 with your full name and address, phone number, year & color Miata to: San Joaquin Valley Miata Club
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Fresno, Ca. 93729-7395

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SJVMC COASTAL CRUISE 2005

"This year's Coast Run lived up to every good expectation and exceeded some! The restaurants were READY for us!!!! Lunch in Paso was delicious and the host even turned down the music so we could chat.

The roads between there and the Coast showed Don's research and Lisa's standby-update check -- they were fantastic! though could've been a problem if the weather was bad. As it was, they were like driving in Disneyland, with water chutes, narrow bridges, rapids, rockies -- you get the drift (check the pictures). Later, a Miata Buddy in VROOM said, when looking at the pictures, My gosh, that wasn't Santa Rosa Road, was it? That's the road SUV owners take to see if their vehicles really can go off-road! And we all just cruised along (sometimes at 1 mph as we forded a creek here and there. . .)

The motel was clean, cheap and quiet -- a good place to sleep and get ready for the next day.

Dinner was the usual good quality with very friendly efficient service and the gathering outside showed that Miata folk will ALWAYS socialize! After dinner, we were pretty much on our own to choose the activities that suited us -- the karaoke group was smaller this year!

A real plus was a good, easy, tasty breakfast after a nice walk on the beach (well, SOME of us joined the usual hardy trooper group!) which left us to enjoy the nice drive up the coast. We also talked about maybe finding a place with a view of the ocean for next year's cruise?

The elephant seals were particularly demonstrative and the other tourists left us with a nice, wide, empty, unlabeled spot in the middle of the lot -- so of course we filled it! It looked so inviting that I noticed some OTMs had lined up next to us, when I came back to the group to leave.

The fog as we drove up over the road from Hwy One to Hunter-Liggett led an Other-Worldly vision to the drive and it was reminiscent of driving up Mt. Tamalpais (up in the Bay Area) but 20 times as long and 20 times as much fun, as there were no tourists on the road.

Those of you who were on the run will remember the startled couple who thought they were camping in the middle of nowhere, enjoying a nice time on their own, when we all arrived for a break. What you may NOT know is that, as we left, I paused and called the guy over to give him a package of a dozen boxes of Valentine Hearts to share with his lady, telling him that we appreciated their sharing their quiet spot with us for a half hour. (As to their dogs, well, I stayed in the car!)

Lunch was scrumptious at the historic building Don & Lisa had arranged for us on Hunter-Liggett -- huge portions, good food, smiling folk.

I think that's what I noticed about the whole weekend -- everyone was smiling! Doesn't that summarize it?

Thanks, Don, for sprinkling a new flavor onto this classic run -- we'll see you all next year! After all, variety does count."

Most important of all, of course, is that we drove TOP DOWN the entire trip, from joining the group at Kettleman City (hey, I live up in the Bay Area!) until we got back home Sunday night, including I-5. The only time the top went up was when parked. AWESOME! (And, a tribute to the Oris Windstop.)

Pictures I grabbed along the way: <http://www.deltamiata.net/pics/2005-CoastRun/CoastRunFeb/index.htm>

Graeme

"Gina", Classic Red '01

Another Performance Mod by Don Asperger

Forget turbos, intakes and headers. Lisa and I recently upgraded the parts of our Miatas that most needed improvement - the loose nuts behind the wheel.

Phil Wicks has been a race driver and instructor for nearly 50 years. (He also drove the red MINI in the recent remake of *The Italian Job*.) His history, which includes extensive racing of classic Mini Coopers (among other things), prompted MINI USA to support his non-profit "Ultimate MINI Driving Academy."

While he mostly targets MINIs, Phil understands and appreciates Miatas. In February, he invited us to attend his Driving Academy at the Willow Springs Raceway. We rearranged our schedules, and took off for Lancaster. This was Phil's first time at Willow Springs, so he shared organizational duties with Rich Barker, of the Racer Factory. Rich and Phil did a wonderful job of making it happen.

After a short safety inspection and a brief (non technical) classroom session, we hit the track. The instructor-student ratio was nearly 1:1, so most drivers had a ride-along instructor for every session. Lisa and I were lucky. We were sharing the Buggy, and thus able to share Bruce Parker as our instructor. Bruce has extensive racing and teaching experience, including a tremendous history of driving this track.

We spent our first six or eight laps trying to get a feel for the line. Bruce patiently pointed out the braking points, turn-in points, and apexes each time we went by, and we eventually saw what he was pointing at. (Coning the track, as Team Miata does at Thunderhill, would have avoided a lot of uncertainty. Phil says he'll try to do that for future events.) Once we had the general idea, Bruce worked with each of us at our own pace as we tried to drive the line, use more of the track, and improve our driving techniques.

We've got a long way to go, but we both improved considerably. In one corner, Bruce gave me a rudimentary idea of a primitive level of "trail braking." (I've been wondering for years what that meant.) In another, he taught me how and when to induce controlled oversteer, which could be useful next time I'm surprised by a decreasing radius turn. Lisa learned some of the joys of over-correcting, which (while traumatic at the time) in hindsight she admits was worthwhile.

Going fast was not the emphasis. The goal was to learn better car control, so we'd be safer drivers on the streets. A side benefit was that, as the day wore on, we naturally drove faster. One turn that I took at 60 early, I took at 85 or so later, and felt like I had better control.

Phil will be returning to California, and says we'll be invited again. I'd encourage our members to try out his program, which is a lot of fun. Everyone was as nice as could be, and those MINIs handle beautifully. They're great playmates for our Miatas.

The Racer Factory has an independent schedule of track events, which is also worth investigating. On the web, see www.wicksdrivingacademy.com and www.racerfactory.com.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE COASTAL CRUISE

The 2005 SJVMC Coastal Cruise was one of the best we've attended! A very novel cafe with motorcycles in the lunch room and good food, then a superb dinner near the surf, a great breakfast in amongst Egyptian motifs then a relaxing ride up Highway One to see the interesting mating techniques of the huge Elephant Seals. The trip over the mountain from Highway 1 to the military base was, for once, without the usual bicyclists and we had yet another good meal at Mr. Hearst's old hunting lodge. This is an eating club with Miatas!

We had a great time, we returned to Cambria before 4 p.m. and had plenty of time to wind down with a glass of Zin.

Many thanks to the club, the organizers and their assistants for a fun filled two days in our neat sports car!

Bill & Gaye Koepf
'01 Emerald Mica
'97 Classic Red
SJVMC
VROOM

Dale and I thoroughly enjoyed our weekend get-away on the 2005 SJVMC Coastal Cruise. We had almost forgotten how much we enjoy our Miata times together. Do you ever notice the quantity and quality of conversation resulting from time spent two-by-two in a Miata? The Sunday lunch stop at Hunter Liggett was a real treat. Thanks to Van and Herta for organizing the event. Lisa and Don did a wonderful job of planning a route that put zip into our annual event. Thanks for including us.

Dale and Sheri Bond

The coastal Cruise was a hit again! I backed my newly washed and waxed Elanar out of the garage bright and early Saturday morning to be greeted by rain. So we got that clean car to dirty car out of the way early. But by the time we got to Lemoore we were greeted with a mixture of clouds and sunshine for the next two days. There was a good blend of old roads and new routes. The non-driving time was shared with Miataphiles from Samoa, Delta, So-calm and of course SJVMC. The meals were very good, timely and the SJVMC check book balanced! I'm just sorry my better half, Lor-Rae was at home with a bad cold.

Bob "Papa" Raus

Upcoming Events for SJVMC & Other Clubs

SJVMC POKER RUN: March 18-19 This year's run would be based out of Oakhurst. The Shilo Inn in Oakhurst has reasonable rates and will let us use a corner of their lobby for registration. The route is set. Lunch is set as well as dinner at an Italian restaurant in Oakhurst.

FRIDAY EVENING DINNER at the Bonds' Oakhurst resort. To help share the load, we ask that SJVMC members bring a salad or dessert to share, plus whatever they'd like to drink

April ____ (tentative) – Dinner run to Coalinga (Katherine Carrillo)

Tech Day; April 16

Don & Lisa will host a tech day at their house, 1214 W. Stuart, Fresno (2 blocks north of Bullard, east of Fruit). If you have any projects in mind, or just want to hang with the gang, please plan to attend. We're planning to start work around 10:00. When the projects are complete, we'll relax and socialize. (Feel free to bring swimsuits, but we don't promise warm water.) We will provide the main dish for lunch. Please bring your own beverages and perhaps a side dish to share. RSVP Lisa at 431-2208 or lasperger@sbcglobal.net.

April 22-24 - SOCALM Three Rivers Run (Contact Bill Bryant bbryant@tvrc.com for information)

May 7-9 SDMC Search for Madonna Run

May 15 Concours d'Elegance (tentative)

May 21 – Kingsburg Swedish Festival Parade (Katherine Carrillo)

Kernville Redux; June 11-12

Due to popular demand, we'll be running to Kernville again. However, the route will be modified to accommodate more casual participants. We'll reach Lake Isabella in time to lunch at Nelda's, which is a 50's-style diner with great food and nostalgic milkshakes. After lunch, those who want to relax can explore Kernville and the surrounding area, while Don leads the hardcore drivers on a spectacular route. Our group will dine Friday night at McNally's Resort, then enjoy a potluck Sunday breakfast at the lodge before returning home via the Western Divide Highway. Please call Alice at the Kern River Golden Trout Resort, (760) 376-3548, to make your reservations. RSVP Lisa Asperger at (559) 431-2208 or lasperger@sbcglobal.net.

June 25-26 Cool Weekend on the Coast- Redwood Coast Miata Club

The Redwood Coast Miata Club is proud to present the 2005 Cool Weekend event. Beat the heat and get to the coast...The Northcoast of California.

July 16 - Club Birthday Party at the Haywards' house.

September ____ (tentative) – Sonora/Tioga Pass overnight.

October 1-2 – Gold Country Trip.



San Joaquin Valley Miata Club



Meetings are held the **3rd** Thursday of each month at:

Marie Callender's, 1781 E Shaw Ave (at Cedar) at 6:30 P.M.

Win a free pie!

NEXT MEETING
• **SEE YOU THERE**
MARCH 17, 2005

WARNING:
Dates in Calendar are closer than they appear.

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