



HORIZONS

July-August 2001

The Official Newsletter of the Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

Dateline Tampa, FL June 6, 2001

RE: June Moon Zoom

We got rained out... We had our funny hats and flowers, and you know we could have done it with a little rain, but it was coming down in buckets! And it didn't look like it was going to stop. We almost didn't make it across Tampa! We will try again next year (you only get one chance a year). Kathy Davis has a write-up in this newsletter. Thanks Kathy!

We have a picnic event this month, I know it is kind of short notice, but clear your calendar for July 15th, and come and enjoy some shrimp with fellow Club members. Details inside.

I would like to introduce a new, recurring monthly event, The Breakfast Club. This will be less formal than the Monthly Meeting, on Saturday mornings, and will give you a chance to show off your car (or whatever) to other club members. Details inside.

The club is gathering birthdays for members, a list is inside. Those that have e-mail, please send the information to Kevin@sunriders.com (day and month only is needed, but if you want to give us a good laugh, tell us the year). You may "snail-mail" the info to the club P.O. Box listed on the back cover.

Finally we have a famous Sunriders Autocross on the 21st, come and join Jonathan and his crew for some fast times! Please read the related article in this issue - *Diary of an Autocross Virgin* by Kim and Joshua Adams for a new-timer's view on what autocrossing is all about. Thanks Kim & Joshua!

See you at the events!

Dave Tietz



June Moon Zoom wannabes mugging it for the camera, l-r top: Dave & Dianne Tietz, Kay Pearson, new Guy Gary Lynn, Ed Link, John LaVigne, Fred Flintsone (aka. Lloyd Davis), Kathy Davis; l-r bottom: Lloyd Pearson, Karen LaVigne, Ed Simon (Eileen was there but wouldn't stay still for the camera).

The June Moon Zoom

Kathy Davis

Although Mother Nature tried hard to dampen our spirits for this adventure I am happy to report that her mission was a bust. The first annual Sun Riders June Moon Zoom was still a "howling" success for all of us brave enough to venture out into the serious deluge of water (more than we've seen in months!!!!). With many Tampa roads looking more like lakes than pavement, the real test was to see if our Miatas would float and if not could we turn around somehow and find another street that was NOT under water.

Seven Miatas and their drivers met at the Tampa Port Authority to tackle this feat. The group consisted of Ed and Eileen Simon, Gary Lynn, Ed Link, Kathy and Lloyd Davis, Lloyd and Kay Pearson, John and Karen LaVigne and of course Dave and Dianne Tietz (our event originator). The original plan of a drive across the skyway and a perfectly timed view of a sunset and moon howling had to be put aside due to the weather and a tour of the very wet roads in downtown Tampa and a visit to the Wyndham Westshore commenced. The group enjoyed a very pleasant meal and conversation at the sportsbar in the hotel.



Above: Waiting for the rain to stop... It didn't, and infact, got worse!

Below: The group enjoys a great meal at the Sports bar at the Wyatt-Wyndom after braving flooded Tampa streets.



Diary of an Autocross Virgin

Kim and Joshua Adams

On May 12, 2001, my son and I experienced Autocross for the very first time. This was to be a 17th birthday celebration for my son, Joshua, and I wanted it to be something special. Well, it was much better than I had ever hoped it would be.

I was a bit apprehensive being a "Virgin Autocross Driver" and did not quite know what to expect. My son and I did our homework by studying the Autocross site listed on the web site. Then we came prepared with car and our helmet in hand.

What I have not mentioned up to this point is that I am also a new Miata owner. Coming from a history of Mustangs, the Miata is new and exciting. My need to find out how my new toy handled without the fear of taking out a telephone pole or two outweighed the fear of looking foolish in front of all the Veteran Autocross Drivers.

Needless to say, I never felt like a fool.

On the contrary, my son and I were met on race day with smiling faces and encouragement. We were told how Autocross worked and even had the opportunity to walk around the track as many times as needed to get familiar with the layout. As we walked and talked with fellow racers, we could feel their excitement and love for the sport, which resulted in our feeling the same.

At last the moment arrived. With palms sweating, eyes wide, helmet in place, heart racing, I waited for the green light. Go! I raced at speeds, which felt like 100 mph, but in reality was about 30 mph. Twisting, turning, shifting, braking, accelerating, and then it was all over. I stopped, got out of the car with hands and legs shaking from an adrenaline rush I had never experienced before. Other racers greeted me and we talked and laughed about what we experienced. Then we were ready to go again.

We did this several times during the morning, and then we took a break for lunch. I did not know how they were going to feed all of us with that little grill, but they did

and did a wonderful job too! Lunch was filled with great food and great conversation.

We then hit the racetrack again. We raced quite a few more times and watched others do the same. We also made sure that we did our duty to watch for any cones gone astray.

After the races were finished, awards were then given. My son took the award for "Fastest Virgin - Male Division" and I for "Fastest Virgin - Female Division." Everyone then sang "Happy Birthday" to my son as he turned a beet red.

Then, it was time for the Enduro run. This is where the racer drives the track five times consecutively. Joshua did an impressive run and even came really close to our Vice President's time. That was OK; we did not hold it against Jonathan. He had not raced his car all day, so we cut him some slack this time!

Finally, it was time for the free run. This time my son and I decided to ride shotgun with one another. Being the first driver, I left the gate and heard laughter

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and fear in my son's voice the entire time around the track. I do not think he thought his mother could drive a car so fast and so carefully at the same time. Besides being late for baseball practices or doctor appointments, this was the first time he had ever seen me drive so fast. It pains me to admit, however, that my son handled the car much better than I. OUCH!

After all times were tallied, my son beat me by .11. He says that he will never let me forget it, either. I certainly hope not!

Thank you, fellow racers, for helping to make my son's birthday memorable!

A Couple Of e-mails

Ed. Note: Things got slow on the Club e-mail list for a couple of days, so Kevin Morrison and Jim Poehlman discussed some neat sounding places they visited while "working". Might be a good place to take your Miata to...

From: Kevin Morrison

To: sunriders@yahoo.com

Sent: Sunday, June 03, 2001 8:24 PM

Subject: [sunriders] random thoughts of minor interest

Kinda quiet around here, except for the birthday list (great idea Kathy!), so I thought I'd inflict a few observances on you all.

First, I just got back from a short trip to Indianapolis for a web client of mine shameless plug - www.spatechnique.com. You gotta love a city where people hang checkered flags on their porches and have "welcome race fans" banners in the front yard. And I'm not talking about the people who live right next to the Speedway. People all the way out in the 'burbs do it. I've never been a big fan of the roundy-round type of racing, but that place is truly the Mecca of racing in the US, if not the world. Lots of history.

After I finished up at my client's place Saturday afternoon, I took a little side trip to the Speedway and went to the Indy 500 museum. Lots of cool cars in there. They have a great many of the cars that have won the 500, going back to the very beginning in the 1909-1910 time frame, as well as a modern F1 car, a number of significant sports cars from the '60's (Ford GT, Maserati Birdcage, Ferrari 250) and

a few of the 500 winners from the last few years. If only I could have been there a week ago to see the big race.

It was only \$3 to get in, and well worth it. I spent about 5 minutes crouched down on the floor behind Eddie Chiever's winning 1998 car, just studying the rear suspension. It's pure art. Makes a Miata look like a Model T.

Regarding Steve Swiger's announcement of his impending reenlistment in the Miata-owner ranks, he left out some really significant details about this car. I'm assuming he's saving it for when he actually has the car and can show it off, so I won't blow his cover, but this car he's getting is pretty special, if you ask me.

Speedvision showed the 1971 Steve McQueen movie "Le Mans" last night, and I taped it so I could watch it tonight. I watched the end of it already, and dang, that is just about the coolest thing I've ever seen. They will never again be able to make a decent racing movie like that. It would just be too expensive and the insurance companies would never let an actor drive a car like Steve McQueen did in that movie.

This is one I'm going to have to get on DVD, to keep until the day when I actually have a DVD player.

Oh, I almost forgot, here's another shameless plug. I've just started a new business in my spare time. Check out www.morrisonwebtech.com If you know anybody in a corporate marketing department anywhere or someone who owns a website and needs more traffic, they are my target demographic, if you refer someone to me, I'll give you a cut.

Kevin Morrison

Team Roadster Rage

Flaming Blue Weasel Motorsports

Morrison Web Technologies

Spec Miata #89

To which Jim Poehlman replied:

I'm sitting in a motel room in Columbus, MT. I'm here for a couple days installing some Sun servers in a... Now get this... A belt buckle and Stetson hat manufacturing facility.... Yeeee Haaaa. I flew up here on Saturday (a day early for sight-seeing). I spent all day today driving through the

Beartooth mountains (DAMN I wish I had the Spykster up here) and then through the northern third of Yellowstone National Park. You know the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words?... Well, being there is worth a bazillion! If you've never been here, you gotta do it. It's incredible what this country of ours has.

I started in the local "lowlands" at around 3,500' elevation. I took route 78 out of Columbus and headed towards Wyoming. Between Columbus and the park is the Absaroka Range. To get around the range I had to drive through Beartooth Pass to an elevation just below 11,000'... And at that elevation, I drove through a heavy snow storm... Luckily I rented a new Isuzu Rodeo 6-cyl 4x4... nice vehicle for the area. Anyway, heading towards the pass was a blast... I can just imagine driving these rolling twisties in a Miata.

I entered the northeast entrance of the park, and was overwhelmed by the towering snow-capped mountains skirted by swift moving clouds. The narrow passage into the park opened wide and revealed the lush Lamar Valley. Just like Wild Kingdom, the valley was teeming with wildlife along the Yellowstone river. A pair of elk and their two young were frolicking along the river, buffalo were grazing on the acres of spring grass, and a caribou was foraging for a snack in a clearing on the mountainside... As if Disney had scripted this landscape himself.

I continued on through another range passing by Mount Washburn and Prospect Peak. I bought gas (at two bucks a gallon) at Canyon Village... The young guy that pumped my gas (self serve, not an option) was from Georgia and his grandparents live on Indian Rocks Beach. Anyway (again), I drove back towards the north by Mount Holmes, again seeing quite a few caribou and elk. I made it to Mammoth Hot Springs three hours into the park. You'd like this Kevin, being a geologist and all, the mountainside is covered and terraced with mineral deposits from the sulfur laden springs that emerge from the ground in the area.

Because of time, I didn't make it into the southern two-thirds of the park... That'll be next time, I hope.

Jim

Fall MADS and Rotary Expo

I wanted to let everyone know about this event. It is usually held in either Virginia or West Virginia. In 1999, it was held at Summit Point, West Virginia. In 2000, it was held at Virginia International Raceway (VIR), just outside of Danville, Virginia. In 2001, it will again be held at VIR. Mark your calendar for September 1&2, 2001. You may want to mark off the Friday before and Monday after as well for travel time. VIR is located on the Virginia/North Carolina state line. Last year 4 members of the RX-7 Club of Florida + a guest attended the event. I had a great time, and I am sure the others who attended enjoyed it as well! Fall MADS and Rotary Expo brings rotary and Miata owners from all over the East Coast to this track and non-track event.

For those of you wanting to run on the track. Good news. Last year we ran on just the North Course, which is 2.3 miles long. And it was awesome! The off camber

turns and upgrades and downgrades make for a fun track. However, this year the Full course will be run! It is 3.3 miles long, and has even steeper inclines/declines! Just for comparison, Sebring is 3.7 miles long and the Moroso/Homestead road courses are about 2.2 miles long. For 2000, the cost to run on both days was \$275.00 (payable in advance, but well worth it!). I have a feeling it may cost a little more to run in 2001, as we will have full use of the track.

For those of you who don't run your car on the track, there was an autocross. I do not know if there will be one again, but I would think there would be one. They had an excellent turnout for the autocross last year. Cost to run in the autocross: \$10.00 (as of 2000)

For those of you who want to show off your car, there is a car show just for RX-7s/rotaries and Miatas. There are different classes for the RX-7s and Miatas (stock, modified, sound systems, etc.). Car show costs \$5.00 to enter (as of 2000).

And for those of you who just love RX-7s or Miatas, it is a great time to just go and browse and meet people from all over. To come and watch and meet people the cost to you is FREE!

Unless you know someone who lives in Danville, VA or Milton, NC (town is closest to VIR), you'll have to figure in the cost of lodging. Food and gas are the other major expenses. Last year, the Howard Johnson in Danville, VA was the head-quarter hotel. I believe it will be the hotel of choice too. If you want to stay here, you'll want to make reservations early. There will be discounted rooms available.

For more information check out <http://www.mscw.com/schools2001.html>. This page will give information about last year's event. I am sure the page will be updated as the event progresses.

Gil Gredinger

Birthday List (so far)

January

12 Jonathan Skinner

February

07 Molly Norris
03 Ed Simon
19 Ed Link
25 Lloyd Pearson
28 Richard Oster

March

18 Joe McCormick

April

10 Lo An Nguyen-Linthicum
10 Steve Robin
11 Geena Giacimetti
28 Kay Pearson

May

02 Ryan Berringer
15 Jim Pullin
16 Joshua Adams
21 Doug Presnell
28 Dave Tietz
30 Dianne Tietz

June

16 Nicole Shaffer
17 Myk Freeman
15 Pam Barker

July

09 Beborah Oster
19 Tammy Ware
27 Judy Davis McCormick

August

08 Gary Lynn
17 Kim Adams
22 Kevin Morrison
25 Nancy Bickner
27 Ken Eldridge

September

09 George Bickner
14 Paul Williamson

October

10 Maggie Seymour
11 Lloyd Davis
14 Kathy Davis
29 Tammy Berringer

November

04 Eileen Simon
15 Henry Silva
16 Mike Benishek
18 Fritz Kloepfel
23 Jon Vielhaber

December

03 Dewaine Norris
05 Paul Shaffer
16 Doro Anderson
19 Sandi Scott
22 Andrea Shaffer
31 Don Reese

Breakfast Club

I would like to introduce a informal monthly event that has been a great success in one of my other car clubs. We do a monthly breakfast get-together, not connected with any other event, just to jaw & look at each other's mugs and cars. A club member volunteers his/her favorite restaurant and arranges for appx. 20 people to meet and have breakfast there. If there may be some interesting thing to do afterwards, that's a bonus! It should start at 9:00 am (I know we all have stuff to do on Saturdays.) I had to do 10:00 am this time, because that's when the restaurant opens!

I will start by arranging a breakfast at the French Hen Bistro at 596 North Indian Rocks Road in Bellair Bluffs. The easiest way for most of us, is to take West Bay (East Bay off of US 19 turns into West Bay. After you cross Alternate 19 it is about a mile to Indian Rocks Road. There is a Texaco gas station there. Turn north (right) and look on the left side of the street (about a quarter mile). There will be some interesting things to check out afterwards. We will be looking for a September Breakfast Club volunteer at the next meeting... We all know a few good spots (the farther, the better).

Dave

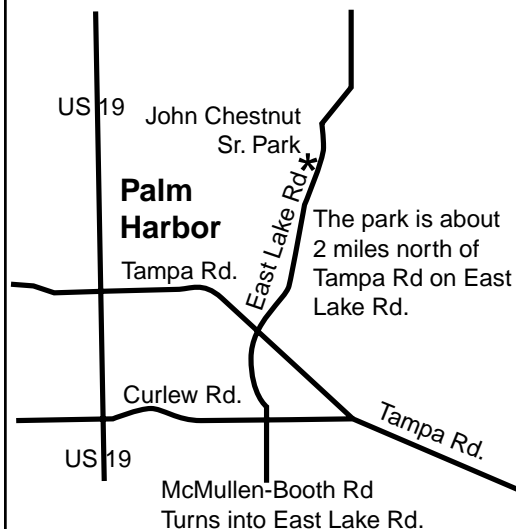
Date: August 4, 2001

Time: 10:00 am

Place: The French Hen
596 Indian Rocks Road North
Bellair Bluffs, FL
727/586-6316



Map to John Chestnut Sr. Park Shrimp in the Park Event



Club Events

We are always looking for fun activities and events. If you have an idea, don't be bashful! Something that you enjoy is likely to be enjoyed by other club members also. Contact Pam if you have suggestions for events or would like to volunteer to organize an activity.

All events are open to all Sun Riders Miata Club members, their guests, and prospective members unless otherwise noted.

If you have questions about any of our activities or events, please contact the event organizer if one is named or Pam Barker at 727-415-3217 or pam@sunriders.com.

For quick event information, or to leave a message for the club leadership, call the SunRiders' official information hotline at 813-225-4240

Shrimp In the Park

Sunday, July 15 - 12:00 PM - You are invited to the first Club Shrimp Boil, in John Chestnut Sr. Park on July 15, 2001. The Club will supply the shrimp and boiling water and you supply everything else. Bring a dish to pass, your most exotic, and your appetite. Single guys - cinnamon rolls, pies, dinner rolls are some of the items you may buy... Eh, bake for the event. If you don't like shrimp, there should be some other casseroles if the law of averages apply.

We meet in Pavilion #6. John Chestnut Sr. Park is at 2200 East Lake Road in Palm Harbor (see map at left). There is a super playground if you have kids, hiking trails and gators in the ponds (you may want to keep an eye on the kids). This is a rain or shine event (in fact it may be cooler if it rains).

Come on and get over the 4th of July celebrations with some seriously good eating!

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 17, - 6:30 PM social - 7:00 PM dinner and meeting. New meeting location at the Paradise Restaurant located at 443 Main Street in Safety Harbor. Parallel parking is available along Main Street and we will meet in the private dining room.

SunRiders Autocross

Saturday, July 21, 2001 : Series 2001 event number four. The Fourth Annual Evening Autocross. Beat the heat with us by autocrossing into the night under the lights. Registration starts at 2:00 PM, driver's meeting at 3:30. Registration closes at 3:30. Be there before 3:30 or be a spectator! This is a great way to improve your driving skills in a place where you can't get a ticket and you can't hurt your car. If you are not a member of the SunRiders, you are still welcome to participate. You don't even have to own a Miata, any type of car can come. Cost will be \$25 and that will include a lunch. Spectators can eat lunch with us for \$5. Call Jonathan Skinner at 727-784-5529 for more details. A few helmets will be available for rental for \$5. Read this short article about what to expect at a SunRiders autocross. Beginners are welcome. The event will be held at the St. Petersburg Junior College - Allstate Campus in St. Petersburg, at the Southeastern Public Safety Institute.

The Campus is located at 3200 34th Street South, St. Petersburg.

Directions from I-275 Southbound:

Take Exit #6, which is 22nd Avenue South

Directions from I-275 Northbound:

Take Exit #5, which is also 22nd Avenue South

Head West on 22nd Avenue South to 34th Street

Go left at the light onto 34th Street South. (this is also known as US 19) Head South for about a half-mile, SPJC-Allstate Center will be on your left, across from Florida Power.

Breakfast Club

Saturday, August 4, 2001 - The French Hen - details at left.

First Class Mail

Tampa, FL 33623-6071
P.O. Box 26071



Join Us at Our Club Meetings

We meet the third Tuesday of each month at the Paradise Restaurant, tire kicking starts at 6:30 pm, the meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Visit the club's web page at: www.sunriders.com

Call the Event Hotline at 813/225-4240 for the latest event information.



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