



HORIZONS

September-October 2000

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

Mystery Tour Destination Revealed!

Good lookin bunch huh? These guys bravely followed Dave & Dianne Tietz on the "Mystery Tour" to taste exotic food (Italian) and watch the "Handler" (Organist) do tunes on a "big thing" (a 1931 Wurlitzer Theater Organ). Please read the story inside (thanks Kathy Davis).

Kevin Morrison asked me if I would be the Editor of the Horizons newsletter, in addition to the same for the Update, and I have accepted. I hope to keep both newsletters informative and interesting for you to enjoy.

Speaking of Newsletters, this one is a big one! A lot of stuff happened this past month, and I have lots of pictures.

Also included is a copy of the proposed Sun Riders Constitution and Bylaws and two ballots (assuming two Members per Member Household). If you are a single Member Household, please use only one ballot to vote, throwing the other away.

It is the intention of the Board of Directors to have the club become incorporated, and having a Constitution is a step towards that goal. Please read it, and vote, either mailing your ballot back in to reach us by September 18, 2000 or bringing it to the next meeting for counting.

The adoption of the Constitution will allow election of officers and Board Members in November to conduct next year's business.

Dave Tietz



Photo by Dave Tietz

Monthly Meeting Summary

August 15, 2000

A quick note regarding the Monthly Meeting:

- * Lots of new faces including at least 4 couples who joined within the last month.
- * Vinnie Lucido was at home in Tampa after spending quite a bit of time this summer traveling the United States and brought us up to date on some recent trips to the Florida Panhandle and Phoenix, Arizona and planned trips to the UK and Netherlands.
- * A very large turnout found us adding more tables and chairs in order to squeeze everyone in.
- * Our newest member, 8 week-old Nicole, beautiful daughter of Andrea and Paul, proudly wore her first Miata club T-shirt

handmade for her by Doro Anderson.

- * Mystery Tour on August 25th is our next club event — Dave is still determined to not spill the beans regarding our destination and will not be tortured, tickled, or bribed into revealing the mystery location. He did drop a few hints though...
- * A number of other events for the remainder of the year were reviewed with details to be published in the September newsletter
- * Generous meeting attendees donated \$50 to a 50/50 pot with \$25 being raised for "Toys for Tots" which will also be the focus for other fund-raising and club activities between now and December. Ed and Eileen took home the other \$25 after Ed bought the last ticket which brought the pot up to an even \$50.

Pam Barker

Mystery Tour

August 25, 2000

If you missed the August Mystery Tour, you missed a lot of fun!

Organized by Dave and Dianne Tietz, the Mystery Tour started at the Port Authority Building in Tampa. The crowd gathered amidst a welcoming committee of rain and hail (fortunately there were covered parking spaces for us!). Did that “dampen” our spirits? No way!

The group of 23 Miatas formed a caravan and headed out to 301 for a nice drive on some open back roads where we could all enjoy a good pace and the interested looks of people passing by, wondering curiously about the long line of Miatas that just happened by on this particular nice but wet Saturday night.

After one little missed turn resulting in 23 Miatas making a U-turn to go back to the correct road (remember Dave was leading, we love ya Dave!), the group gathered at Sun City Center for a quick head count and proceeded to hit the road again, still without a clue as to our final destination.

15-20 minutes later our Mystery was solved as Dave and Dianne led us into the parking lot of Roaring 20s Pizza and Pipes in Ellenton, Florida.

At Roaring 20s we were all treated to a wonderful dinner and some spectacular music. The restaurant is infamous for its Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ. Mr. Bill Vlasak, one of 2 award-winning organists, was the hit of the show as he amazed us with his skill on the mighty organ.

The organ itself is quite a sight to see, consisting of 3,000 pipes, the largest being 16 feet in diameter while the smallest is the size of a pencil!

The food was very good and ranged from made-to-order pizzas to pasta or special sandwiches. The group of over 40 members filled a very, very long table and enjoyed the food and the music enthusiastically.

All in all, it was a very fun night and we all had a great time!

Kathy Davis

Ed. Note: Some people thought I made a mistake when we did the U-turn... Err, really what I wanted to do, was check to make sure everyone was still there, following us... Yeah, that's it, had to see if everyone was still there... Dave



We regrouped at Sun City Center for the last stage of the tour. It looked like it was clearing, and many Sun Riders put down their tops. Photo by Mark Jones.



Rain it did... And some hail, the adventurers took shelter under the covered parking spaces at the Tampa Port Authority meeting place. Photo by Mark Jones.

The Gap!

One of the Sun Riders' mid-summer highlights is a 1300 mile round-trip to the Miata Mecca of the Southeast US, Deal's Gap, NC. The attraction to this route through the foothills of the Smoky Mountains stems from a snippet of US Highway 129 that crosses the North Carolina/Tennessee border. Also known as “The Dragon” its tail boasts 318 turns in 11 miles of road. This year more than 300 spirited Miata Drivers from all over North America and parts beyond “unofficially” (due to liability reasons) gathered at a quaint mountain inn at the southern-most end of the Dragon for a weekend of driv-

ing and socializing.

This year, quite a few Sun Riders made a pilgrimage to the Dragon's lair. Dragon slayers including myself (Jim Poehlman) were Pam Barker, Jonathan Skinner, Kathy & Steve Bryce, Paul & Andrea Shaffer, Eric & Lorna Smith, Skip Willis, Paul Williamson, Cherie Turner & Cosmo.

The trip started very early on Thursday July 27th. Meeting at a rest area on I-75, Pam, Cherie, Jonathan and I headed north and picked up Kathy, Steve and Paul Williams at route 54. The caravan was forming. A couple more hours up the road we picked up Paul & Andrea who had

dropped off our youngest Sun Rider, Nicole, to spend the weekend with Andrea's folks (you bet grandma and grandpa enjoyed that). Just shy of the Florida Border, First Coast members, Dan and Becky Schaff joined the group heading north. From there to Atlanta the trip was fairly uneventful... I-75 ain't the most exciting stretch of road.

Eric and Lorna Smith, members who recently moved to Atlanta (Lawrenceville, actually), opened up their home for us that evening for a great Bar-B-Q. They also generously gave us a place to stay over night - a hearty THANKS goes out to Eric and Lorna from their wonderful hospital-

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Some Sun Riders stopped at the Chateau Elan Winery for lunch on the way up... Pretty place! Photo-Ken Cloud



L-R: Rob Ebersol, Steve Swiger, Paul Williamson, Pam Barker, Jonathan Skinner, Andy Felker, Jim Poehlman, Skip Willis, Lora Smith, Eric Smith, Paul & Andrea Shaffer. Photo-Paul Shaffer

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ity. Now it's time to fill all those bedrooms, you two!

Our first mission for Friday was to head just outside of Atlanta to the Panoz auto factory in Hoschton for a tour of their facility (www.panozauto.com). Panoz hand-builds a small variety of ultra-exclusive automobiles including the retro styled Panoz A.I.V. Roadster, The Esperante, a luxury sport convertible and the Panoz GTS, a 385 horsepower race-ready car specifically built for SCCA club events. Kevin Morrison who happened to be in the area, and members of the Peachtree club from Atlanta joined us for the factory tour.

After the tour, our large group headed to the Chateau Elan for lunch (www.chateauelan.com). Owned by Danny and Nancy Panoz, the chateau is a French-style citadel boasting a 200-acre vineyard and winery, a resort with four golf courses, and a conference center. After a few photo opportunities, the group split up and went in two directions.

As half of the group made the final few hours drive to the Tapoco Lodge at Deal's Gap, the rest of us drove out to Road Atlanta Raceway to meet Steve Swiger and the owner/drivers of Roadster Rage Racing (www.ebersol.com/rr). Rob Ebersol and Andy Felker were participating in an open track day sponsored by the local area SCCA. This year these guys are campaigning a '99 Miata in the Motorola Cup Street Stock Championship. Today Rob and Andy were attempting to sort out

some glitches that may have been a result of installing some new performance parts. At one point we removed the crank angle sensor from my car and put it in the race car in order to troubleshoot a suspected problem. After a few hours, we left the raceway and headed to the Gap. Steve and the Roadster Ragers were going to finish the day, pack up, and meet us at the lodge.

A few hours later and after a quick jaunt through "The Snake", another twisty mountain road, we made it to the Tapoco Lodge just after dark. The sight of hundreds of Miatae is amazing. Just about every year, color, and edition are represented when Miataphiles gather. After a couple hours of car gazing and gabbing, we retired to our cabins.

Saturday was spent socializing and making numerous runs through the gap. Though local law enforcement's presence was felt in other ways, the ability to test one's bravery and concentration while briskly navigating the tail of The Dragon was most joyously tolerated. Saturday evening brought cool weather, a few bugs, and live bluegrass music generating a cozy social atmosphere for all attendees. It also prompted a new tradition.... See the following story.

With morning dew dripping off the blanket of mountain kudzu, Sunday arrived with an early breakfast, a few quick good-byes, and a great group photo-op. Some went on to other destinations and a few stopped in Atlanta, but four of us made the non-stop trip from Tapoco Lodge to Tampa. The trip

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Skip Willis & the Mistress negotiate a section of Deal's Gap, NC. Photo-Skip Willis

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home was uneventful, except for a major storm in Lake City that prompted us to pull over for an hour or so.

For the trip I mounted a remote camera in the "mouth" of my Miata connected to a camcorder in the cockpit. In conjunction

with a microphone under the hood, I recorded three runs though the Gap including a night run inducing a great adrenaline rush... Not recommended for those with heart conditions or those apt to be affected by motion sickness! Great footage was captured and I plan to show excerpts at the next

couple monthly meetings.

For those of you who have never made a Deal' Gap trip, it's a must... At least once. This trip reminds me of one of my favorite quotes from the late Enzo Ferrari - "Only those who dare, truly live."

Jim Poehlman



Which Club had the biggest banner... Huh?

Photo by Ken Cloud



A bunch of Miatae at the Gap. If you want to see what other

people spend on their cars, you gotta go! Photo by Paul Shaffer

The Rumor

I can neither confirm nor deny the event as it was related to me after the fact by "Stealth Couple". This brings a whole new take on "buffing out the car".

It begins around 2:00 AM, with both parties getting sleepy. Around 2:30...

"She" says: "I can't sleep",

"He" responds with "Me neither".

"She" suggests: "How about a night run at the Gap?"

"He" flies out of bed and says "Let's go!"

It would appear that the story is a little convoluted at this point, but ONE of them suggests that the run be performed sans garments, and both parties note that there are still people milling around the Tapoco parking lot. It was agreed that the nude portion of the run would start at the Crossroads of Time.

"He" asks: "Your car, or the 'Mistress'?"

"She" replies: "Doesn't matter, but I get sick in the passenger side, so I'm driving"

"He" briefly considers the extra safety of the sport package, fog lights, and the roll bar in the "Mistress" but quickly remembers her driving style and that "She" got

TWO tickets by FOUR different gendarmes between Robbinsville and Tapoco that day, and smartly retorts: "Yours, but the dog stays here, unless you clip his nails first."

Out the door they go in their pajamas, drop the top, fire up the ride, head down the lane and out the gate. At the Crossroads, they pull the car off the road, then pull the clothes off: Sun Rider history in the making.

"She" says "The car can leave skid marks on the road, but you can't leave any on the leather" and tosses him a towel for the seat. Before he can get the belt adjusted, the wheels are spinning and the journey began.

After "She" power slides the car around the first switch-back on the NC side, "He" notes a "pucker factor", and that the towel is becoming closer to his body. As they cross the TN border, they both have arms in the air like a roller coaster ride. YYYAAAHHHHOOO !! The first section of the road is uneventful... Just trying to adjust for the limited sight distances. At one point, "He" sees either a very large rabbit or a very small deer bound across the road and up into the woods. When "He" tells "her" this, "She"

says something about deer always coming in groups, but she is faster... "She" steps on the throttle, and "He" feels the towel becoming less comfortable. The TN switch-backs arrive in sequence, and the short "straights" along the open cliff face... With tires squealing, "He" senses that the towel may now be permanently attached, and has a fleeting thought of how his mother always recommended clean underwear in case of an accident... And wonders how that applies in this situation.

In what seems like a few seconds, they arrive that the dual overlook, and "She" turns around and parks, stating that "She" is a little queasy from the "tunnel vision" of the headlight beam in the curves, and wants to rest for a few minutes. "He" suddenly realizes the opportunity at hand... A starry night... Still breeze... Two naked bodies in a roadster on a desolate stretch of road... Etc. Just as "He" gets the towel dislodged and starts to lean over... "She" has the car in gear, the clutch out, and gravel flying. Darn.

With the constraints of nausea setting in, "She" makes the return pace quite leisurely. Only thing of any note was a fox bounding across the road... About the

Continued on page 5

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From page 4

same place as the earlier deer sighting... Must be the deep woods equivalent of the late night Taco Bell drive through...

"He" is suddenly very cold... And notes that "She" has turned on the A/C. "He" asks: "It's 3:00 AM, and we're naked... Why the \$%\$# do you have the A/C on ??!!"

"She" reminds him that she is still a little queasy, and the cold air helps. "He" reminds himself that it is "her" car...

"He" considers using the towel for warmth, but remembers where he just removed it from... Being cold won out.

As they approach the Crossroads, they decide to make the entire trip back "au natural". Through the gate... Up the lane... Park the car... Top up... Run into the cabin... No witnesses.

"She" presents the dilemma: "I don't have a key to the cabin... Do you?"

"He" responds with: "No, I didn't bring a room key either... I'm obviously not wearing anything with a pocket !!"

Cosmo the wonder-dog is now peering out the window at them with a very puzzled look on his face... "Houston, we have a problem". Luckily, the window was unlocked... And "Stealth Couple" get back inside without unneeded em-bare-ament.

And so... The Sun Riders tradition of "Coed Naked Gapping" began.

From an anonymous source

Ed. Note: If we could just figure out who has a car named the "Mistress" we might figure out who these people were.

Pam Barker's Father passed away September 3, 2000. Our sympathy to Pam and her family.

Sun Riders Miata Club come on out and join in the...

Coastal Clean Up Sept. 16, 2000 - Fort De Soto Park

Group will meet at 9 am at Bay Pier, Fort De Soto (Tierra Verde, Florida) (9-noon is the time frame) trash bags, data cards and pencils provided by Tampa Bay Watch

What to wear and bring: Wear close-toed "wet-able" shoes, cool, comfortable clothing, drinking water, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.

I will bring a camera and first aid kit and Lloyd has volunteered to bring a truck to collect our "findings". We will have a Club provided lunch afterwards.

Let's have some fun! (let me know if you need a map) Contact Kathy Davis at 586-5111 or via e-mail at Davka62000@aol.com ASAP to sign up!

Directions: To get to Fort Desoto, take Interstate 275 to Exit 4 in south Pinellas County. Head west along Pinellas Bayway, passing the first toll booth. At the intersection in the Isla Del Sol community, turn south on the Bayway (which also is marked as County Road 679). Continue on through the second toll booth to the park. Enter the park and proceed along the main road. Stop at the T-intersection in front of the Park offices and turn right. There will be a sign for the Bay Pier on your left.



We have a celebrity in the club! The photo and e-mail from Kathy Davis

From: <Davka62000@a...>
Date: Fri Aug 11, 2000 1:43 am
Subject: just had to share....

Do you think I will still fit in my Miata in my new work outfit? :)

Dave, this is the debut of the costume, it is brand new and this is the first "sighting" of it in public! I wore it to spark enthusiasm for the Val-Pak Muscular Dystrophy Bowl-A-Thon, a fund-raiser that the company does every year. We raised almost \$10,000 and we had a spot on channel 28 to "show me" off.

Kathy

Ain't She Cute!

You've heard about her, here she is! Nicole (daughter of Paul and Andrea Shaffer), the youngest Sun Rider. Check out the Sun Rider T-Shirt made by Doro Anderson.



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The Sun Riders Miata Club thanks all our sponsors for the advertising they place in our newsletter. Please consider them when looking for products & services.

Upcoming Events

Coastal Cleanup at Fort Desoto

Saturday, September 16th - 9:00 AM - The Sun Riders will help the community by picking up trash and debris at Fort Desoto Beach as part of the Tampa Bay Coastal Cleanup day. Meet at 9:00 am at the Bay Pier inside the park. The club will provide lunch at noon for all our volunteers. Please RSVP to Kathy Davis at 727-586-5111 or davka62000@aol.com so that we may plan for supplies and food. For additional details, please see the top of page 5.

Monthly Meeting at Jimmy Mac's

Tuesday, September 19th - 6:30 PM kick the tires - 7:00 PM dinner and meeting. We meet the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Jimmy Mac's Marina restaurant in Tampa. This casual eatery is located block south of Tampa's Gandy Blvd at Bridge Avenue which is one block west of Westshore Blvd. Look for the large Imperial Marina sign on Gandy Blvd, turn south onto Bridge Avenue, and then right into the marina parking lot at the small Jimmy Mac sign. The restaurant phone number is 813-839-3449. We will celebrate the 5th anniversary of the founding of the Sun Riders Miata club, review the proposed Constitution and Bylaws, and vote on their adoption.

MCA 2nd Annual Poker Run and Bar-be-que

Saturday, September 23th - Miata Club of America headquarters, Suite D, 6850 Shiloh Road East, Alpharetta, GA. Please RSVP by September 15th to MCA at 770-205-8832. (non-club event)

Third annual Dine and Drive

Saturday, September 23rd - 5:00 pm Meet at Freedom Lake Park which is located at 9990 46th Street North in Pinellas Park, immediately southeast of the intersection of US 19 and 49th Street North. Approach the park from 49th Street and enter via the curved road at the entrance sign for the "The Lakes" subdivision. You can't miss the full size jet and extra-large American flag which are displayed near the front of the park. Please RSVP to Pam Barker.

Petit LeMans at Road Atlanta

September 27th - 30th - On Saturday, September 30th, a Miata Corral sponsored by Peachtree Miata Club and MCA will welcome Miata-driving spectators to Road Atlanta in Braselton, Georgia. For more information, contact Michael Opalak at 678-361-3998 or 1-800-849-7223. (non-club event)

Tech Session, Swap Meet, and Dent Removal at Cottman Transmission

Sunday, October 1st - 1:00 - 3:00 (or later if cars are still being worked on). This will be an opportunity to change your oil, install after-market accessories, or simply observe other car projects. This is also your chance to clean out your garage and sell, give away, or swap your usable car accessories and supplies—used or new. And if you have dents and dings, Kevin Byrd from Allied Dent Repair will be available to perform paintless dent repair at a nominal cost. John and Brant LiVigne will be around to help out and air tools, hand tools, and two car lifts will be available for members to use. Cottman Transmission is located at 3128 9th Street North in St. Petersburg. The shop phone number is 727-822-1033. Please note: due to limited space, this event is open to Sun Riders Miata Club members only.

Dinner and a Movie

Saturday, October 7th - 5:00 PM - When was the last time you went to a drive-in movie? We'll meet at the MacDonald's parking lot located just north of the intersection of Highways 41 and 54 in Tampa and drive over to Dade City for dinner followed by a drive-in movie at the Joy-Lan Drive-In Theater and Swap Shop (gotta love it!)

Board meeting at Jimmy Mac's

Monday, October 9th - 7:00 PM dinner and meeting. All Sun Riders Miata Club members are welcome to meet with club officers, board members, and committee chairs and discuss club goals and plan next year's activities.

Street Car and Hot-Rod Show at Burger King

Saturday, October 14th - 6:30 PM. Cars of every description, disc jockey, contests, and door-prizes at a weekly gathering at Burger King at 3911 Van Dyke Road (corner of North Dale Mabry and Van Dyke) in Tampa. Restaurant phone number is 813-269-0667. Eat supper ahead of time or plan on grabbing a sandwich or snack at Burger King.

Monthly Meeting at Lindell Mazda - "2001: A Sports Car Odyssey"

Tuesday, October 17th - 6:30 PM kick the tires - 7:00 PM dinner and meeting. This will be a special meeting at sponsor Lindell Mazda in St. Petersburg to celebrate the arrival of the 2001 model year Miatas. We will have a catered dinner, door-prizes, and other special activities. Please RSVP to Pam Barker at 727-415-3217 or pam@sunriders.com by Sunday, October 15th so that we may plan appropriately. At this meeting, we will also be accepting nominations for club officers and directors for the upcoming calendar year with elections to be held in November.

Sunday Drive to Howie-in-the-Hills

Sunday, October 22nd - day trip - A pleasant drive in the rolling hills of Central Florida followed by a gourmet brunch at the mission-style Howie-in-the-Hills golf resort. Please contact Ilona Wessling at 727-376-2484 for more details.

Daytona 2000 - Miatas in Paradise

Tuesday October 24th - Friday, October 27th - National Miata Event. Sponsored by the six Florida Miata Clubs, Miata Club of America, and Mazda North America. A limited number of spaces are still available for the annual national Miata gathering. There will be many activities from which to choose and literally hundreds of Miatas and their owners from all over North America and beyond gathering in Daytona Beach. See www.Miata2000.com for more information or contact Jonathan Skinner at 727-784-5529 or jonathan@sunriders.com.

Evolution Performance Driving School at Buckingham Field in Fort Myers

Friday, October 27th - This one-day autocross school put on by Evolution Performance Driving School will feature nationally ranked autocrossers as instructors. For more information, contact Darrin DiSimo at 954-757-2298 or ddisimo@gate.net. (non-club event)

Halloween Tricks and Treats

Saturday, October 28th - evening event - You're never too old for Halloween tricks and treats. Join the Sun Riders for a fun evening as we take a short drive to a ghoulish destination followed by a few sweet treats.

International Auto Show at Tampa Bay Convention Center

Saturday, November 4th - Meet for breakfast and then "ooh" and "aah" over the 2001 models and concept cars.

Fall Fuel-Up Antique Engine Show in Ft. Meade

Saturday, November 11th - Leave first thing in the morning for a pleasant drive to Ft. Meade and the Fall Fuel-Up Antique Engine and Tractor Show. Interesting things to see, musical entertainment, and good food. For more information, contact John LaVigne at 727-526-6695 or jaxton@tampabay.rr.com or check the event web site at www.old-engine.com/fallfuel.htm.

Please note:

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

The November autocross has been canceled due to difficulties in site scheduling. Our next autocross will be on Sunday, January 21st and will be preceded by a one-day autocross school on Saturday, January 20th.

Though we have enjoyed our monthly meetings at Jimmy Mac's, we are outgrowing this location. Please contact Pam if you have suggestions for other local restaurants with private meeting rooms.

We are always looking for fun activities and events. If you have a good 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.

And a big "thank you!" to Dave and Dianne Tietz who organized our August Mystery Tour and to Jim Poehlman, Kathy and Lloyd Davis, Ilona and Joe Wessling, and John and Karen LaVigne who are planning upcoming events.

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. You may also call the Sun Riders Miata Club Event Hot Line at 813-225-4240 for the latest updates or to leave a message.

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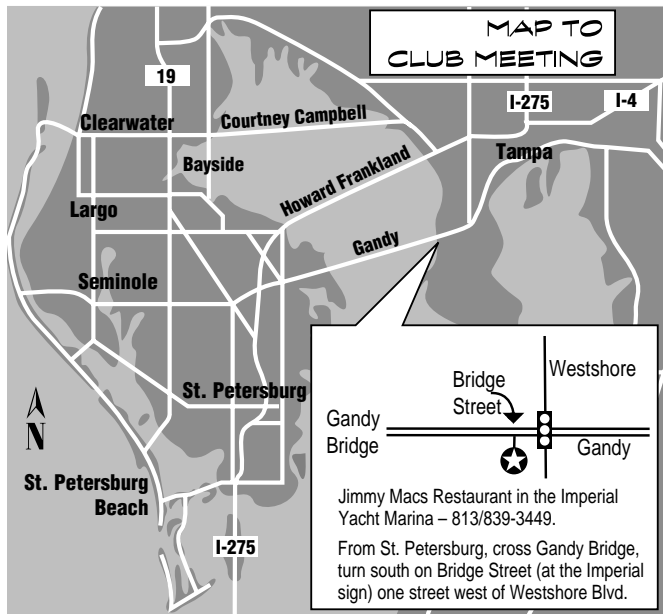


Join Us at Our Club Meetings

We meet the third Tuesday of each month at Jimmy Macs 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.



If you received this newsletter and are not a member of our club, please consider this an invitation to join.

President	Pam Barker	727/415-3217 (pam@sunriders.com)
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