



Catch the fever - Olympic fever, that is..

by Mark Brooks

he 2008 Summer Olympic Games, officially known as the Games of the XXIX Olympiad is a Summer Olympics event, that will be held in Beijing, People's Republic of China from August 8 to August 24, 2008 and followed by the 2008 Summer Paralympics from September 6 to September 17. 10,500 athletes are expected to compete in 302 events in 28 sports, just one event more than was on the schedule of the 2004 games. The 2008 Beijing Olympics will also mark the third time that Olympic events will have been held in the territories of two different National Olympic Committees (NOC): at the 2008 Olympics, equestrian events will be held in Hong Kong, which competes separately from mainland China.

The Olympic games were awarded to Beijing after an exhaustive ballot of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on July 13, 2001. The official logo of the games, titled "Dancing Beijing," features a stylised calligraphic character jīng, meaning capital, referencing the host city. The mascots of Beijing 2008 are the five Fuwa, each representing both a color of the Olympic rings and a symbol of Chinese culture. The Olympic slogan, One World, One Dream, calls upon the world to unite in the Olympic spirit. Several new NOCs have also been recognised by the IOC.

The Chinese government has promoted the games to highlight China's emergence on the world stage and has invested heavily in new facilities and transportation systems. A total of 37 venues will be used to host the events including 12 newly constructed venues. Earlier in 2007, former IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch had said that he believes that the Beijing games will be "the best in Olympic history."

-wikipedia.com



Robins' Nest

by Robin George

Hello everyone. This has been an interesting month. I have had my Miata (TOBARR) since 1996. Since that time I have added to her (notice the female reference) mainly cosmetic items. A little gold trim here and there, a style bar, and kept her nice and shiny. Well this month I got up the nerve to add a little muscle and do some serious cosmetic surgery. With the help of my bus money and Uncle George I bought a SUPERCHARGER. The newly California approved MP62 with all the trimmings. With the help of Joe Rainbolt (actually I helped him) we were able to install a new timing belt, water pump, radiator, and SUPERCHARGER at his home. It goes like crazy. It used to zoom before, (ask the wife?), but now it zoom zooms. If you want to become one with your little car this is certainly the way to do it. It tested my patience when I had pinched a wire that knocked out my dash cluster and it only took me 3 days to find it. Grrrrr Now I have a couple more items to add (clutch, flywheel, and pressure plate) and the most important of all, save some money for the premium fuel it now uses.

Another part of this month has been my ears. They have been blocked for several months now and when I talk it probably sounds like I have been shouting and talking from inside a jar. Thank you for your patience. The ears have been filling with liquid and the Doctors are finally going to operate to clear the blockage. One good aspect is that I have learned to read lips pretty good and I can't hear the wife's frequency on selected occasions. Here is an idea, Ralph Gingrich driving (I'll be his eyes) and he can be my ears. That will be fun. It's rough getting old. Mick Jagger turned 65 yesterday. Ouch!!

I was contacted earlier in July by the Towe Museum about having an exhibit at the state fair. The Fair is going to allow Auto Clubs (that's us) to bring our vehicles onto the fair grounds to be viewed. Since we have so many events on our weekends we are pretty booked during the fair, but we have several souls who will participate on Sunday August 24th. We were also able to get a second date if we want during the weekday. Tuesday August 19th. The area will be between the Horseracing Grandstand and first exhibit building. It will be covered and security provided. The beer garden is right next door. Free admission for several with each car. If you would like to show off, let me know and give you more details. We may also have prizes for those who participate. If you are going to the Fair this year please stop by and view the different clubs and of course your club if your there on our dates. An exhibit at the fair is a great way to drum up new members and get the word out about the Best Automobile Club in California. See and hear you soon.

Treasure Trove

by Jeanne George

WELCOME to these new members joining in July

Richard and Teri Dart
Steve Smith
Astrid Senger-Gibbons and Erik Ringelberg
Mario Lavoie
Richard Holland
Terese Davis and Jimmy Carter
David and Sunny Kira

Memberships Expiring August 1

Callaghan, Jim & Sandy
Garner, Gerald
Gentilli, Noelle & David Lask
Hunt, Randall & Pam
LaFler, Kenneth
Patterson, Ben/Ronnie
Souza, Shelia & John
Stewart, James
Thomas, Sharon & Rick
Vance, Eric/Ann
Wright, Mac & Jean

Memberships Renewed during June 21-30

Chermak, Ray & Susan Willet
Hahn, JR & Susie
McClure, Jim & Jackie

Memberships Renewed during July

Zander, Ron
Leininger, Jan
Kathi Bell and Vince Weis
Sipe, Mike & Jenn
Patterson, Ben & Ronnie
Dugan, Cathy & Michael

July Meeting Notes

by Jeanne George

Despite the smoke filled sky and hot temperature, 38 members ventured to Coco's Restaurant for the monthly meeting. That represented 20% of the membership. On the other hand, three Officers stepped forward to run the show. Due to vacations and illness, President Robin, Vice-president Mike and I blended to cover for our fellow Officers.

Robin started with his usual opening speech. He mentioned that Secretary, Pam was in Nebraska and that I was filling in for her. He presented me with a box of Crayons in order to keep notes for Pam and history. Robin indicated our Events Coordinator, Jack and Tech man, Mark were elsewhere....he wasn't sure, as he admitted he has no control of his Officers. Media man, Ron had become ill and unable to attend, so the group was stuck with us. Robin advised the group that a recent National Survey determined that the average person in the United States walked 900 miles in a year. That survey also reported that each person consumed 18.6 gallons of alcohol each year. Robin took the research further and determined that as a result we are each averaging 48.3 miles to the gallon. He told the group about our recent San Diego trip and the Miata club meeting we attended while we were there.

Next he threw me to the wolves, I mean crowd. I informed the group I would do Pam's Secretary Report first. I asked "How many people read the BOO Meeting or General Meeting Notes on the website?" I looked up and saw a sea of blank faces and no raised hands. My quick response was "Good, so I don't have to take detailed notes." I reported that

our Club had grown to 110 memberships, consisting of 177 people and 118 Miatas.

Kicking into Treasurer Mode, I held up a SAMOA logo canvas bag. I asked "How many people have one of these bags?" A few hands went up. I explained that the bag was a recognition award. It was part of a program Robin had instituted in 1999 to recognize Club members who had made a contribution. In 1999 the awards were engraved coffee mugs and 2000 the canvas bags. "Well I still use mine. Recently I celebrated my Birthday, and always being diligent about my Treasurer duties, I bought myself a new tool." I pulled out an 8 1/2 x 11 inch calculator! This brought laughs of understanding as we are losing our preferred eye sight. Next, I reminded members of the upcoming Birthday Picnic at the Windwalker Winery. (An article is in the events section of this newsletter and also the web site.) I mentioned to newer members, that they can order name badges and the forms are on the web site.

Mike stepped up to introduce the new members attending the meeting that night. Brenda Murray was introduced and indicated she had a black 2000 Miata, which her dogs love and that she was their chauffer. She was asked why she bought the car and her reply was "I wanted to go topless!" Mike McGuire indicated he had a 1990 Red. He lives in Grass Valley and works in Folsom. He indicated he was a Project Manager that involved tracking inmate movement. Mario Lavoie has returned to the Club after a period of absence due to health reasons. He has a 1994 Montego Blue named Bert. Richard Holland joins SAMOA from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Richard has a 1997 dark Green and says "you don't get to enjoy Miatas in Canada too much." His work recently transferred him to the Sacramento area. He is looking for a place to live then his family will join him. He decided this meeting was a good place to meet fellow Miata owners.

Mike and Robin took turns announcing the upcoming events. You can find them listed on the web site. Ron does a good job of updating and adding information when he receives it. Robin asked how many people check the web site regularly. Mac Wright indicated he was a "Luddite and that explains why I get along so well with the web site." When asked what it was, he told the group "it's your word for the day, look it up."

Mike stepped up wearing his Olympic swim goggles to announce the upcoming SAMOA Faux Summer games. This quickly drew inquiries of "Where is your speedo?"

Skip Noyes spoke a little about the upcoming Scrabble Scramble 2008 event. He has been working on a route and thinks attendees will enjoy it. He told the group that Denise had received the \$1000 check from Mazda. This sponsorship check helps fund the banquet dinner.

Robin introduced the Crazy Red Italian, Dave DeNuzzo. He stepped up to remind owners that with the high temperatures to watch for overheating and air conditioning problems in their Miatas. He also answered some tech questions and indicated he is now listed in the Yellow Pages under Miata Specialist. Dave thanked the members for their business and indicated his appreciation of their trust. He will not be at next month's meeting but you can contact him by email or phone.

The raffle was held and the meeting was adjourned. The delta breeze had rolled in and allowed for visiting in the parking lot.

"Luddite n (1) any opponent of technological progress (2) one of the 19th century English workman who destroyed labor-saving machinery that they thought would cause unemployment.

Upcoming Events

by Jack Parker

It appears that August is going to be a fun time to be a Miata owner and a member of the club. Although only two events are planned at this time they are going to be interesting and fun. We start off with the Faux Olympics on August 23, sponsored by Mike and Helen DeLaurentis. They write:

Participate in Olympic games just as world-class athletes are doing the same in China this summer. Our games, however, are designed so everyone can compete regardless of your

athletic ability. Compete as a team or as an individual. The \$10.00 per person entry fee covers the cost of the game equipment, Olympic stadium rental, and a barbecued lunch. Send your entry form and fee to SAMOA, 1864 Bridge Creek Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833. You are guaranteed to have fun!

Mike and Helen's events are always well planned and a little offbeat and fun. A laugh or two is always guaranteed. Your entry form can be downloaded from our website. What is not mentioned is the gathering place is at the Denny's in Newcastle just off I80 at the Newcastle/Indian Hill Road exit. I believe a 9:30 gathering time is planned. Mike and Helen can be contacted at (916) 791-9418.

The day following the Olympics, August 24, is a planned daylong exhibit at the California State Fair. This is a first for the club as well as the fair to host car clubs. Robin and Jeanne write:

We have been approached by the director of the Towe Auto Museum about a new project this year, a daily, revolving car club show at the California State fair. The show represents a unique opportunity for our club to participate in a celebration of California's unique motor vehicle culture. Each club will be assigned a date on which to present a minimum of six cars plus accompanying information about their club and activities. We have been able to secure Sunday, August 24th. The show will be located under tents in front of the entrance to the Cal Expo Grandstand, and the cars will be exhibited from open to close on that day. A minimum of 2 club members will be present at the exhibit at all times. Assistance in layout, set-up and execution of our presentation will be provided.

Each participant will receive free admission to the Fair on our show day, including parking, plus 2 additional free tickets to be used on any day of the Fair. Contact Robin George at robin@winfirst.com or at (916) 359-2627.

More details need to be worked out on this one but it provides us with a great opportunity to showcase our cars and provide information to prospective members.

Those are the only two events officially planned for August. As usual though, there are informal/impromptu events. August 11 is a Sierra Nevada ride over a few mountain passes that will take most of the day. Highway 395, 88, 89, Sonora Pass, Carson Pass and other scenic places are planned with some road never before taken. A Planned meeting at 8 in the morning at Mar Sha Tes in Rancho Murieta and departure shortly thereafter.

August 17 will be an "impromptu" return to Kirkwood Inn. A planned 8:30 departure for omelet's and pancakes. We may even take the long way home, whatever that is. The route will be different than our previous event to the same location. No rsvp is required for any of these unscheduled runs and they will be spirited with radar detectors on.

Most impromptu

Just a quick mention and reminder about our club picnic that is September 21. Our route this year will include a poker run

to Windwalker Winery with proceeds being donated to the winner's choice of preselcted charities. Incahoots will provide the lunch. More on this next month. You can always check our website to get all the details

Scrabble Scramble is planned for October 4. The start location is in Folsom again this year. Denis is asking that if you are planning on attending that you get your registration in by August 29. Denise can be reached at correiadenise@yahoo.com.

SCCA has four autocross days on the schedule. August 9 and 10 and August 30 and 31 are all held in Stockton at the fairgrounds. More information can be found on their website at <http://www.sfrscca.org/solo2/Sacramento/sacschd2008.htm>. You can also contact myself at 916 698 2006, culdad@svics.com or any of the other drivers.

Upcoming SAMOA and Local Events



- Sat Aug 2 - Preston Castle Tour
- Thurs Aug 14 - SAMOA Club Meeting
- Fri-Sun Aug 15-17 - Monterey Historics
- Sat Aug 23 - SAMOA Faux Olympiad
- Sun Aug 24 - Miatas at the State Fair
- Thurs Sept 11 - SAMOA Club Meeting
- Sun Sept 21 - SAMOA Birthday Picnic
- Sat Sept 27 - Miatapalooza
- Sat Oct 4 - Scrabble Scramble 2008
- Thurs Oct 9 - SAMOA Club Meeting
- Fri-Mon Oct 10-13 - Weekend in Ft. Bragg
- Sat Nov 8 - Teddy Bear Run
- Thurs Nov 13 - SAMOA Club Meeting

SAMOA Events Information

by Jeanne George

Since September of 2007, the SAMOA Club has 57 new members. We are approaching the season of many long standing Annual Events. As an Officer, we tend to talk about these events as if everyone knows what we are talking about. I realized that many of the new members do not know what these events entail. I will provide an explanation of the major upcoming events. Additional details are posted on the web site and also in the newsletter as the event date approaches. As part of the BOO (Board of Officers), I hope you will come out and enjoy the fun of these traditional events.

Special Event: SAMOA Faux Olympiad Saturday, Aug 23

This is the brainchild of Mike and Helen DeLaurentis. They hosted a fun-filled Faux Winter Olympics a couple years ago. Due to that success, this year the event is moved to an Olympic park. The games are designed so that everyone can compete. You can sign up as a couple or an individual competitor. This event is not limited to membership. If you have co-workers or friends that you think would enjoy this event, sign them up with you as a team. None of the games have anything to do with your Miata. It's all about the fun.

Upcoming Annual Events

SAMOA 18th Birthday Celebration Sunday, Sept 21:

October 13, 1990, 13 Miata enthusiasts met at Carmichael Park and started what is now known as the Sacramento Area Miata Owners Association. Over the years the club has recognized the anniversary of that date. The Board of Officers hosts this event which is open to all club members. The day will include an organized drive, wine tasting at Windwalker Winery, Bocce Ball, catered BBQ lunch, and other activities. This is a great chance to meet other members, especially when your schedule doesn't allow for you to attend the monthly meetings

Scrabble Scramble 2008 Friday, Saturday, October 3-4

This event was introduced several years ago by Genny and Bob Paauwe and they presented it for two years. This is Chairperson, Denise Correia's 4th year for this event. The event consists of several different activities.

Scrabble Scramble provides a set of written directions and maps that lead you on a predetermined course. Miatas are released at timed intervals instead of driving as a group. There are multiple stops along the way called Tile Stops. At each Tile Stop you check in with the stop workers and draw 2 Scrabble Game tile letters. You mark your letters on a worksheet; the workers mark a master list. Unlike Scrabble, the point value on your tile does not mean anything. At the end of the drive, you try to make words that are listed on the authorized word list provided to you. Each word has its own point value and there are bonus words or points available. You are given instructions when to turn in your highest value point word. At the banquet dinner, awards are presented for various winners.

Friday night: SAMOA sponsors and Denise hosts a hospitality Suite. This is a chance for Sacramento area and out of town guests to stop in for snacks, wine, water, meet new people and the always entertaining chance to talk with Denise. She provides the registration packages to the attendees.

Saturday: activities include a Car Show, pre-planned driving route instructions, Scrabble Stops, lunch, and dinner at the awards banquet co-sponsored by Mazda North American Operations and SAMOA.

Ft. Bragg Weekend

Friday-Sunday, October 10-13

This is SAMOA's longest running event. Fran Rowell, JoAnne and Ralph Gingrich have organized this event for over 10 years. Their helpers include Kathi Bell and Vince Weis who have organized the driving route. This event usually has a group leader for people departing on Friday with wine and lunch stops and another leader for the group departing on Saturday for a more direct route. The Best Western has a Cottage which is used for socializing, wine drinking, eating, playing games, and fun.

Fran and Ralph plan to organize a Saturday night dinner for people to enjoy. A reservation for this dinner is necessary for them to purchase adequate food. Other things you can do in Ft. Bragg include the Skunk Train, shopping, wine tasting, the local Brewery, gathering seashells, and watching the sunset. Be sure to watch for deadline dates for the hotel Miata Group Discount.

Teddy Bear Toy Run

Saturday, November 8

This will be SAMOA's 8th year of having a toy run prior to the holidays. Jack Parker has organized this event for the past several years. He has again selected the Teddy Bear Run to benefit the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento, located at 3555 Auburn Blvd. Jack collects the bears and toys and takes them to the Home. He is organizing the driving route and meal stop. Now is the time to look for sales for the upcoming event. If you are unable to attend the Run, you can bring the unwrapped gifts to the September or October monthly meeting and give them to Jack. Let's make this our largest donation yet.

Christmas Party

Saturday, December 6

This is your chance to start your holiday season off with a festive dinner with fellow Miata friends. Get out of your Miata driving gear and dress in your festive finest. Once again, Gundi Bechthold has offered to take the responsibility of organizing the event. It will be held at the Lion's Gate Restaurant in McClellan Park off of Watt Avenue. Watch for menu information on the web site and the newsletter.

Annual Business Meeting

Thursday, December 11

At this meeting Elections for Officers for 2009 will take place. There are 7 positions to be filled: President, Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary, Events, Tech, and Media Director. Now is the time to start thinking how you would like to contribute to your club. The meeting takes place at the Coco's Restaurant where are monthly meetings are held.



SAMOA Club Picnic - Sunday Sept 21

by Jeanne George

SAMOA Club will celebrate its 18th Birthday with a picnic at the Windwalker Winery. The owners of Windwalker have graciously allowed us to use their facilities. This will be our 3rd year at this location. In addition to wine tasting, a BBQ lunch, meeting other members, and having fun, a bocce ball tournament will be offered for those interested. Or you can purchase a bottle of Windwalker wine and sit in the shade and watch the activities. The winery is located at 7360 Perry Creek Road, Somerset (530 620-4054).

Incahoots Restaurant from Plymouth will cater the event. Our menu will be sliced tri-tip on a French roll, green salad, potato salad, soda, water, and of course desserts. Lunch is planned for noon.

The day will begin with an organized drive to the winery (still in the planning stage), or you can drive there on your own.

The cost will be \$15 per person, payable in advance. At registration the day of the event, your money will be returned to you. Each active membership qualifies for two ticket refunds.

RSVP for this event is required by September 15. Contact Jeanne George at jeanne@winfirst.com to place ticket orders or call 916 359-2627. Send checks payable to SAMOA and mail to 1864 Bridgecreek Dr., Sacramento, CA 95833. Checks must be received by September 18th.

If you pay for tickets, but find yourself unable to attend, please notify me to cancel your attendance by September 18th for a full refund. No refund after the caterer is given the final headcount on September 18th.

Come out and enjoy the fun. Your Board of Officers (BOO) is working on additional ideas and plans which will be updated in future newsletters.

Jeanne George

Treasurer



Quad County Run to Downieville

by Mike DeLaurentis

Between the temperature and air quality the week leading up to the July 12 Quad County Run to Downieville it was the worse we've seen it in the 12 years we've lived here. One article I read said that when California became a state, and before Fire Departments were established, the summer air was always smoky as forest fires raged out of control for months until they burned themselves out or the Winter rains arrived. Makes you wonder why it was named the Golden State as opposed to the Gray state. In any event 13 SAMOANS braved the heat and smoke and drove with us to Downieville on July 12th.

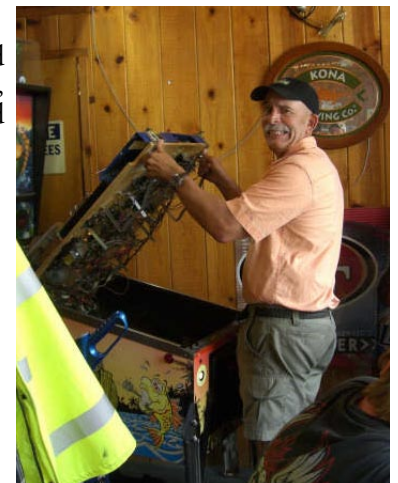
Gary and Peg Winney; Richard and Teri Dart; and Brad Grant chose this to be their first SAMOA run and we were glad they came along. Like a lot of runs there were a few surprises along the way. After a pit stop in Nevada City getting back on to Route 49 involved a U-Turn and an unplanned drive through down town during some kind of festival. It was crowded but thanks to Richard Dart leading us through his former home town we got back on to Route 49. Once we arrived in Downieville we quickly realized there was something going on as there was no parking to be had either in front of the restaurant or anywhere else for that matter. We drove off in different directions looking for parking spots to squeeze in to then met at the Gallows Inn restaurant for a nice lunch. The folks at the Gallows Inn forgot to tell me about the huge Mountain Bike race and festival that was taking place that weekend. Lunch was good and we had a chance to roam around town looking at a lot of mud splattered and tired looking bicyclists.



After ordering lunch Brad Grant saw an old pinball machine in the corner of the restaurant. Being sort of a Pinball Wizard (our own Roger Daltrey perhaps?) he decided to play while waiting to be served. Apparently the machine wasn't

working quite right and before we knew it Brad had the "hood up" and was playing with springs, levers and thing-a-ma-jobs trying to get it to work properly. We thought it was pretty funny but I don't know if the restaurant manager did.

Gary and Peg summed up the event by writing, "Sometime the unexpected adds to the fun".



Finding the next Dream Miata

by Denise Correia

FINDING THE NEXT DREAM MIATA by Denise Correia

8 years ago on July 4th weekend, I fell in love with my first Miata, a '96 M-edition. At 151,000 miles I was still happy to drive the foothills every chance I got for what I call "4-wheel therapy". I confess there were several times I was attracted to another Miata, first the Mahogany then during the last couple of years I was dreaming of a new retractable hard top in Stormy Blue. Finally, the excuse to buy a new Miata presented itself on July 4th weekend. My grandson needed my Miata and after some thought, I agreed he could adopt it. Coincidentally, on July 4th weekend, I said a teary "goodbye" to my '96 M while my grinning grandson drove it away. I heard he spent 3 hours detailing it and even changed the oil so I am convinced my much loved '96 M-edition was adopted by a true "Miata" man.



Of course, I started my research of the internet with a spreadsheet containing about 40 Miatas then eventually I requested price quotations for about 15 MX-5 models scattered about California. Finally, I found two with my criteria "dreamy next Miata"2008 Stormy Blue Grand Touring Power Retractable Hardtop with tan/saddle leather interior with 6-speed manual plus the suspension package (premium package, sirius radio, appearance package, chrome wheels, chrome fuel door, "wood" dash/shift knob/brake/door button trim).....Escondido Mazda offered the most options on a similar model as offered by a San Jose dealer but San Jose model was price at \$2000 higher without all the options. The decision seemed clear and easy. The sales contact at Escondido Mazda is a long time Miata lover and club member, Barb Shev, who quickly responded to my every question with energy and enthusiasm. Initially, my Placerville friend was making a trip to San Diego to visit her son but was not able to schedule her trip in the near future. Barb was willing to pick me up from the airport and made



other very kind offers. On Friday, July 11th, I caught a Southwest flight from Sacramento to San Diego. Barb met me in a titanium Miata at the airport then we drove to the dealertopdown during a 71 degree clear and smokeless day. Barb introduced me to everyone at the dealership. We found mine getting a last minute detail touchup. I said a teary "hello" to my new love. Time for paperwork

and scary money changing then Barb provided a terrific lunch for me. After lunch she spent a couple of hours to help me drive a twisty nearby road, learn the feel of my new baby, and review the operation of every button & knob from bumper to bumper. She mentioned the differences between my '96 and my '08 then demonstrated the up & down procedure for the hardtop and numerous other items while letting me try until I felt comfortable with each operation. She helped program radio stations and even set the clock for me. Finally, with clear directions I left Barb in Escondido about 5:00pm to drive to Fresno. Five hours later I arrived at my folks home in Fresno after a miraculous drive with no traffic or trouble at all.

The next day my family enjoyed show and tell with me (mom, dad, brother, sister, nieces, nephew, in-laws) including rides around the country blocks and celebrated my new baby. Early Saturday afternoon SJVMC members met me for lunch (Sharon Mack and Bill Morris) to celebrate my new baby. I decided to christen him Wild Blue (as in off into the wild blue yonder) and started looking for a chrome license plate to include his name. About 4:30pm I left Fresno to return home to Placerville. I stopped for gas then learned my mileage to be 30mpg (so far, which is higher than estimates on the window sticker) during my first 48 hours of ownership and about 750 miles of driving.

Sunday the "Miata High" continued during visits with SAMOA member (Skip Noyes and Ron Crawford). Also during visits with girlfriends (Ellen and Karlene) who offered lots of positive responses via ooohs & aaaahs. I am delighted and enjoying the euphoria of my new baby.

Weekend in Ft. Bragg

by Ralph Gingrich

It is time to reserve your hotel room for the weekend at Ft. Bragg. We will be staying at the Best Western

And the room rates are \$95.99 Plus tax a night. We will have the cottage for meetings and games and a dinner on Saturday night.

We will be staying in Ft. Bragg the weekend of October 10-13, 2008. One party will leave on Friday October 10, at 8:30 am from McDonalds off Mace dr. In Davis. We will have our usual lunch stop on the way and some winery stops, with Vince and Kathy leading us.

Fran and Ralph are working on the meal for Saturday night. Fran is working on some things to do while we are in Ft. Bragg.

The hotel phone number is 1-707-964-4776. We have until September 15, 2008 to make your reservation.

If you have any questions please contact:

Ralph Gingrich (916) 721-4499 or rkitman@surewest.net

Fran Rowell (530) 344-1913 or franrowell@aol.com



Jim Clark - Remembered 40 years on..

by Adi Damania

Look hard, through the bushes and you may eventually discover the small stone cross where the great Scottish racing driver fell at Hockenheim racing circuit, Germany, 40 years ago. There are grander memorials than this, grander deaths too than his on this bland circuit driving in a mostly meaningless formula two race.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the death of Jim Clark, one of the greatest racing drivers of all time. Juan Manuel Fangio, the Argentine driver who with five world titles had his own claim to the title of "the greatest", himself said that Clark was the best of them all. So too, more subtly, did Ayrton Senna, the Brazilian driver.

Shortly before his own fatal crash at Imola, Italy, in 1994, Senna commissioned a Brazilian artist to paint a grid featuring the greatest drivers in history (with the exception of his old protagonist, Alain Prost). He instructed Clark to be placed in pole position. Senna had never seen Clark drive but had heard and read enough.



Clark was only 32 - a shy, modest man from Scotland's Border country - but he had dominated formula one for five years and won two world championships, in 1963 and 1965. He drove

in 72 grands prix races scoring 25 wins, 33 pole positions and 27 fastest laps. He had the advantage of driving the best car of the day, Colin Chapman's Lotus, but he was so much better than anyone else it did not seem to matter.

Nigel Roebuck, in his classic book "Grand Prix Greats", says: "I saw the reigning world champion compete in a humble national meeting in April, 1964. That day he drove an ageing Lotus 19 in the sports car event, an Elan in the GT, and a Lotus Cortina in the saloon car race - and he won the lot." In 1965 he won six of the first seven formula one grands prix races - he did not race in Monaco because, in a diary mix-up by someone, he was contracted to compete in the Indianapolis 500; he won that too.

In Roebuck's book one of Clark's rivals, Chris Amon, remembers that the morning of the accident was "misty, wet and miserable. Jimmy was very uptight the whole weekend... He was very tired and really didn't want to do the race." But in the end he did race and crashed to his death.

Amon added: "As well as the grief there was another dimension altogether. If it could happen to him, what chance did the rest of us have? We all felt that we'd lost our leader."

Jackie Stewart, a stalwart campaigner for improved driver safety, also describes 1968 as the year that really focused his mind on the issue. "Jimmy died in early April, Mike Spence was killed at the beginning of May, Ludovico Scarfiotti at the beginning of June and Jo Schlesser in early July. Remember, racing drivers were a much closer community in those days.

And those four deaths completely ruptured any confidence in the governing of the sport regarding safety."

Stewart and Clark could scarcely have been more different. "He was introverted to the point of extreme shyness," Stewart recalls. "In a car, Jimmy liked to show off a bit. That was in complete contrast to his normal character. In the last year he was just beginning to come out of himself."

Stewart, in his own book "Winning Is Not Enough", says that for someone so commanding when race driving, "Jim was frustratingly uncertain in other areas of his life. He was one of the world's greatest procrastinators.

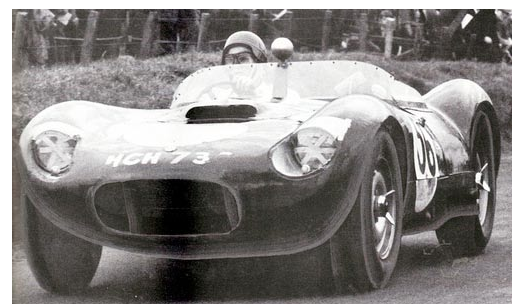
"We were once driving to a race in Sebring, Florida when we arrived at a single-track level crossing. The railway stretched away straight as a die for miles to the left and right and there was no other traffic.

"Jim was driving, so we stopped and looked left and right. There was nothing. He glanced at me warily and said: 'Well, what do you think?' I thought I must have missed something. So I looked left and right and saw again that there was nothing within miles of us. He was still sitting there in a quandary. 'I think it's safe to go, Jim,' I said.



'OK,' he said, and we continued on our way."

At Hockenheim Clark's cross does not mark the exact spot. He died a little way away where his car, going at about 160mph, is thought to have blown a tire, twitched from left to right and gone off into a densely wooded area and struck a tree. The car broke into half. He was killed instantly. That part of the track is no longer used for safety reasons and has grown over with grass and weeds. The cross has been moved to a position just outside the existing track, but it should be more prominently displayed inside the circuit. Clarke, the ultimate racing driver, was rarely in the wrong position on the track.



Statistics don't lie... Much

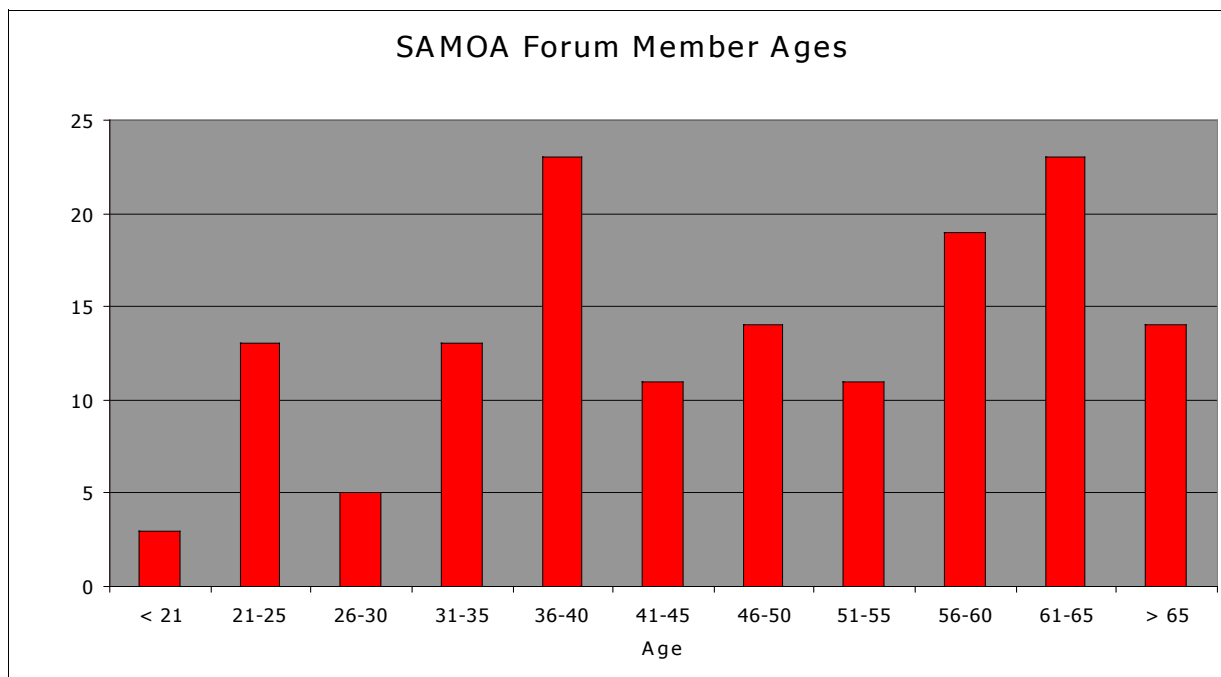
by Ron Petrich

In our ongoing quest (struggle) to increase club participation in both events and communications, I thought it would be interesting to take a closer look at some statistics related to our SAMOA forum. Granted, our forum is comprised of some folks who are not SAMOA members, but by and large they are. And as such, this sample may represent our club fairly closely.

Our forum now is up to 149 members. SAMOA currently is comprised of 114 memberships and 183 members. Several memberships consist of both husband and wife or significant pairs. Because even as administrator of the forum I cannot see the true name of each forum member, so I have no way to be certain who they are and if they are SAMOA members, but my unscientific review of forum member email addresses suggests that about 70% of forum members are also SAMOANs. And of course a much higher percentage of forum members can logically be considered Miata enthusiasts. So for the purposes of discussion, let's just say that the forum represents SAMOA well.

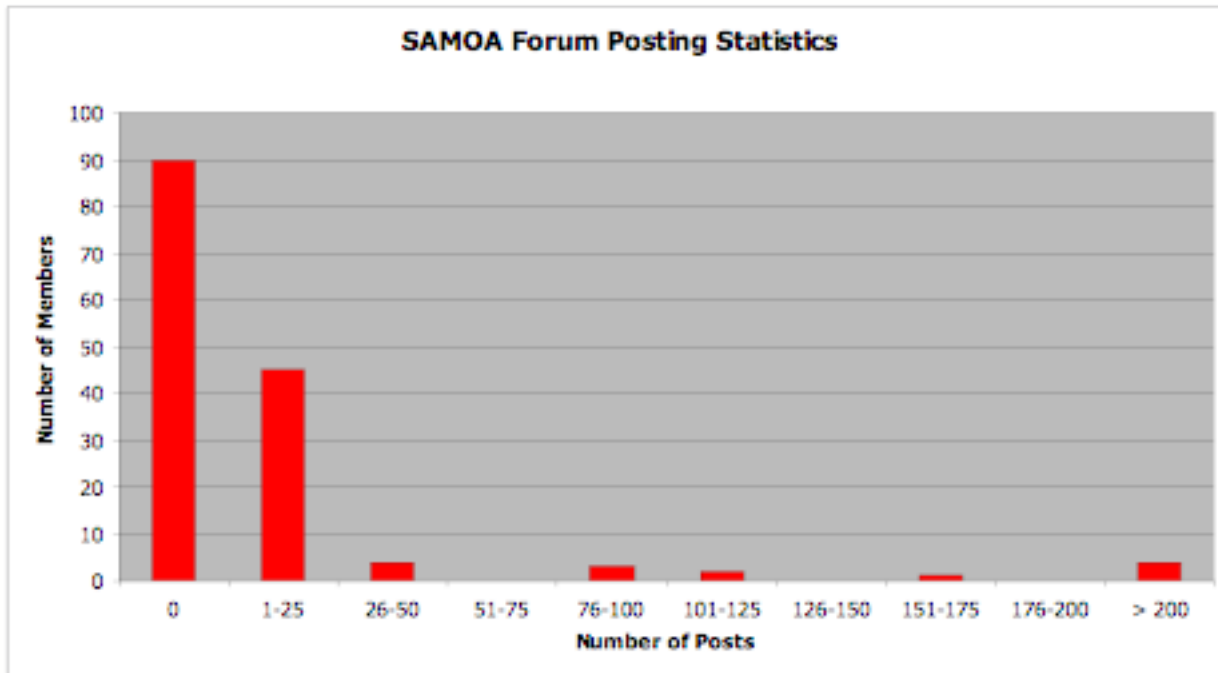
In examining the forum this month, I examined member ages and posting frequency. I also looked to see if there was a positive correlation between the two, but it was not significant. In other words, a forum member's age does not seem to relate to how much – or how little – he/she posts. I also could not examine the age or posting distribution by gender, because we seem to have none. Or, to be precise, almost 90% of forum members chose undeclared as their gender when enrolling. I am not a social scientist, so I won't even begin to imagine what that might mean.

Our forum members (and our club members as well) come in all different shapes and sizes, AND in all different ages. I think that portends well for SAMOA. But we are a relatively mature club – no surprise there – with a mean (average) age of just over 47 years. The median age is 48, meaning there are 74 forum members younger than 48, and 74 members older. The forum members range in age from 17 to 77 (I had to manually adjust the reported ages of 2 members who rather whimsically listed their ages in triple digits when they originally enrolled – a father and son tag team one of which drives a Corvette – but I'm not naming names Jack), a pretty broad range. The ages are fairly widely dispersed as well. The population has a standard deviation of 14.67 years. All you need to know about this statistic is that about 68% of the forum members range in age from 32 to 62. Below is a graph which illustrates our forum member ages.



The other forum statistic that I examined was posting frequency. Of nearly 3,000 posts so far to our forum and with (now) 149 members, I was surprised to find that 90 members (60%) had **never** posted to the forum. In fact, many of these 90 forum members have never even logged on to the forum. Sixty-five (65) members have not posted in the last 180 days, and 7 members have never even activated their accounts!

As of this writing, there have been 2,968 posts since the inception of the forum. Just five (5) members are responsible for 71% of the posts, and ten (10) members have accounted for 96% of the posts. The average number of posts is about 20. A distribution curve would be highly skewed to the right. Graphically, the post counts appear as follows:



So what does this all mean? Is our forum successful or not? Well, judging by some parameters, like number of members, we are extremely successful. Many forums just wither and die, or never even see the light of day. SAMOA's forum, on the other hand, seems to have daily activity, and comments from club members indicate that it is a valued asset. On the other hand, many of those same members 1) have never signed up, and 2) have signed up but have never participated (don't forget those 65 forum members who have been absent for the last 6 months). It seems many forum members just like to log on once in a while, look at recent posts, and then log off without comment. So what does this say for the long-term success of the forum?

It follows that the forum is a microcosm of the club itself. A finite number of *regulars* are present at most monthly meetings, and a smaller number repeatedly show up for club events. As with the high volume posters to the forum, these club participators are relatively few in number, but individually are avid with their enthusiasm. And I guess it further follows that SAMOA is fairly representative of other Miata clubs, and perhaps social clubs in general, in the percent of members who actually participate in club activities.

Human nature? Do we need to make a stronger outreach to more diverse members? Do we need more youth? More geezers? Better and different events? More change (groan)? I don't have any answers and perhaps there aren't any. But I hope the foregoing prompts some thought on your part, and perhaps a renewed energy to get more involved in your Miata club and its activities. Thanks for listening.