



Miata *tudes*

Newsletter, Volume 13
January 1, 2009

Robins' Nest

by Robin George

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and is looking forward to having a wonderful and exciting New Year. We certainly ended last year on a happy note at the General Meeting. This year we will start the New Year with our Really Hung-Over Run and the General Meeting at a new restaurant (see articles).

Did anyone get a new GPS for Christmas? Time to try it out on the 4th. The Really Hung-Over Run is nice and simple and really an excuse to get out to exercise our vehicles. Also there are some new vehicle laws that our wonderful and clear headed legislators have enacted for the New Year.

Senate Bill 28 prohibits drivers from text messaging or e-mailing while driving. Fines for violating this law are at least \$76 (including penalties) for a first offense and about \$190 for subsequent offenses, depending on the county in which the violation occurred.

How many of us can text message while we drive?

Another new law, SB 1567, requires portable GPS devices that are affixed to a vehicle windshield to be placed either in a seven-inch square in the lower right corner of the windshield or in a five-inch square in the lower left corner, while the vehicle is being driven. Motorists may still mount a GPS device on top of the dashboard as long as it doesn't block their view of the road. The device must not be placed so that it interferes with the deployment of an air bag. The fine for a violation is approximately \$108 including penalties, depending on the county.

Time to get out the rulers. Finally a law that makes a little sense.

AB 2401 prevents a car owner from being held liable for a parking ticket or toll-evasion violation issued against a vehicle before he or she became the owner of the vehicle. Sufficient proof of non-ownership includes, but is not limited to, a copy of the sales agreement showing the date of the vehicle ownership transfer.

I hate paying for parking tickets that aren't mine.

Also, any vehicle purchased outside of California and brought into the state within 12 months of the purchase date is subject to the payment of a use tax (equivalent to a sales tax). Previously, the law imposed this tax only if the vehicle was brought into the state during the first 90 days of ownership. An owner can avoid paying this use tax by providing documentary evidence that he or she intends to use the vehicle outside the state. The state expects to

receive approximately \$20 million per year from this change in the law.

Another reason to leave the state.

There are several other laws which are new but we don't usually find out about those until we break them. We still have to have a front license plate tsk tsk

Please email me or a board member with any suggestions to help improve the club or just to bitch. They will be given the proper weight and consideration. I welcome Bob Bacon to the Board as our Tech Advisor. I look forward to abusing him...oops I mean working with him as well as the rest of the club. Have a happy New Year !!

It's Resolution Time!

by Mike DeLaurentis

What I like about Kwanzaa is it reminds me that it's time to prepare my New Year's resolutions. A lot of people don't like to let on what they've selected as their New Year's resolutions for fear that someone will actually remember and nail them the first time they see them breaking them. But I'm fearless. Also two days from now I won't be able to remember them anyway so the odds of anyone else remembering them is slim.

I only have one criteria for creating New Year's resolutions and that is it has to be something that I can give up for Lent. That way I satisfy social as well as religious obligations at the same time. So, as they say, without any further ado – my 2009 New Year's resolutions.

- Take up deep sea diving. (This was actually a perennial of my Fathers)
- Obtain videos of my track day at Thunderhill and dispel the rumor that I used turn signals on the track.
- Go easier on guys who drape sweaters over their shoulders.
- Be more tolerant of S2000 owners.
- Fight the urge to flip off anyone who tells me to stand up even when I am.
- Refer less frequently to the 2000 SE Mahogany Mica as the most beautiful color Mazda ever created.

So there they are. Simple but challenging enough for me and without peril should I slip up and violate one or two.

Happy 2009 to all of you SAMOANs – even those who have colors other than Mahogany – arguably the most beautiful color Mazda ever created! Oooops.

Treasure Trove

by Jeanne George

Memberships Expiring January 1

Auyeung, Tak
DeLaurentis, Mike and Helen
Moe, Ron and Linda
Murray, Brenda
Rainbolt, Joe and Carol
Smith, Russell
Wilson, Mike and Marlaina
Wroth, Donald and Barbara
Zicker, Wes and Paula

Memberships renewed in December

Cece Myers
Gary Dunne
Genny and Bob Paauwe

The Finance Committee of Rod Gonzalez, Wes Zicker and I met December 16. Per the SAMOA by-laws, we reviewed the 2008 records, Cash Flow Report, and Account Balances Report. We prepared a 2009 Proposed Budget to be presented to the 2009 Board of Officers for discussion and approval.

SAMOA income exceeded its expenses by \$208.85 for 2008. In addition, people attending SAMOA 2008 events contributed to the following charities: Crohn's Colitis Foundation of America \$14,025.31, Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento \$800, and Wreaths-Across-America \$225. Thank you to SAMOA members for their generosity to these organizations.

January Meeting Location Change

by Jeanne George

On January 8, 2009, SAMOA will hold its monthly meeting at 7 pm at The Hof Brau, 2500 Watt Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95821. It is located near the intersection of Watt Ave. and El Camino Ave. Telephone (916) 482-2175. www.thehofbrau.com The meeting will be held in the banquet room at the back of the facility.

Come early to enjoy dinner. Food is served cafeteria style and the line may be crowded with other customers. Upon arrival, place your food order, pick up your drinks, salads, desserts, pay then proceed to the banquet area. Wine and beer is available in the main line or a full service bar is located inside the main sitting area.

This change is for the January meeting only. After the meeting we will reevaluate this change and decide if we want to make it permanent or not.

Really Hung Over Run

by Jeanne George

Sunday January 4, 2009

Join Robin and Jeanne George for a Road Trip for the first run of the New Year. We will meet at the Starbucks located in the shopping center at Duckhorn & Arena Blvd. in North Natomas. Starbucks is at 3230 Arena Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95834 (916 419-3954). Take I-5 north, exit at Arena Blvd, Duckhorn is located on the West side of I-5.

Meet at 10:30 am, we will depart at 11 am. Please park in the back or side area of the lot.

We will end with lunch at the Road Trip Bar and Grill in Capay. www.roadtripbg.com

Please RSVP to Jeanne at 916 359-2627 or jeanne@winfirst.com by Saturday January 3rd, so they know how many to expect.

January Birthdays

by Ron Petrich

The following SAMOANs have informed us that they were actually born in a January long long (or not so long long) ago...
Cat Black... January 24th
Judy Bloom... January 16th
Sandi Campbell... January 30th
Donna Carlson... January 26th
Denise Correia... January 19th
Robert Hayes... January 17th
David Kira... January 4th
Mario Lavoie... January 9th
Ed Long... another one for January 19th
Paul Pouliot... January 22nd
Jon Somplack... January 21st
John Taylor... January 7th
Vicki Titus... January 27th

and last but not least... Don Wroth on January 26th

Happy birthday to you all and many many more. We still have many club members who have not informed us of their birthdays, so they will definitely NOT be receiving a special present this month. All you have to do is check the detailed member roster... if your birthday is not listed, just drop a line to the webmaster and we will take care of it for you.

Upcoming Events

by Jack Parker

As the New Year approaches, the weather and the holiday events have diminished the number of events that are planned. One reminder though is very important. On January 8, 2009, SAMOA will move to a new meeting location. We will meet at The Hof Brau, 2500 Watt Avenue, Sacramento. Their web address is www.thehofbrau.com. You can view the menu at this location.

Our meetings start officially at 7:00 PM, but please come an hour earlier, as usual, and join us for an informal dinner or other refreshments. There will be no wait people attending the tables as the usual Hofbrau line will be in effect so come on in, see what you want, order and bring it back to the meeting room or you can eat in the main dining room for a little more intimate dining experience. The meeting format will remain the same once dinner is finished. Contact Robin George for more information.

Join Robin and Jeanne George on a road trip to the Capay Valley for the first run of the new year. We will meet at the Starbucks, located in the shopping center at Duckhorn & Arena Boulevard in North Natomas (3230 Arena Boulevard, Sacramento). A map can be found on our website. We will meet at 10:30 AM and depart at 11:00 AM. Please park in the back or side area of the lot. The run will end with lunch at the Road Trip Bar & Grill in Capay (www.roadtripbg.com). Please RSVP to Jeanne at (916) 359-2627 or jeanne@winfirst.com by Saturday, January 3, 2009, so they can give a count to the restaurant. Robin and Jeanne's runs are always interesting, so be sure to join in the fun on Sunday January 4th.

At this time there are no details for other upcoming events but place these dates on the calendar.

Super Bowl Sunday Run, February 1: This I am sure will follow the previous path through Highway 128 and 121 to Napa and back.

Presidents Run, February 22: Another Robin and Jeanne event which promises to be fun as usual.

Chili Cook Off, March 14: More details will be forthcoming, but it will be held at the Nicholsons Home.

For events further down the road, check the website. Very few details exist now but it is early. Let's make this another fun year and get out there and drive.

December News Events

by Jeanne George

December 11th SAMOA Meeting Elections

SAMOA Officer elections were held at the December Annual Business Meeting. Election Committee Chairperson Rod Gonzalez ran an organized voting process. Rod handed out printed ballots and pencils to the attending members. At the appointed time he took nominations from the floor, indicated a Tech Advisor write-in candidate, then explained the need to vote on a waiver of the by-laws two year term limits for several Officer positions. Following the vote to approve the waiver, the actual vote for candidates, he announced the new Officers: President-Robin George, Vice-President-Mike DeLaurentis, Secretary-Pam Hunt, Treasurer-Jeanne George, Events-Jack Parker, Media Director-Ron Petrich, and Tech Advisor-Bob Bacon.

The crowd cheered wildly and grateful for a well run election. Thanks to Rod there was no confusion, no stuffed ballot box, and no need for a recount. There was an actual sigh of relief from members to find they weren't drafted into office. Very nice job, Rod.

Officer Raffle Gifts

Robin had requested that each of the Officers purchase an inappropriate gift to be used in the December raffle. He indicated he wanted each giver to present the gift and explain it to the "lucky recipient". Mark presented three small animals that apparently pooped. Ron presented a Miata model that had been hidden in his basement for years. Jack presented Mike D with a race track roll-over kit which was a plastic hard hat and a bottle of Excedrin. Jack also presented "free gas once a week for a month" which was 4 cans of chili. Pam gave out Fanny Floss. I gave a mini-picnic basket appropriate for these economic down times which consisted of canned spam, bottled cheese spread, crackers and thin mints. Since the cost of each gift was limited to \$10, Mike bought a bottle of wine and drank it down to the \$10 value. He then presented the remainder of wine to the recipient. Robin presented a Billy Bass singing trout and demonstrated its singing ability and presented it to a fish enthusiast.

December Full Moon Run

On Friday night, December 12th Robin and I headed to the Starbucks meeting location for the winter drive. Shortly after we arrived several other hearty members arrived bundled up and ready for the adventure. At leaving time, 10 people in 6 Miatas were ready for the drive in search of the moon, any moon. Following several days of very heavy fog, we were fortunate to have no fog but there was cloud cover. Not to be deterred, we headed out along the river and back roads to Knights Landing. We could see the many mansions along the river decorated with bright Christmas lights. At our turn around point, we got out of the cars to stretch the legs and hope to see the moon. It was casting a bright glow behind the clouds. At this point we decided to head back toward Woodland and just get on the freeway and head home.

As we were driving back, the clouds soon began to part. We were in contact with Mike DeLaurentis and told him we were going to pull over and hope that others followed us. They did. The 8 of us got out of the Miatas and stood looking at the full moon coming from behind the clouds until it was completely visible. We looked like cold little kids that had never seen a moon. After joking and laughing, the cold and wind convinced us we had seen enough. The group said good-bye and headed home.

The roads we found were great and would have provided good moon viewing. Robin and I talked on our way home and decided we will do this trip in warmer weather. We also decided our stopping point would deserve a champagne toast, so watch for this event in the future.

Wreaths-Across-America

Mike and Helen DeLaurentis located some great back roads from the Davis meeting location to the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon. They led the group of 18 people in 10 cars to the wreath laying ceremony. It was a cold brisk winter day in Dixon and some were bundled and prepared and others were misguided by the warmer sunny day in Davis.

It turned out that Mike's route and our timed departure got us to the location on time. Many more people attended this year's event and many were unable to get into the parking lot before the 9 am ceremony began. After introductions and presentation of the colored-guard, we listened to several speakers. The Director of the operation indicated that the Sacramento Valley National cemetery was one of only three in the country that received wreath donations to cover every gravesite. The other two were in Maine near where the wreaths were made and the other was in Arkansas. Wal-Mart donated many semi-trucks and drivers to help deliver some of the 100,000 wreaths to over 350 VA cemeteries. The truck convoys left Harrington Maine on December 7 for the drive across country.

After the ceremonies, our group helped place some of the 3,700 wreaths on the gravesites. As we waited for the parking mess to clear we were treated to decorated wreath shaped cookies from Helen. We ended the day with a drive to Winters for pizza and conversation. Thank you Mike and Helen for leading this event.

Upcoming SAMOA and Local Events



- Sunday Jan 4 - Really Hung Over Run
- Thursday Jan 8 - SAMOA Monthly Meeting (at HofBrau, NOT Coco's!)
- Sunday, Feb 1 - Superbowl Sunday Run
- Thursday, February 12 - SAMOA Monthly Meeting

Look at all the open space! Want to help set up an event? Contact Jack Parker!

We Live in Interesting Times

by Adi Damania

This recession/depression/hard economic times/Wall Street/Main Street collapse or whatever name(s) you want to give it, has certainly thrown up unprecedented opportunities for car and home lovers alike. You can get a new KB home in Woodland with 3-4 bedrooms, 2-car garage for less than \$199,000. But more enticingly, for us at least, is the possibility for upgrading to a brand new Pontiac Solstice with a 4 cyl. turbo motor or a 2000 Porsche Boxster with very low mileage for the same amount! Why, Chrysler/Dodge dealer in Folsom is giving away 2008 Chargers for less than \$14K. A brand-new Ford Cobalt, Toyota Yaris, Mazda 3, Nissan Versa, Hyundai Accent or a Honda Fit can be had for less than \$8K. So now the \$2K Tata "Nano" car, of which I wrote about a few issues of *Miatatudes* ago, does not seem all that ridiculous, does it? Except that Mr. Tata has suffered huge reverses, due to damages and loss of business, during the recent terrorist attacks to his hotels in Mumbai. Needless to say, most of the hotel guests checked-out without paying. There was nobody left at the front desk to settle their bills!

Coming back to that \$15K used Porsche Boxster with low miles in the Bee, I have never been a great fan of Dr. Ferdinand Porsche's creations. Firstly, because they look too much like the old Volkswagen Beetles, and secondly, the rear air-cooled engine with louvers/air vents on the cover always reminds me of the small Renault 4CV that a Bollywood movie director of failed pictures used to own in the 3-storey apartment building where I grew up in Bombay. One of his biggest failures, which drove him to near bankruptcy, was titled "Cincinnati Booblah Boo". It was little wonder that with a title like that any movie, however good, would be doomed to failure at the box office! But the rear-engine purple Renault (which he pronounced as "Raynalt") car attracted a small crowd wherever it went.

On the 4CV's launch, it was nicknamed "La motte de beurre"



(the lump of butter) due to the combination of its shape and the fact that many early models were painted with sand-yellow-colored surplus paint originally used for German Army vehicles (aka European

Sand). The 4CV was powered by a 748 cc engine producing 17 hp (13 kW), which was coupled to a three-speed manual transmission and featured the infamous suicide doors.

A short note here about Monsieur Louis Renault (1877-1944) will not be amiss here. Renault set up car manufacturing business in 1899 with the backing of his two brothers and friends. The car business was good and during WWI Renault supplied vehicles to the French Army. He was decorated with the Legion of Honor after the Great War for the success of his military designs, most famously including the



revolutionary Renault FT-17 Tank. During WWII he was not so lucky. In 1939 he began military production once again but in 1940 France capitulated to Hitler and Renault was forced by the Germans to supply them with army vehicles (those ugly Wehrmacht army 'jeeps' often seen in war movies). However, in 1944, with the liberation of France by the Americans he was arrested as a "collaboteur" and imprisoned (during that time there was hysteria against those Frenchmen and women who had been in cohorts with the Germans – women who had slept with Germans had their heads forcibly shaved bald). Renault was found dead in his prison cell, a long hand-written legal defense by his side. At first he was thought he had committed suicide. But the autopsy showed that his neck was broken (James Bond style) leading to the speculation that he was murdered. Today Renault-Nissan is the 4th largest automaker in the world.

But back to my story about the low-priced exotic cars that you always dreamed about could be finally within your grasp. My friend and Woodland co-habitant Bruce has two Maseratis and a Fiat roadster which he picked up recently for a song. He calls them his 'retirement projects' - something for him to tinker with once he retires from his managerial job at a local super-market chain. The neighbors were complaining about these and his everyday cars parked in the driveway and on the road, so he has moved them to a large 18,000 square feet garage he has built at the foot of Mt. Shasta! We live in strange times - not only can you pick up bargain exotics, but you can also buy a huge garage on the cheap to house them. Possessing a flock of lovely cars is no longer the privilege that only the likes of Jay Leno or Jerry Seinfeld can afford. Isn't this a great country or what?

Member Recognition Awards

by Jeanne George

At the December meeting, President Robin took the opportunity to present several SAMOA members with recognition for their contributions to the club. SAMOA magnetic decals were presented to new event leaders:

Randy and Pam Hunt for their Loon Lake Run

Gundi and Gary Bechthold for the 2008 Christmas Party

Larry and Barbara Penfield for the Preston Castle Run-not present

Genny and Bob Paauwe for their Scavenger Hunt Event.-not present

Special Recognition awards of SAMOA embroidered backpack/computer bags were given to 7 members that had each led events 3 years in a row. Between them they have provided 42 events to our membership: Skip Noyes, Ralph & JoAnne Gingrich, and Rod Gonzalez who also is on the Election Committee and Finance Committee. Not in attendance were Vince Weis and Kathi Bell, Fran Rowell, Graeme Kinsey, and Denise Correia

Four Officers were recognized for leading multiple events 3 years in a row. In addition to their other duties, they have led 57 events for the membership. Mike DeLaurentis, Robin George, Jack Parker, and Ron Petrich, plus many impromptu Sunday runs, and 3 Got Guts track events for Charity which raised \$34,000.

These 11 individuals have offered our members 99 events out of a total of 117 events presented during the past 3 years.

Other individuals who were recognized for their hard work, efforts, and contributions were: Pam Hunt, Mark Brooks, Jeanne George, Bob Bacon, Terri Bacon, Wes Zicker, Adi Damania, Dave DeNuzzo, Frank & Vi Nicholson, and Helen DeLaurentis. She especially deserves this bag, she has put up with Mike and Robin.

Photos

by Jeanne George

Photos from "Wreaths Across America"



Photos from December Meeting

