

# THE *M* EDITION

## On the Road Again Meander

**Notes from Jarvis & Marsha Gamble** - Saturday, May 8 was a clear and sunny day for our first Meander since Covid 19 drastically changed our schedule. Although the day was also cool, most of us drove top-down. After a long winter, it was so pleasant to meander through very green and peaceful landscapes (and a little curvy!) in Fulton County. We ended at Mom's Diner in Archbold, where we had an excellent lunch in a classic 1950's diner. Thanks to Steve & Pat Dettmer for such a successful first event of the season!

**Notes from Bill Potvin & Linda Myers** - The eight Miatas that attended our first driving event of the year ranged from the early NA of Jordan May to several ND's. The cars and their drivers and passengers were all geared (to coin a phrase) to enjoying the nice spring day and the company of their fellow Miateers. It was good to see Terry Koral, and he dutifully recorded the event with many pics that can be seen elsewhere in this newsletter, as well as on the club's Facebook Page. Let's hope we have many more events like this in 2021 to make up for lost time last year.

## Meet in the Middle Meander & Picnic

**Date:** Saturday, June 5, 2021    **Meet:** 9:00 am    **Depart:** 9:30 am

**Place:** Meijer Parking Lot, 2111 E Wooster St, Bowling Green, OH

We will meet and socialize prior to driving for an hour to a rest stop, then continue to Memorial Lake Park in Norwalk, Ohio. At Noon we will meet with members from the Northcoast Miata Club. A reserved picnic shelter will allow us to enjoy camaraderie and a picnic lunch, regardless of weather conditions (although "top down" weather is always best!).

**Please pack a picnic lunch.** Although there are picnic tables, you might find a seat with a back is more comfortable, so feel free to bring folding chairs. Due to the size of the facility, **this meander is limited to 15 cars from each club.**

Any of our spots not taken by the RSVP date will be released for use by the Northcoast Club. If they have any unused spots, they will turn them over to us.

RSVP to hosts Greg and Terri Wilkins by May 29.  
Phone 419-619-4952 or email [tandgwilkins@gmail.com](mailto:tandgwilkins@gmail.com)

## Tentative 2021 Event Calendar

Thurs-Sun, June 3-6	Zoomin' the Mountains of East Tennessee
Saturday, June 5	Meander with Northcoast Miata Club by Greg and Terri Wilkins
Sat-Sun, June 12-27	The Tire Squeal 2021, Southern Indiana Road Tour
Saturday, July 10	Summer Heat Meander by Bill Potvin and Linda Myers
Saturday, July 24	Adopt-A-Highway Session organized by Karl Schwemley
Saturday, September 4	Eric Jones Memorial Riverrun Tour hosted by Buckeye Miata Club
Saturday, October 16	Adopt-A-Highway Session organized by Karl Schwemley

*Photos by Terry Koral*



*Memories of a Simpler Time*



*Bill Potvin, Jarvis & Marsha Gamble and Bob Reitzel*



*So Many Menu Choices, So Little Time*



*Linda & Bill Roan*



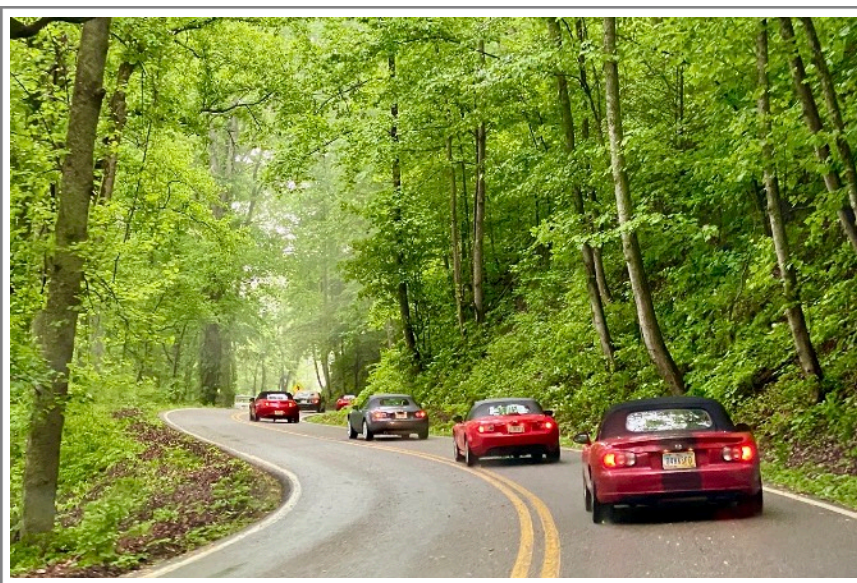
## Miatas at the Gap - 2021 Edition

by Terri Wilkins

Four Miatas from our NWOhio Miata Club, together with Miatas from North East Ohio and Florida, converged on Townsend, TN May 9-14 for a wonderful spring trip full of driving, eating and fellowship in the Great Smoky Mountains of TN and NC. The roads there are some of the best in the country, especially for our Miatas.

Steve and Pat Beam arrived early Sunday to help check out the driving routes and restaurants. Bob and Cheryl Reitzel and Greg and Terri Wilkins also checked into the Highland Manor Inn Sunday, so the six of us went out to dinner together. Joe and Karen Stec arrived Tuesday night.

Each day started off with breakfast together at 8:00, gathering in the parking lot for a briefing and then setting out for about 200 miles of driving pleasure on twisty, tree-canopied mountain roads. The main attraction is always the legendary Tail of the Dragon at Deal's Gap. This is an eleven mile stretch of US 129 between TN and NC that features 318 challenging curves: thrilling turns and sharp descents that get your adrenaline pumping. Commercial traffic is prohibited and there are no intersecting roads and no buildings or driveways along the roadside; just



the Great Smoky Mountain National Forest to the North and the Cherokee National Forest to the South. We got to drive the Dragon at least one direction every single day!

Happily, the Dragon was not as busy this time as it was in the Fall of 2020, when we took our re-scheduled "Spring" trip. Those that wanted to go full throttle were able to get in some good spirited runs. Wednesday, however, was cold and rainy so the entire group just meandered through the Gap, giving us all an opportunity to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. There were lots of turkeys this year as well as squirrels, chipmunks and fun birds like the Pileated Woodpecker (looks like Woody Woodpecker).

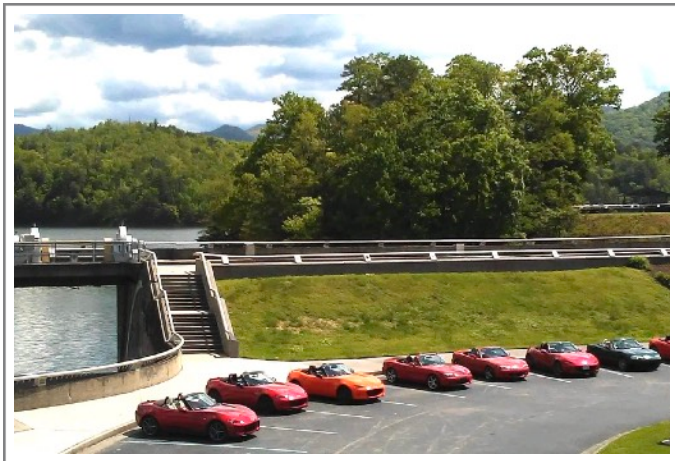
We also drove at least part of the Foothills Parkway each day (often the entire route, including the new section). Unlike the Dragon, the Parkway is a relaxing ride with long, graceful turns and incredible scenery. It skirts the boundaries of the Smoky Mountain National Park, connecting Tellico to Wears Valley in TN. There were plenty of other roads that we drove too, including the Cherahala Skyway, Moonshiner 28, Wayah Road and the River road through the national park. We saw elk again in the Park! We ate at a lot of familiar restaurants but did try out a few new ones. Two new places we especially enjoyed were Bradford's BBQ and Fireworks in Ducktown, TN and Dan Good Foods at Carriage House in Townsend (which is under new ownership). On Wednesday we drove to Cherokee NC and ate at Paul's Diner, which used to be a regular stop on this trip but had been missed the last few years. We ate at Elvira's on Friday evening, where we celebrated the end of a great week. Reservations are already being taken for next year, May 8-14. Call the Highland Manor Inn (800-213-9462) or email [office@highlandmanor.com](mailto:office@highlandmanor.com) and tell them you are with the Miata group.

**Some History of Our Love Affair with the Gap** - Coordinating this trip and leading a large group takes a lot of work. Bill Titley has been the fearless leader for 21 years now. Bill belongs to both the Northcoast Miata Club, out of Cleveland, and the Space Coast Miata Club of Florida. Our club became included in this event in 2004, thanks to Larry and Jan Sheridan. In the days BC (Before Children), Jan taught with Bill and his late wife, Rancie in the Barberton, OH school district, and the couples became close friends. Eventually, even their children became good friends, and the families remained close even after the Sheridans moved to Northwest Ohio.

One year, Bill's son had a Miata, and he took Bill to drive the Tail of the Dragon. Of course, Bill was hooked and bought his own Miata. He started leading the Spring Miatas at the Gap trip for both of his clubs. When Larry and Jan had a chance to buy a Miata in 2003, they did not hesitate. They were invited to join the groups from Northeast Ohio and Florida in May of 2004. They had so much fun they decided to open the invitation up to our club members as well.

This year, the Sheridans and Frank and Gloria Bracken (who also became regulars on this trip over the years) were to have joined us. But as you know, Gloria passed away in early March and Larry passed just before this trip. One evening during the week our whole group gathered after dinner and we all reminisced, remembering those who have passed, especially Bill's wife Rancie, Larry and Gloria. Definitely an emotional gathering.

Many thanks to Bill Titley for organizing this event and to our own Pat and Steve Beam. The Beams planned and led Tuesday's drive and ran "sweep" often—bringing up the tail end of the group to ensure no one would get lost. We really appreciate it!



The Group at Fontana Dam



The Wilkins Laugh Politely at a Steve Beam Tale

## Tire Squeal Reminder

Anyone interested in a four day road trip to drive some nice roads in Brown County, Indiana, should contact Bill Potvin ASAP. Dates are flexible at any time between June 12-27.

The plan is for an easy, self-paced tour, with time to check out nearby points of interest. There are several nice B & B's and motels in the area, but we should book soon. See the April 2021 *M Edition* for more details.



Greg, Bob, Pat and Cheryl





## Wings and Wheels 2021

Like classic and high performance cars? Like classic and high performance planes? Then a few hours ogling both may be just your style.

This year the show will be Sunday, June 13 at the historic Willow Run Airport. Maybe not a meander, but just a group drive to Ypsi, some time at the show and then a late lunch nearby.

Those who are interested can contact me and we'll put something together. See details at <https://yankeeairmuseum.org/wingsandwheels/>

- Bill Potvin

## Riverrun 2021

We have received word that this year's event will be, like last year, on Labor Day weekend, Saturday, September 4. Stay tuned for details, as we get closer to the date.

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Mazda6



Mazda3



CX-5



MX-5 Miata

**Stop in and talk to Nik, Mark or Bill,  
and check the club web site for  
the latest special deals.**