

THE *M* EDITION

Cake & Ice Cream Birthday Party

It was not how we had originally planned to celebrate the club's 25th anniversary year, but it still retained the main elements: a gathering of more than 40 members sharing fellowship on a beautiful day. Organizers Pat and Steve Dettmer did a great job of providing a special event, while keeping us safe with facial coverings, sanitizer and lots of opportunities for social distancing.

The three part event began with a visit to Simpson Garden Park in Bowling Green. This is a gem of a botanical garden that most of us had not visited before. Folks had



plenty of time to check out the plantings, as well as meeting in small groups to catch up on what people had been doing in the months since we had last met. It was particularly nice to have three club presidents in attendance: Current prez Bill Roan, immediate past-president Marv Himmelein and Jerry Bish, who served from 2008-2011. Marv also had good news to report. He and Carol have recovered from being hospitalized with coronavirus earlier this year. Other good news on the medical front was that Randy Raymond was present, looking good and feeling good. You'll recall that he was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in August. His treatments have been very successful and we wish him well in his recovery.

The next feature of the day was a mini-meander from BG to Oak Openings Metropark. The Dettmers were able to find some nice scenery along the 30 mile route, including the curviest bits of Poe Road, west of Bowling Green.

The final element was the feature of the day. The site was a beautiful setting beside Evergreen Lake in the park. There were more opportunities for chatting in small clusters, while the special club birthday cake was laid out, along with Dove ice cream treats. Also available to each member were commemorative car magnets (also suitable for refrigerators) produced by Randy and Teresa Raymond's business, Marbee Printing. The Raymonds also provided each of us with a special 2020 edition of the club membership directory, which is a handy reference to members' contact info, photos and year and color of car. Many thanks to them for all they have done for the club over many years.

(see **Cake & Ice Cream**, page 2)

(from **Cake & Ice Cream**, page 1)



Teresa and Randy Raymond
about the wonderful day and anticipating the club's 30th anniversary party.

There followed a short presentation with some words by Bill Roan, including general praise for all the contributions made by the members. Bill Potvin also presented welcome gifts to the new members present, Jon and Dan Laux, Mike and Jane Burns and Courtland and Diane Clark, not really new members, but attending their first event.

The gathering ended a bit abruptly when a wedding party arrived. It turns out that they had reserved the area, but the park's people had neglected to post a sign to that effect. The Dettmers had even gone there earlier in the day to make sure the area was available. Luckily, all of our business and most chatting had been completed (does it ever end?), so we all headed in our various directions thinking

2020 Miatas at the Gap

by Terri Wilkins

While the 2019 "Miatas at the Gap" tour had the most cars in its 20 year history, the 2020 tour might have had the fewest! The event usually happens in the spring and includes folks from our Northwest Ohio Miata club, the North Coast Club in the Cleveland area and the Space Coast Club from Florida. Because of Covid-19, this year's event was rescheduled until September. Originally our club had six vehicles signed up but with the rescheduling, only three made it: Steve and Pat Beam, Bob and Cheryl Reitzel and Greg and Terri Wilkins (we brought the Fiata this time). We were joined by three cars from the North Coast Club and one from the Space Coast club, so both of those groups had reduced numbers as well. Although we truly missed our fellow club members and friends who could not make the trip, we did enjoy the amazing roads, autumn colors, (mostly) beautiful weather and the camaraderie.

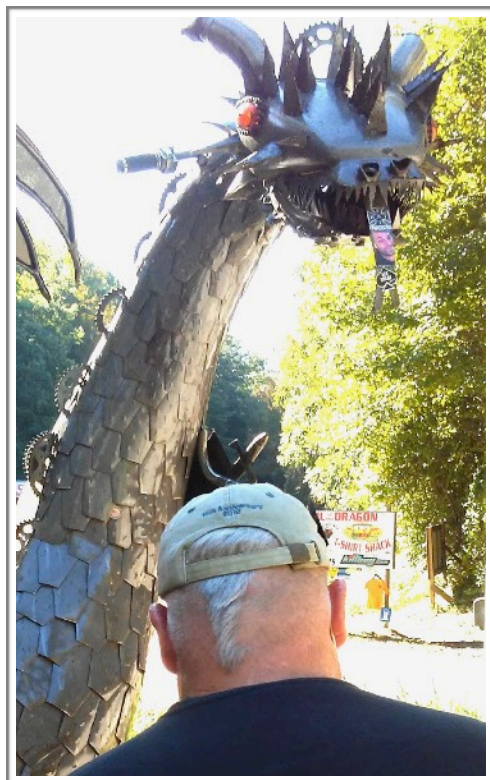


Surprisingly, all seven of the roadsters were red! We turned a lot of heads zooming around the twisty, hilly Smoky Mountain roads. The first few days we were joined by a gray Mini Cooper from Illinois, driven by the nephew and wife of the couple from Florida. Very nice folks so we let them drive at the end of the line.

(see **Miatas at the Gap**, page 3)

(from **Miatas at the Gap**, page 2)

The roads were in excellent condition (no potholes!); on some there was little to no traffic; and all had lots of switchbacks and changes in elevation. We usually kept up a pretty fast pace! The main attraction for the trip is Deal's Gap, also called the Tail of the Dragon. This is an 11 mile stretch of road with 318 very tight turns and no intersecting roads or driveways. Bordered by the Great Smoky Mountains and the Cherokee National Forest, it is famous as one of the most challenging and fun drives in the country. It was very busy this time of year but we were able to drive it several times during the week.



Steve's Dragon Tail

We did lots of other driving, about 200 miles a day, as well. Each day, Monday through Friday, was a different drive. Steve and Pat Beam planned and led a new route one day that took us past Tellico Village and looped through Lenoir City. In celebration of the trip Steve sported a "Tail of the Dragon" hairstyle that was admired by all. Bill Titley of the North Coast Club was the primary organizer who led us the other days on some routes that we have enjoyed in the past, full of twists and turns and beautiful scenery. We took a one day excursion through the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and on up the Blue Ridge Parkway. A highlight was seeing several groups of elk in the meadows in the Park (this was the first we had seen them here). We enjoyed lunch at the Pisgah Inn at an elevation of 5000 feet; beautiful views and delicious food. This year we got to drive over the Fontana Dam, and even drove a short little stint on the Appalachian Trail! The lower drive

to the dam and the Visitor Center were not open but we were able to walk around the dam, which was featured in the 1993 movie, The Fugitive.

Other fun drives took us on the Foothills Parkway and Cherahala Skyway. Friday we stopped at Bald River Falls and then drove Wayah Road through Nantahala National Forest in NC. This road is spectacular! It has lots of tight switchbacks as it goes way up over the mountain and then back down and then snakes its way through the shady cover of a mature forest. Pictures of some of our excursions are on the club Facebook page.

If you are up for an adventure, the plan is to go back to being a spring trip so the dates are Sunday, May 9 through Saturday May 15, 2021. Some folks stay the whole week, but others come and go during that time frame. You can make reservations where we usually stay at the Highland Manor Inn (800-213-9462) or email office @highlandmanor.com and tell them you are with the Miata group.



Miatas at Margaritaville

by Bill Potvin

Over the past 25 years of our Miata ownership, national and regional events hold some of the most exceptional memories. Although our local meanders are fun, there is something special about driving to a completely different locale, and getting together with dozens or even hundreds of new Miata friends.

We have attended these types of events in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, Ontario, Arkansas, North Carolina and Massachusetts. Miatas at Margaritaville, held at Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri will be remembered as one of those special ones.



Linda and I were joined by Tom and Fran Thayer, and our adventure started with a two day, 650 mile drive. Taking two days allowed a more leisurely pace and enabled us to avoid cities and a lot of interstate travel. Both going and coming home we stayed in Urbana, Indiana a university town that provided a lot of nice choices of motels and restaurants.

The event was to start with registration on Thursday evening, but we arrived on Tuesday in order to enjoy the beautiful lake area on our own. This worked out well, since the weather was perfect for top-down touring.

A unique feature of this event was that all six planned drives were available on a smartphone app prior to the event. We took advantage of this by completing two of the drives on Wednesday and Thursday on our own, at our own (spirited) pace. It also meant that we could have done all of the drives on our own schedule. We elected to “run with the pack” on Friday and Saturday, however, and that was a good choice, since they were some of the best organized tours we have ever seen at these types of events.



Although there were 90+ cars at the event, each drive was limited to 15 cars plus a leader and “tail gunner” who were in constant communication. We had excellent written instructions in addition to the app, plus FRS radios that were used to call out every turn! The speeds were just right, there was little OTM (other than Miata) traffic, and the rest stops were well placed. And did I mention that they were some of the nicest roads and scenery that you’ll find?



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There were no “captive” meals, so we sought out some local places, including a nearby winery/brewery pub. Actually, the Landshark Restaurant at Margaritaville

was surprisingly good, so we dined there outside, overlooking the lake, several times.

There were cars from at least 10 states in attendance, with a couple from New Jersey taking the farthest traveled award. It was interesting to see them all gathered, representing about every year and color. Best of Show went to a women driving a turbocharged, roll bar equipped, soft rubber clad mean machine.

Our great few days and 2000 miles of top-down fun could only have been better if a few more of our NWOHio members could have joined us. Our advice: don’t miss the next one!

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**Stop in and talk to Nik, Mark or Bill,
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 the latest special deals.**