

HORIZONS

The Newsletter for The Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

November/Dec
2004

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Ferman Mini's of
Tampa Bay
sponsor of the Sun Riders
Auto Cross Series
31400 US Hwy 19 N
Palm Harbor

End of Autocross Season

by Loren Williams, Motorsports Director

This should be the last newsletter of the year, so this is my last opportunity to write about the remainder of this season's events. There are two events remaining, November 20th (with chairman Chad Sutton) and December 3rd (with chairman Mark Cookman). The December event will be a night event on a Friday, more about that below.

As usual, the November autocross is open to novices. We had over 30 of them at the last autocross, 10 of them being first-timers (we jokingly call them "virgins") and it was great fun to watch some of the first timers do things they didn't think they could do. (right, Carmen?) Again, I will tell you: Even if you have no interest in competition whatsoever, autocrossing a Miata is FUN. In addition to being fun, you just might learn something about car control that could save your butt on the street.

In spite of our sometimes published 48-car limit that we've been ignoring for about a year, and our "hard limit" of 60 cars, we allowed 70 cars to run at the October autocross. Things went surprisingly well in spite of that and a late start. It still didn't feel right to me, though. I really liked being able to give people 6 to 8 runs rather than the 4 runs that we had to cut back to this time. I think we should try to stick with that 60-car limit... maybe even implementing required pre-registration if necessary. But those are issues for next year's Motorsports Director and his committee to handle!

About that December autocross... yeah, the night event. We have to put some limitations on that event due to it being held in the evening and in the dark. We won't have as much time to run, so we're going to have to limit entries to 40. Along with that, we're going to make it a Members Only event. And lastly, because it's going to be dark, we're going to have to exclude novices. It's just not safe to run this kind of event if you don't have a firm grasp on the basics. We'd like entrants to have a few events of experience, but absolutely no first-timers for this one.

Our regular autocrossers have something to look forward to next season. (other than getting rid of me as their head guru) We're doing the research right now on some new timing equipment. At a minimum, this equipment will give us more reliability and the ability to interface with a computer for some work-saving automation. But, depending on which option we choose to go with, we may even have enough money to buy a large timer display to proudly show your times to your screaming fans as you finish! How cool is that? Keep your eyes open for it... it's coming.

I've been scrambling over the past week trying to find a new Motorsports Director. Paul Luna was all lined up to take over from me, but he recently got a job offer that he couldn't refuse... in California! With a little bit of begging and a few lies about how easy the job is, I got Chad Sutton to agree to take the position. The irony there is that about 5 years ago,



Chad was in charge of the Wichita Region SCCA autocross program and I took it over from him. Neither of us would have ever guessed that the situation would be reversed in the future... especially not in a different club 1500 miles away. Anyway, thanks, Chad!

With that, I'm signing off as Motorsports Director. It's been a fun ride, but I'm handing the keys to Chad. Chad has experience doing this and is more than qualified. (see above)

Don't worry, I'll still be in the back seat!

3rd Annual Christmas Light Drive

Who: Miata pilots and copilots who like good food, evening drives with the top down, Christmas lights and ice cream. (not necessarily in that order)

What: Dinner, the quest for Christmas lights, and ice cream.

When: December 16 – 6:00pm

Where: Meet at Casa Tina for some fresh Mexican or Vegetarian food. 369 Main Street in Downtown Dunedin. From there, we will begin our drive at around 7:30pm. The drive will take us through some of the best home light displays in the North Pinellas area with a few curvy roads thrown in for good measure. We will end at about 9:30 with a stop for ice cream.

Why: If you have to ask, maybe you should just stay home?

October Monthly Meeting

At the October monthly meeting, awards were presented to the officers of 2004 for their outstanding participation and dedication to the club and the duties of their position. Without their support, we would not have as great a club as we do.

Thank you! Keep up the great work!



2nd Annual "All Miatas" Meet

We participated in this event last year.

Well over 40 Miatas showed up, many faces that we don't often see. It's time to do it again!

December 10

7PM until ?

Sonic Drive-In

4411 W. Gandy Blvd.



NEW OFFICERS FOR THE 2005 CLUB YEAR

LoAn Nguyen - President

Jon V. - Treasurer

Bob Bartlett - Board Member

Kevin Morrison - Board Member

Loren Williams - Vice President

Kathy Davis- Secretary

Dan Rasp - Board Member

Joe Wessling - Past President



WELCOME TO ALL NEW CLUB OFFICERS!



The Sun Riders Annual Holiday Party

Holiday Party on Dec. 11. It's right around the corner!!

The fun begins at 6:30!

RSVP by Dec 9th to kathy@sunriders.com (Please RSVP so food can be accounted for!!)

We have secured the penthouse at the **Chart House Suites in Clearwater Beach** and this is our final party there, the hotel was sold and will be torn down in April. There are a lot of memories for us there, so let's have a blast to remember!

The Planning Committee also learned from the Chamber of Commerce that on the night of the 11th there will be a boat parade!!!

The Planning Committee has worked up a terrific menu, but we are asking that anyone who would like to, please bring a favorite holiday goodie to share for dessert or just for nibbles. We have some dynamite bakers among our members. And as usual, BYOB.

Many of our favorite traditions will continue this year, including the **Dirty Santa gift exchange**, games, holiday music, and great conversation. Some new surprises will be added, too. **Limit is \$20 and item must be car related.**

<http://www.charhousesuites.com/> For maps and directions



Hope to see ya'll there
for some good food and lots of fun!



Calendar of Events

November 2004

Saturday 11/20/2004 Autocross Event Allstate Campus at 3200 34th Street South in St. Petersburg. Details on the Courtesy Mazda Sunriders Autocross series and directions to our autocross site can be found on the Sunriders website. Registration is from 8:00-9:30, be there early! contact Loren Williams at <mailto:Loren@Sunriders.com> 727-797-1062

Sunday, 11/21/2004 SunRiders Sam's Club Clearwater Fun Rallye

Start time is at 2:30 p.m. Starting in north west corner of Sam's parking lot, corner of us 19 and Gulf to bay

Nice to know if you are planning on coming, Drivers, bring a navigator who can count to 10, but come one, come all. Event organizer: Bob Bartlett

December 2004

Friday, 12/3/2004 SunRiders SPC - Allstate Campus * Night * Autocross

Was originally scheduled as a Primus Track event, rescheduled as an autocross at SPC due to unavailability of the track, and then rescheduled again to a Friday night event. Entry will be limited to 40 cars (pre-registration is advised), Members Only, and No Novices. (sorry, this is not the kind of event you want to attempt if you aren't familiar with the basics!) Setup begins at 5:00pm, Registration from 5:30-6:30.

Saturday, 12/4/2004 - Saturday, 12/4/2004 SunRiders SR54 & US41 Dade City Cruise-In

If you only do one Cruise-In, this is the one to do. It's the biggest one of the year, lots of Xmas decorations, music, food and lots & lots & lots of antique autos. Meet at McDonald's at 54 & 41 at 4. We leave at 4:15 for a lively 45 minute trip thru the woods to Dade City.

Saturday, 12/4/2004 Sun Riders Autox Club SPC - Allstate Campus Autocross Event

***** RESCHEDULED FOR 12/3/04 *****

contact Loren Williams at <mailto:Loren@Sunriders.com> 727-797-1062

Friday, 12/10/2004 SunRiders Sonic Drive-In 4411 W. Gandy Blvd. Tampa, FL

2nd Annual "All Miatas" Meet We participated in this event last year. Well over 40 Miatas showed up, many faces that we don't often see. It's time to do it again!

December 10 7PM until ?

Saturday, 12/11/2004 - Saturday, 12/11/2004 SunRiders Chart House, Clearwater Holiday Party

This year's Holiday Party will be held at the Chart

House Suites in Clearwater Beach (for directions, see below). Please RSVP by Dec 9th if you plan to attend:

To Kathy Davis at kdavis41@tampabay.rr.com. There is no charge for active club member and guest.

The party starts at 6, dinner begins at 7:30, and Dirty Santa begins at 8:30. Please bring a car-related or Miata-related wrapped gift for the Dirty Santa Gift Exchange. Price limit is \$20.00.

Directions: The Chart House, 850 Bayway Blvd.,

Clearwater Beach, FL 33767 <http://www.charhousesuites.com/>

Wednesday, 12/15/2004 NO MONTHLY MEETING

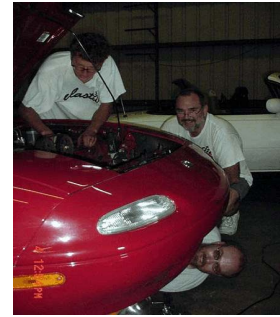
Thursday, 12/16/2004 SunRiders Casa Tina 369 Main Street Dunedin

Christmas Light Drive

Meet at Casa Tina for some fresh Mexican or Vegetarian food at 6:00pm. From there, we will begin our drive around 7:30pm. The drive will take us through some of the best home light displays in the North Pinellas area with a few curvy roads thrown in for good measure. We will end at about 9:30 with a stop for ice cream.

Summer Tech session

Attached are a couple of photos from the last Tech session. Bill Holland is shown stuffed in where the drivers seat used to be and Loren and friends are disemboweling his RED Miata, (courtesy of Owen Johns)



2004 OFFICERS: President - Joe Wessling / Vice President - Joe McCormick / AutoCross Dir. - Loren Williams / Treasurer - LoAn Nguyen / Newsletter Ed./Sec. - Kathy Davis / Event Planning - Loren Williams / Merchandise - Ilona Wessling / Fellowship - JoAnn Forte / Membership - George Bickner / Historian - Jonathan Skinner / WebMaster - Kevin Morrison

Directors: Mike Benishek, Owen Johns, Bob Bartlett / Past Pres/Vice Pres. Don Reese

NEW ROTATING MEETING LOCATIONS!!!!!! SEE CALENDAR ON WEBSITE FOR DETAILS or contact any board member.

Join us at our club meetings...We meet the third Wednesday of each month. Tire kicking starts at 6:30 and the meeting begins at 7:00pm. For more information visit the web page at:

Stuff the lawyers make us say: all opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. they do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sun Riders Miata club, Miata Club of America, Mazda Motors, or the Board of Directors of any of these organizations. Technical advice given is based on the writer's experience with their particular cars. Unless otherwise stated, these procedures are not "Factory Approved". Sun Riders assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of any information presented herein. Use any information at your own risk. Some assembly may be required, batteries not included. Keep away from small children and point away from face when lighting.

The Sun Riders Miata Club
P O Box 26071
Tampa, FL 33623-6071

