

## 2013 West Coast Lotus Meet

By Cindy Hoest, member of Lotus of Colorado

**Friday morning June 28<sup>th</sup> 7:00 am.** - It's time to load up the 2011 Solar Yellow Evora S (known affectionately from here forward as the "fun car"). Load the car onto a trailer you think – ABSOLUTELY NOT – it's time for a ROAD TRIP!!! We pack four small soft sided bags in the trunk along with various extra shoes, cleaning supplies, and the tow hitch - just in case. There is one small bag seat belted in the back seat with a few necessary items, wallets, maps, atlas and gum. Then off to work. After what seems like endless hours it is finally 4:00 pm and time for the official start of the vacation. Check the odometer 25,462. It's time to roll. We leave Glenwood Springs on I70 headed west. Should we just blast I70 on our way to Salt Lake City? NO silly we are in the "fun car" so we head North on Hwy 13 toward Meeker, CO. Terry mentions he has never been on the road to Piceance Creek so we pull over switch drivers and turn onto CO 5. This is a great Lotus road and the beginning leg of some "spirited driving". Eventually we meet Hwy 64 and head West through many small towns in Colorado – Rangely, Dinosaur, and into Utah. We take Hwy 40 to 191 by way of Vernal, Duchesne and Heber City. These are fun roads not too much traffic and we get to go over Daniels pass. One small rock chip to commemorate our evening drive. We spend that evening and the next morning with friends Shawn and Nicole.

**Saturday June 29, Day Two** – We knew from the beginning this would be a less than stellar driving day. Just too many miles with very few road choices so it's I80. The salt flats are amazing but after miles and miles of them . . . Eventually we get to Winnemucca NV. We have no reservations so we stop at a motel to see about a room and there sit two Studebaker Avanti. Neat! The first additions to the memorable car list we are keeping.

**Sunday June 30, Day Three** – We continue on I80. Not too far along we see this odd building on the south side of the road so we stop off at the Thunder Mountain Indian Monument. This is pretty hard to describe. There are many old cars that are now part of a fence. There are old bottles built into the walls. I suggest you search Google images. Fortunately we stopped there early as we hit temperatures of 109 degrees during our drive on this day! Eventually we cut off on Hwy 431 toward Lake Tahoe. Another fun road! Wow, are there a lot of people at King's Beach! From there it is up Hwy 297 to Hwy 89. Do you see a pattern here? We are looking for small windy roads which are lined with green dots which on our maps mean scenic byways.

We are having a blast, fun windy roads, barely any traffic, sunshine, great car, superb day. Terry is driving when we come upon a guy walking along the road. There is an amazing railroad bridge we have stumbled on the Keddie Y. If you are not a train person you will have to look this up too. We got to watch a train cross over this one of a kind bridge. The guy, who was a motorcycle rider, looked at our map and deemed our intended route "so boring I wouldn't even ride my motorcycle on that", and suggested a change. So off we went down CA 70. He was right it was an amazing ride along a river. Great corners and the posted speeds – we were shocked - they were set at 60 mph. Honestly if they were in CO they would have been posted maybe 40 mph. We had a blast!

We turned North of Hwy 149 and then afraid we were missing something, headed Northeast on CA 32. As this road had no green dots I kept reminding Terry not to smile, not to have a good time, and not to take pictures because this was NOT a scenic road. . . according to who??? This was another blast of a drive. It involved many more spirited corners, turns, hills, valley, it was awesome too and the speed limit – once again 60! We are loving California now baby! We hooked back up with Hwy 89, then CA 44 into Redding, CA. We managed to talk a Thai place into making dinner to go as they were closing talk about a FABULOUS Lotus day!

**Monday July 1<sup>st</sup>, Day Four** – We found a rock chip repair place, got the windshield fixed, had breakfast and finally hit the road. I am sure there is a rather direct route to Portland where we were to meet up with other Lotus folks – ahhh, yeah we didn't take that route. CA 299 green dots, another great scenic road but...NO...it was all under major reconstruction. We sat in a huge row of cars. We were toward the end of the group. We drive for miles and miles before we come to the end of the construction. We figure if we

pull over and wait no one will be behind us because all those going down the mountain have to take their turn through the cones. We park for a bit then turn on a small unmarked road to Trinity Lake. There is NO traffic. Spirited, smiling, grinning, our tires are not quite so happy, we may have left a bit of tread on this road! Then up CA 3 North to Yreka.

At Fort James they are paving and there is fresh tar on the road, ICK. So Terry says "turn here" and we find another small unmarked road (It's called Scott River Road). Windy and curvy do NOTHING to describe this road. One of the most amazing roads I have ever been on and the entire thing is paved, course a lot of it is only one lane – did I say windy? Might I mention occasionally scary! After a time this road is also under construction. We pull over under a tree and stop the car. They are repaving this little STEEP road. No one goes through. We talk with a guy who lives up on top of this mountain and drives the road all the time. He tells us this road is nothing compared to the one just south of here. We visit with the sign guy. We hang around for about an hour until they drive the paving machine and all the equipment by us – there was a tiny pull out where we were. Then they led us through, there were exactly two cars waiting on the other side – this is NOT a highly travelled road! But a very exciting one! So much for missing the fresh tar on the road! Back to Hwy 96 then Hwy 299 into Blue Lake where we spent the night.

**Tuesday July 2<sup>nd</sup> Day Five** – Redwoods – We take Hwy 101 up the coast. Today we are heading for the Giant Redwoods. After driving through thick fog and spectacular views of the ocean, we stop for breakfast and find two Packard cars restored to perfection. Beautiful cars! At Jedediah Smith State Park the trees are wonderful. A ranger insisted that we take the, at times, barely one lane wide, tiny dirt road through the redwoods called Howland Hills Road. If you get the chance, do, for it was amazing. We walked around, took lots of pictures, and enjoyed the park thoroughly. We headed on up the coast and stopped for our first seafood then we pulled in and walked along the ocean. Not too many of them in Colorado. We happily played tourist all day and spent the night in Coos Bay. Here were three more classic cars all from Colorado. We never did manage to catch any of the drivers to talk with them.

**Wednesday July 3<sup>rd</sup> – Day Six** – It is a coast kinda day. The plan is to run the coast up all the way to Hwy 18 and meet some of the Portland Lotus folks. We need to be there about 4:30. We drive about 15 miles and realize we are having some braking issues. The fluid level is fine, everything seems to be good but the brake pedal keeps creeping closer and closer to the floor. So we call Ron Tonkin's Lotus and see what they have to say. They can see us if we get to Portland by 1:00, so we head east on hwy 126 to I5 to Portland. We make it and they graciously pull out another Lotus and check ours out. They didn't see anything obvious but they drained all the fluid, replaced it, checked the system, and put us back on the road. – Our "fun car" was actually from Ron Tonkin's. When we went to purchase our Lotus we wanted a new yellow Evora S and the only one for sale in the USA at that time was in Oregon so they shipped our car to Ferrari of Denver – I think our car just wanted to go home for a visit since we were so close!

We found the hotel and pulled in and there was our first sighting of other Lotus cars! We went to the Lotus showroom where we saw six cars in the showroom. I think 10 Lotus cars drove over from the hotel. We had snacks, met new Lotus friends and then we had a talk from the Western Sales manager for Lotus. He brought us up to date on all the doings at the company. It was wonderful. Then we all returned to the hotel for dinner. That was the beginning of some new friendships.

**Thursday July 4<sup>th</sup> – Day 7** – We headed out in a caravan of 7 cars. This was a quick jaunt straight up I 5. We got a ways up and stopped in a rest area and picked up three more Lotus cars. We stopped for lunch at Big Bubba's Burgers and met Doug, in his Lotus Elite (the only one at the event), who was pretty much running the entire WCLM meet.

From there it was on to the hotel. Well, three of us decided we could get there a bit faster and we headed out on our own – guess we were ready for a bit of spirited driving! We pull in and voila Lotus cars all over and more coming in all the time. We got checked in and went out to watch the cars arrive.

They had the entire parking lot roped off for our cars. There were two hoses available the entire time we were there for free car cleaning! Nice bonus. Eventually there were 52 cars there by our count. There

was one Elite, one Exige, a flock of Elises (3 were series one), a bunch or Sevens, Evoras, Europas, Elans both older and newer and several Espirits. It was quite a sight. There were 11 yellow cars and only one that was truly orange quite a different paint palette compared to our LOCO gatherings.

After checking into our room, we all gathered together for a rundown of the events ahead. While enjoying free drinks and appetizers, they gave out prizes for the track event earlier in the day (which I don't believe any of the LOCO drivers participated in) as well as longest/shortest drives to the event, and oldest/newest cars at the event. We were the proud winners of the longest drive with only 2242 miles. After the dinner, we joined others for Bellvue's fireworks celebration. With CO's constant fire bans, it was nice to finally see a good fireworks display.

**Friday July 5<sup>th</sup> – Day 8** – The first full day of the gathering was to begin with a trip to the Flying Heritage Museum. However, some of us chose to enjoy a few extra zzzz's. Skipping the museum, we went out for some lunch before partaking in the Autocross event. What a unique experience, and apparently a more common activity for members of the West Coast. It was a small track lined with cones in an open parking lot. You race through the cones and try and get through with the fastest time. Oh, and if you hit the cones, you get time penalties. We separated into two groups since most cars had two drivers. Cindy went first and improved with each try. Each driver was allowed 6 attempts. Terry went second and accomplished his best lap on his 4<sup>th</sup> try. However, by the 6<sup>th</sup> lap, cones were flying left and right. Tires squealing, cones flying, engine revving, who knew one could have so much fun in 1<sup>st</sup> gear!!! After cleanup, we headed to the Snoqualmie Casino where we were treated the like royalty. We parked the cars atop the parking garage and were catered to with drinks and cigars. Dinner at the buffet was way beyond our expectations. Fresh fish, crab, and shrimp. Juicy Prime Rib and Mongolian Grill Asian stir fry was to be had. And the wait staff was outstanding. The casino did a wonderful job!! It was a terrific end to a terrific day.

**Saturday July 6<sup>th</sup> – Day 9** – Started out the same as the day before, we were 'supposed' to join others for a day at the race track but sleep sounded too good to pass up. We decided to head through town to find a bite to eat and it was an event all its own. I don't know what kind of money is in that town, but there were supercars on every block. Just driving to lunch we saw (within 8 blocks or so) 2 Lamborghinis and an Aston Martin. While having lunch we saw a Masarati, 2 Nissan GTRs, and another Aston Martin. And I'll also add that the day we left Bellvue for home, we spotted a McLaren MP4-12C which we like to otherwise call a McLaren Fax Machine. What a treat it was to see so many amazing cars.

After spotting cars in the wild, we headed towards the DeLorean repair shop/museum. It was amazing to see 12 DeLorean cars in one location. It was fascinating to learn how Chapman helped with the design and the similarities it had with the Lotus Esprit. With time to spare, we made a quick jaunt over to the Space Needle to take a tour of the Chihuly Glass Garden at the base of the Needle. What a remarkable exhibit. Afterwards, we made our way south to the LeMay Car Museum for a casual park side car show highlighting the eclectic mix of Lotuses.

The LeMay treated us to a delicious meal, an engaging lecture from Dominic Dobson, and followed up with multiple stories of the most beautiful and unique car collection in the world. Some of our favorites included the early motorcycles, the Flintstone's car, the Tucker, the mini Bugatti, and the Ferrambo (a Rambler with a Ferrari engine).

**Sunday July 7 – Day 10** – Having burned through our allotted vacation, it was time for us to head for home. We only had two days to head back so that meant a quick trip on the super highways – but wait – Peter and Mike said we couldn't miss Lolo Pass so of course we couldn't. We also wanted a picture of the 99 miles of windy road sign but it was in a terrible location and we didn't get a picture either. It was a fun road that took us slightly out of our way. Exactly how did we end up in Montana? We spent the night in the tiny town of Dillon Montana after driving through a cloud of bugs. At least we had the pass to remember this day by.

**Monday July 8<sup>th</sup> – Day 11** – This was an all interstate highway drive that started at 7 am and ended at home in Rifle, Colorado at 9 pm. The final odometer reading was 29169. For a grand total of 3707 miles driven and if we could we would jump in the car tomorrow and do it all over again!