



# MINI NEWS

Official Publication of the Mini Owners of America, Los Angeles, Inc., Sept./Oct., 2005

## Mini Meet West - San Ramon, CA July 28-30, 2005

Mini Meet West is the highlight of the year for Mini Owners on the West Coast -- and even some on the East Coast and Canada and Mexico. It is always a difficult task for the hosting club to put together an event that will cater to the tastes and desires of such far-flung and eclectic a gathering of Mini Folk. Every decision that an organizing committee makes is put under a microscope after the meet is over and there are generally more than enough "Monday morning quarterback" to dish out opinions.

Well ----- my measure of a good meet is one that asks "Did I have a good time?" The answer in this case is a resounding "YES! I had a GREAT time."

I have been involved in the organization of enough MMW events to qualify myself as "experienced" (notice -- I did not claim to be an "expert"). My opinion weighs equally with all participants and does not carry extra weight because I am "experienced" at being a part of organizing past meets.

The MOASF and NOR-CAL MINIs efforts deserve a resounding "Well Done!!". Everything you could have expected from a meet was fulfilled admirably by the hosting clubs. There



Easily the most unusual car at the meet -- at least the one that attracted more attention than any other was this "Beach Car" that had a complete Rattan basketweave interior. Very cool for driving around in a wet bathing suit, eh?

were photo and arts and crafts contests, RC Racing, Concours and Car Show, Slot Car Racing (a new and most exciting event for MMW), Kids activities and (notice I've saved the best for last) Autocross, Funkhana, Rally and Awards Banquet.

The Autocross and Funkhana were held at historic Altamont Raceway Park - formerly known as Altamont Speedway. The organization of this event was handled admirably by several volunteers (whose names I wish I had right

now) and, of course, Mike Kimball. Mike always runs a rather Loose ship -- but does so with an eye towards the three most important things - Safety; Safety and Safety. The course was well layed out and from a spectator standpoint looked "really fast" -- but it was a medium-speed, second-gear course for the classic Mini while still giving the MINI a challenge without slanting the "tightness" of the course so much as to give the classic an advantage.

Continued on Page 6

## The PREZ Sez:

Hello Fellow MOALA Members!

Mini Meet West has come and gone. This was the first time I took the time off work and attended the event. WoW! I am glad that I did! The event was a blast. It was great spending the time with fellow Mini/MINI enthusiasts. We had an opportunity to spend some time with many members of our club, get to know them on a more personal level and develop great friendships. Many great events and all of them set in beautiful settings. Now I know what all the talk was about and if at all possible will not miss another one.

The month of September brings us another opportunity to get together, enjoy our cars and at the same time give others an opportunity to see what a great club MOALA is.

In case some of you do not know the Annual Belmont Shore Car Show is coming up on Sunday, September 11th. This show is one of the best car shows

around. The city of Long Beach closes down Belmont Shore and the entire 2nd Street for this event. Over 1,000 cars are on display along with vendors, DJ's and live bands. What make this show different is that the entire area is full of shops, great restaurants and bars. In addition over 30,000-40,000 people attend the show.

Over the years the promoters of the event have set aside a special area for us. Imagine a city block full of Minis/MINIS with a big MOALA canopy behind. No other club gets this treatment!

We are hoping for

our best turn out yet for this event. Download the form on [MOALACHAT.com](http://MOALACHAT.com) and sign up. You will not be sorry.

At the last meeting a vote was taken and we have agreed to give all attendees that sign up and bring their car to the show a choice of a reimbursement of 50% of the cost of the entry fee or a free event T-Shirt. So, don't wait and put this on your calendar of must things to do. For more details on this and other upcoming events log on to [MOALACHAT.com](http://MOALACHAT.com).

Boris Tilim  
MOALA Prez



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## Editor's Ramblings

To start with -- I know that all of you have been wishing I would stop whining about the fact that I am going to give up writing the Mini News. And more whining about the fact that no one has shown an interest in taking it over. Well -- after this little paragraph -- I will stop whining because I do have volunteers to take over my duties. Yes, you read that correctly - plural - volunteers - two of them. I am happy to announce that Rick Anderson and Ralph Carita have volunteered to share duties writing the newsletter starting in January. Thank you very much. All I have to say is that Rick seems very excited to take it over -- Ralph does not seem quite "as excited" but a willing volunteer, nonetheless. I am

sure they will both do an admirable job and I have promised to help in whatever capacity I can to ease the transition.

Mini Meet West is history again. Great meet. Lots of fun things to do with our favorite people. Front page news for the Mini News, of course -- and lots of photos. I had a great time at the meet and got to see some of my former compadres from the Bay Area. The weather was at times a little on the hot side -- but most of the time it was just right - in a word - beautiful.

Lots of Vans and Mokes. They seem to be growing in number each year. Some very nice examples and that applies to all of the cars -- very nice stuff. Everything from a "Beach Buggy" Mini to a Chevrolet Camaro V-6 engined sedan. People, of course, from

just about EVERYWHERE. Really enjoyable time with my favorite people -- Mini people.

Other stuff happening also. The Braille Rally was (again) a great event that just seems to get better each year. The fun and competitive spirit of the students never ceases to amaze me. And -- our club did admirably as far as getting trophies for the students. I think there were three trophies out of six participants from the club. And the best time of the day was turned in by a Mini from the SCMM club in San Diego. Story elsewhere this issue.

So that about sums it up. Two volunteers - imagine that. Have a great day, week, month -- talk to you all next time around. One more time.

Drive Safe - Bob Amaral



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# The Braille Rally - July 16, 2005

The braille Rally is probably my overall favorite event of the year. I have participated in it many times over the last 15 years. There was the four years that I was up north that I did not get to participate -- but every time that I could get there it was always a priority to do so.

This year was the first year that I did not complete the rally without help from the organizers who I had to call to find the final destination. Dont get me wrong -- I certainly have been lost in the past on this rally. But this time took the cake.

There were a few reasons for that happening -- none that involved my navigator J.D. Ferschweiler. He did a great job but other distractions (which I do not need to go into here) led to my demise.

I thought that I would try running the rally in an open car for a change -- so I drove my Bugeye "Kermit". It was rather difficult to hear instructions with the wind and traffic noise (usually among the reasons that I like driving Kermit). Plus the wind made it difficult for my navigator to read the braille with the pages flapping in the breeze. But those amounted to minor distractions and really just required a little more diligence on our respective parts.

The MOALA did great overall. Three out of the six drivers from our club that participated ended up with a trophy. The weather was perfect for the drive; in part because the rally was run along the coast. Prior events were (mostly) run through the valley -- where temperatures were always close to triple-digit in July.

The MOALA participants

were: Tony Swisler with navigator Seong Hwan (11 years old -- Seong did not know what a rally was but did a great job as navigator); Ken Reid with navigator Beline Salinas; Willy Hugron with navigator Cindy Ruiz who Willy says was a very good navigator that he credits with getting them a trophy; Jack Belcher with navigator Laura Diaz; Marilyn Egler with navigator Jeffrey Brewer; Ernie Shack with Erica Garcia and myself with J.D. Ferschweiler.

This event really leaves you with an appreciation for the gift of sight and is one of those encounters with kids that teaches adults the value of doing good things for those less fortunate than themselves. The braille Institute does great work and they do so much to help these kids to become independent.

I must thank Pat West and Anita Wright who work so hard to pull this rally together. They do a great job. I would also like to thank all of the navigators that have ridden with me over the years -- great kids; and so competitive. It has always been

special to be a part of this event and the navigators are the ones who make it so.

There really is no way to express in words how much enjoyment you can get participating in this rally. Part of it is that the kids are so thrilled to be "in control" for once in their lives. They take the responsibility of that very seriously and try to do their very best in guiding their drivers through the rally. Then there is the feeling that you are doing something truly important for these students. Their participation imparts to them so much confidence and it comes from taking on a task that most of them fear they cannot do. When they find out that they can be successful at it and actually do it -- they just beam. It really is something to see.

I hope to be a part of this rally for many more years to come. Who knows -- maybe I will get one of my kids a trophy one of these days. Stranger things have happened.

Drive Safe - Bob Amaral



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The Braille Rally Winners -- clockwise from bottom left -  
 - Tony Swisler and navigator 11-year-old Seong Hwan took **Fifth Place in the Braille Division**; Ken Reid with navigator Beline Salinas took **Fourth Place in the Large Print Division** and Willy Hugron with navigator Cynthia Ruiz took **Third Place in the Braille Division** (this was Willy's first trophy in his 15 years of participation in this event).

Best time of the day was turned in by Rick Ariaza in a MINI who is a member of Southern California Mini Maniacs with navigator Ingrid Rivera -- **First Place Overall** with an incredible error time of just 3 minutes and 15 seconds and they also took the **Best Time in a Mini Trophy** which is provided by MOALA.

At our last MOALA meeting those present voted to donate \$500.00 to the Braille Institute. It is a very worthy cause and the work that they do with these kids is amazing.



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## Mini Meet West . . . . .Continued from Page One.

The Funkhana was organized by Jack Holdaway and, although I did not participate, I heard that it was fun. Knowing Jack's sense of humor it could not have been anything else.

The highlight of the whole weekend (for me) was the awards banquet. It was held at the prestigious and world-renowned Blackhawk Automotive Museum. To have it here was a stroke of genius on the organizer's part. The food was great but the atmosphere was totally incredible. To be seated amongst the historic and, in many cases, one-of-a-kind automotive works of art was awesome.

I spent four years as a member of MOASF living in the Bay Area and the Blackhawk was one of my favorite places to visit. I displayed my car there on several occasions and visited many more times.

The tedious duty of awards was shortened somewhat by the fact that awards for the Friday and Saturday events were given out on Saturday evening. That left fewer awards to be handed out at the Blackhawk. Nonetheless the awards, although an im-

portant part of any meet, always seem to drag on - no matter what you do to shorten them.

The Rally (Rallymaster - Jack Holdaway) was a straightforward run to the top of Mt. Diablo and back to the Hotel (which was, by the way, beautiful and a deal at the special Mini Meet price). Heck -- I did not even get lost and never "backtracked" once during the whole rally. To some "newbies" in the club that statement may not carry much weight. My proclivity for getting lost is legendary and for me to have gotten through it without doing so is nothing short of miraculous. I, of course, give all of the credit to my trusty navigator, my wife, Dean (usually she takes the burden of blame when I do get lost, of course).

As I mentioned earlier -- a

new event for this meet was the slot car racing event sponsored by Scalextric USA and ClassicMini.us and was completely run by Alan Smith who seemed to be "at the helm" about 20 hours per day. He did a great job of organizing the racers and handled the duties with a fair hand and a dollop of humor. There were two classes and the grand prize in both classes was a collectible Scalextric MINI Cooper Challenge Set. Runners up won a MINI Cooper (1/32 scale). It was fun to watch and equally fun to participate. I hope this continues to be an event at MMWs in the future.

Not a part of the "official" events was an impromptu early-morning run to San Francisco (affectionately known as "The

Continued on Page Seven

On the right - My trusty navigator and I reached the summit of Mt. Diablo with our marriage intact. No - really - it was fun.



The interior of the quite unusual "Beach Car" complete with Rattan floor mats and Magic Wand shifter.



## Mini Meet West . . . . .Continued from Page Six

City" by local bay-area residents) headed up by Hypersprite. I did not participate but heard that it was a pretty awesome ride for the 15 cars that managed to hit several well-known tourist attractions and historic locations including the famed Lombard Street known as the world's most crooked street. See an article written by Hypersprite elsewhere in this issue.

Examples of the kind of people that populate our particular car group always abound when Mini folk get together and at Mini Meet there were plenty of examples. One such example, however, sticks out and I really would be remiss if I did not mention it. It seems our past president, Michael Walsh encountered a problem

about 30 miles short of the Hotel. It was a blown head gasket. He did manage to limp to the hotel parking lot on two cylinders. Well - you might think - what now? It has happened many times in the past - at every Mini Meet that I can think of. Mini fanatics always "come to the rescue" in time of need within a gathering of Mini people.

Chuck Heleker (SAMOA) and Michael Spangler (MOALA) broke out the tools and the coffee and proceeded to change out the dastardly gasket -- right there in the parking lot. They drew quite a crowd as Spanky manned the tools and Chuck supplied technical data, encouragement and "site management". It really was a sight to see. Michael

Walsh also got "greasy fingers" and helped Spanky as much as he could. Before dinner the job was complete. New head gasket - Mini back in business. Mike Walsh drove the car back to Southern California along route 1 and 101 with a little sightseeing along the way. No problems mate -- how about those Mini people? They are pretty cool.

And so - that is my take on the meet. I congratulate both the MOASF and NORCAL MINIIs for all of the hard work that went into staging this event. I do know what it takes -- I do know it is not easy and I do know that every year it gets more and more difficult and more and more expensive to put such a meet together.

Well done - Bob Amaral



These are just some of the many winners that were awarded trophies at Saturday's "pre-award ceremony" for events occurring on Friday and Saturday and, below, the Eric Lindquist Spirit Award was given to Claire Tallman of MOASF.



First place finishers in the concours, rally, funkhana and autocross had preferred parking in the "Blackhawk Circle" in front of the museum during the banquet.

# "The City" Run - July 30, 2005

When you think about going on a run that starts at 6:00 a.m. on a Saturday, it seems a bit silly. Thoughts about giving up perfectly good sleep time, about it still being dark when you leave, about how much earlier than that you will need to be awake in order to make the start time. Who thought this was a good idea? If that's all the information I had to go on, I am sure I would have come to the same conclusion and completely disregarded talk of this run at Mini Meet West but what is omitted from above is the location of this tour. San Francisco, that's right, "The City", one of the most congested and convoluted cities to drive in at any other time, is nearly deserted at six thirty on Saturday morning.

Leaving MMW from the San Ramon Marriott, a mix of 15 Minis and MINIs got off to a somewhat belated start but moved briskly to meet up with our Road Master, Mas on Treasure Island. The weather was cool and overcast so the Minis were running great. We all got out to take pictures of such landmarks at Alcatraz and city skyline and then had a drivers meeting where the route was explained. We headed out to finish our Bay Bridge crossing and zigzagged over to Embarcadero. Moving through countless intersections, crisscrossed with MUNI power lines and train tracks, we easily drove past Pier 39 with no traffic to speak of. Then we went up the hill to the top of Lombard St. where we proceeded to fill this twisty stretch with Minis from top to bottom. What a site!

After this we drove out to Marina Green for a regroup, then worked our way over to the Golden Gate bridge by way of Ghirardelli Square and the Presidio, then on down Baker Beach and by the Legion of Honor where we did loop around the sculpture for some action photos and to make sure the head still knew where the tail was. Surprisingly, we were able to keep together pretty well thus far and simply following the Mini taillights in front of us was enough direction.

We followed some of Forty Nine Mile Drive to end up at Ocean Beach where we parked for a bit and got to know some of our out of town guest who where loving our version of a morning drive. I have to tell you, I have been on quite a few MOASF tours and even I was excited by this adventure. Even though I live in San Jose, a mere forty five minutes from San Francisco, going there is usually left for times when I have friends or family come to visit. With them it's

usually an abbreviated tour with only a few interesting stops and a nice dinner all while driving an SUV through unapologetic traffic. It's not the same, not even close.

Jumping back in and moving out we took a scenic path through Golden Gate Park through Castro and up the twisty section of Market to the top of Twin Peaks. At the top we found a breathtaking view of a city surrounded by its unrelenting marine layer. It really seemed like a crowning moment for this run that was slowly coming to an end. Even with the early start, traffic down on Market had been heavier than we had seen earlier and as we started back to the Bay Bridge we were suddenly in the city that I know, with all the hustle and bustle that normally flows thought its narrow lanes and hilly drives.

As if the gods were thinking "we can't let this go without a hitch", confusion gripped our group about a block from the end when the lead car had to pull over to wait for most of the group that got stuck at a signal. Traffic pressured the middle cars though a construction zone to move past the lead and we got split up getting back on the freeway. Mas headed down 101 to catch up with a few we saw going the wrong way while I drove back to San Ramon with only one other Mini. In the end, everyone made it back safely with no problems, mechanical or otherwise to speak of.

What a blast!  
HyperSprite

For More Photos of MMW 2005 go to  
<hypersprite.com>

## THANK YOU MOALA

I received the following note from Claire Tallman - the 2005 MMW Recipient of the Eric Lindquist Award and thought it appropriate to run it here as it is address to all MOALA members. MOASF president Jon Becker told me that Claire went well above the call of duty while helping stage MMW 2005 and their committee unanimously agreed to bestow the trophy on her.

Dear MOALA Members:

I took home my Mini three years ago. From the beginning, he proclaimed his true nature by being just a bit feisty - his bonnet flew up on the trip home - so I named him Pokey, after the contrary horse in the Gumby cartoon.

Pokey changed my life in innumerable ways. He helped me to see and take on new challenges, to find my independent spirit, to uncover new sources of joy, and live life more fully.

If this is what the Mini spirit is about, if this is what the Eric Lindquist award stands for, then I embrace it wholly.

Working on Mini Meet West 2005 was a massive undertaking, at times taxing, but in the end rewarding. I know that MOALA did not choose me for the award, but I want those of you who knew Eric to know that I truly appreciate the award, and the spirit for which it stands.

Happy Mini-ing to all of you, and  
I'll see you at future Mini Meets.

Claire Tallman . . . MOASF

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I just had to run these two photos. The one below is to give credit to those brave and adventuresome souls that agreed to go on "The City" run in the first place. San Francisco is not a city that is considered to be a "pleasure drive" by anyone short of the king of masochists. And the photo above -- well -- do I have to explain? I have seen many photos of Lombard Street and have even been there a time or two. But I have never seen it filled - top to bottom - with Minis. That is inspiring. What a blast. I hope that there is a "next time" for this excursion as I have heard how much fun it was from some of the participants -- and I want to be there next time.

Thanks hypersprite for the photos and story.

Many more photos of MMW and many other MOASF events can be found on [www.hypersprite.com](http://www.hypersprite.com)



## SEPTEMBER:

**BELMONT SHORES CAR SHOW:** Sunday, September 11. The Bay City Rodders-sponsored show is known as the largest one-day show in Southern California. Sixty blocks (and counting) of streets will be closed for several hours. In the past few years now the Bay City Rodders have reserved a spot for the Mini group - something that is not done for any other car club. So plan to join us at this incredible event. Belmont Shores also offers lots of shopping opportunities for car enthusiasts. If you wish to avail yourself of the "special" parking with the Mini group it is advisable to meet up at our "pre-staging" at Mark Etheridge's Moto Guzzi shop at 1831 Redondo Avenue in Signal Hill, so that we can get in line together. We will meet there **before 6:00 a.m. to depart at 6:00 a.m. sharp** for the show lineup. Fees: \$25.00 pre-registration - \$30.00 day of show.

September 21: Regular MOALA Meeting 7:30 p.m. at Me 'n Ed's Pizza Parlor, Lakewood.

## OCTOBER:

**SAN DIEGO BRITISH CAR DAY:** Sunday, October 2: The 26th year for this show which is a favorite of many British Car Clubs from near and far. Fees: Pre-registration is \$15.00 per vehicle -- Day of Show Registration is \$20.00 per vehicle. Walk-in visitors - \$2.00: Children under 15 years - Free. Trophy categories include: Best of show; Best of Marque; Long Distance; Best Beater (must be running to quality), Founder's Trophy; Best Club Presentation and Best Classic Picnic. The show is held at Fairbrook Farms located on Mission Road near State Highway 76 which connects with Interstate 5 and Interstate 15. More information: <www.sandiegobritishcaraday.org>

October 19: Regular MOALA Meeting 7:30 p.m. at Me 'n Ed's Pizza Parlor, Lakewood

## NOVEMBER:

**TOPANGA TURKEY RUN:** Sunday, November 20. Meet at 8:30 a.m. -- leave promptly at 9:00 a.m. Our annual trek through the mountain environs of Topanga Canyon and surrounding area with a stop at The Rock Store for lunch. One of our most popular runs. Meet alongside the Holiday Inn hotel at the Sunset Blvd. offramp of the 405 Freeway. Roadmaster: Willy Hugron. For more info contact Willy directly at 714-894-8417.

November 16: Regular MOALA Meeting 7:30 p.m. at Me 'n Ed's Pizza Parlor, Lakewood

## DECEMBER:

**THE ANNUAL MOALA CHRISTMAS PARTY:** December 3, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Being held once again at "A Taste of France" restaurant which is located at 7304 Center Drive, Huntington Beach, CA. (across from Old World & next to Del Taco). For directions call the restaurant direct at A charge of \$7.50 per person; \$15.00 a couple will be collected at the door. When the date gets closer you will receive an e-vite to this event.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no official MOALA meeting at Me-n-Ed's Pizza parlor in December.

### CLUB OFFICERS

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## Helpful Hints

That can be applied to any car; any garage; any project

When the time comes to lift one corner of your car, it is a pretty good idea to chock the wheel diagonally opposite. This keep the car from moving as you lift it.

When you reassemble bits and pieces on your car, keep some grease as well as some anti-seize on the workbench, ready for use. As an example, this makes it easy to use something like an acid brush to paint anti-seize on bolt threads.

Do you have a problem with alternator-bearing failure? If so, the most common cause is a too-tight

fan belt. If the belt is over-tightened, the alternator bearings have to absorb the strain. How tight is just right? You should be able to flex the belt approximately 1/2 in for every 12 inches of unsupported span.

When you buy a new set of mechanical gauges, you will invariably find that the nylon tubing is tightly coiled inside the package. Looks neat, but how in the world do you install the circular mess? Take it into the kitchen and turn on the tea-kettle. As the kettle begins to spout steam, draw the tubing through the steam.

Almost all of the coiling will unwind, leaving you with a manageable piece of tubing for the installation.

When the time comes to install a new speedo cable inside the housing, try greasing it first. What if the cable doesn't want to slide in, like pushing a rope? Try chucking the end in a variable-speed electric drill, slowly turning the cable as it is fed into the housing. Works every time!

When working with brakes, it is often necessary to remove things like wheel cylinders so you can rebuild them. If that is the case, the brake lines and hoses should be plugged to avoid contamination. But how to do it? Try golf tees, the cheaper the better. They fit right in the line and will prevent dirt from entering the now-open system. By the way, they are also great for temporarily plugging vacuum hoses.

If you have the misfortune of getting water in your gasoline (and consequently in your carburetor) you will find a nice collection of alkali. This builds up in the fuel bowls when the water evaporates rapidly. Unfortunately, alkali is immune to conventional car cleaners. The best bet is toilet-bowl cleaner. Soak the offending components in the cleaner for several minutes and then rinse with carb cleaner. Amazingly, the grunge will be gone.

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Regular MOALA Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at Me N Ed's Pizza 4115 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, CA

