

P-ing Across Wisconsin in the Rain **by Marcy Hotz**

On a dreary, wet Saturday morning, drivers and navigators of 24 Miatas convened at McDonalds in Lake Delton. Several of us slept at the Voyageur Inn the night before, and the rest drove to Lake Delton in the rain. Having been cooped up during COVID, this writer can't tell you how good it was to see our Miata friends! It felt like old times.

Following the drivers meeting held under the entrance canopy of a nearby building, the stream of cars were challenged at the first 11-second green light, which allowed all but 6 cars to cross the first highway. Splashing our way west on County Road P (of course), we headed toward Coon Valley, with Tom and Mary Lynn in the Lead, Don and Linda as "Rocking Chair" (mid-point), and Hank and Laura as Sweep.

As we curved up and around picturesque roads and landscapes, the rain pounded Miata tops and blurred our vision. It seemed like all the rain we didn't have for weeks poured down onto our ride. We heard the word "hydroplaning" from the Lead car around LaValle. The entrance to LaValle on Hwy. 33 West has beautiful stone outcroppings on both sides of the road.

The Village of Wonewoc, just down the road from LaValle, is located within the "driftless area" of Wisconsin which means the hills were untouched by the glaciers of past. Its name, "Wonewoc" may have evolved from the Indian expression meaning "they howl." It may also mean "the place of the evil spirit." (Wonewoc is home to the Wonewoc Spiritualist Camp, a place that in summer houses palm readers, mediums and a variety of folks who communicate with those in another plane. I only know about it because I lived in the area and someone took us there. My palm reading was pretty accurate. This has absolutely NOTHING to do with the drive, except that we drove through the quaint town near the camp.)

A road closure presented a challenge during the first leg, culminating in a U-turn, which makes this drive "official." Our fearless leader took it all in stride, and seamlessly found another route to connect us to where we should be. We passed a large array of solar panels on County Q. There was much banter on the CBs throughout the ride, and someone commented on how green everything is, unlike the drought-induced brown of past weeks.

We encountered the first of several round barns as we approached the pretty little town of Hillsboro. Our morning pit stop was at the Hillsboro Kwik Trip (where we all "P-d" in keeping with the ride's name), then driving again to County Road P.

We noted a few Amish families in the area, at breakfast at the Voyageur Inn, at the Kwik Trip pit stop, and passing buggies on the road. We continued P-ing our way to Coon Valley. We saw much wild (and domestic) life throughout the ride: cranes, cows, horses, sheep, deer and billy goats (there was much discourse over whether the goats were live or statues, since we had seen fake turkeys and deer statues earlier in the day).

Another challenge for our Lead car came in the form of a bridge being out. Again, Tom came through with a work-around (or shall I say, "drive-around"?).

In order to help out a small local business, we lunched at the Legacy Grill & Pub in Coon Valley, both in the private room upstairs (it was a climb!) and on the main level. The 2 persons serving us also cooked and cashiered, so some tables were finished eating and others had not yet been served. Apparently they had been unable to find people to help out, even knowing 48 people would be converging on them at once.

Needless to say, lunch took quite a bit longer than anticipated, and along with the 2 detours mentioned earlier, we were running behind schedule (yes, these drives all have schedules). Nevertheless, there was one afternoon stop that would have been a shame to miss. In fact, I would call it the highlight of the drive (aside from the soggy but lovely scenery).

The rain had luckily subsided sometime during lunch. Peaceful Valley Haven is an ever-increasing series of miniature buildings, modeled after historical and regional interests. Allen Arnold, a carpenter by trade, enjoys constructing these replica buildings in his spare time. At 1:6 size of the original structure, each building is dedicated to someone who has been part of Allen's life. The artist himself answered the many questions our group tossed to him. See the photos posted on the BMC website and FB page and find more info on his website at tinybuildings.net. This was an amazing museum, and it is free!

We hastily made our way back to Marty's Steakhouse under a brightening sky as we P-d through curvaceous hills and valleys. As we approached Reedsburg, dark, ominous clouds began to obliterate the light patches above.

40 or so Miatans filled the tables in our private dining room. An abbreviated menu had plenty of options to suit our palates, with prime rib and filet mignon as part of the offerings. Tom and Mary Lynn received a round of applause from the crowd, and appreciation was also shown to Don & Linda M, and Laura and Hank N.