

BUFFALO COUNTY STAMPEDE II - AUGUST 2, 2014

By Ellen Elliot

“Perfect Miata Day!” was the first comment heard over the CBs as 15 Miatas with tops down headed out of Wabasha, MN, for our early morning drive. We had two out-of-state cars with us. Dave and Leigh from IL, were camping in the area so joined us for the drive. Lindsey and her friend drove over from Minneapolis for the a.m. drive and lunch. This was Lindsey’s first drive with her new Miata. She loved the challenge of the curvy roads and how friendly and welcoming our group was. This last comment was especially meaningful since Lindsey was at least 25 years younger than the rest of us! (Hope I didn’t offend anyone.)

We drove across the bridge over the Mississippi River for our 200 mile drive through Buffalo and Trempealeau Counties in Wisconsin. Throughout our drive we marveled at the awesome landscape. As we climbed the hills and gazed down at the fields, they looked like curved ribbons of crops in a variety of shades of green and gold contouring the valley below. Added to this beauty, we watched a soaring eagle. Wow! We saw many beautiful churches, both up close as we passed through small towns and from a distance like the one atop Holy Knoll in Independence.

Comments on our CBs were almost nonstop, including suggestions that we sing “Buffalo Gals” or “Rawhide”, neither of which got much support. We were disappointed not to see the “hopping cows” that Paula observed on the test drive. Sharon and Peter did have to break for a deer that darted out from a cornfield. We had just commented that corn was planted very close to the road.

We agreed that our drive covered some of the best Miata roads in Wisconsin. With names like “Beckman’s Gap”, “Pretzel Pass”, and “Alligator Slide”, we knew we were in for a ride. We lost count but were told that there were 25 switchbacks. A whole lot of shifting going on!

Our lunch stop was in Fountain City with a choice of several interesting local spots along Main Street. As we continued our afternoon drive, our clear blue skies were hidden by some dark clouds in the distance. By 2:00, the call went out for “tops up” and just in time as we had a downpour. We slowed down on the slippery roads and enjoyed the scenery to our afternoon stop at the Danzinger Winery near Alma. We enjoyed wine tasting along with interesting commentary by the winery owner who told of following his dream and opening the vineyard and winery as a retirement hobby. Lots of motorcycles and law enforcement vehicles were around Nelson as we concluded our afternoon. We decided that the cycles, not the Miatas, were catching the attention of the officers since no sirens or red flashing lights followed us back across the bridge into Wabasha.

Ron and Paula lived up to their reputation for planning a fun weekend event. Most of us gathered at the motel and caravanned to “T-Bone Grill and Bar” in Wabasha Friday night. After dinner we walked across the street to enjoy “Music Under the Bridge”. Even though we were stuffed from dinner, many of us couldn’t resist a visit to the ice cream shop and enjoying our treat while listening to a great polka band. Saturday night we dined at “The Bluffs” overlooking the Coffee Mill Golf Course in Wabasha. Ron and Paula thanked Jim and Marcy for taking the job of “Sweep”. Jane gave us info about the upcoming Door County Drive later this month. Many of us gathered back at the motel for

good conversation (not all of us talked about cars) and more snacks. We look forward to our next drive together.

Footnote from Ron: To enhance your reading pleasure, go to the BMC website; click on "Latest Website Update"; scroll down to the August 5th update and click on the "[Buffalo County Stampede II](#)" link. Enjoy the entire drive by viewing the wonderful slide show, giving you the impression of actually participating in the event. Thanks Laura N., Jim H., & Paula B. for the great photos!