

What the Heck is a Puddle Dock, Anyway?

By Marcy Hotz

On a dreary, grey, rainy day we assembled indoors at Kwik Trip in Verona. Roughly 35 hardy Miataans (only a couple cancellations due to weather) listened to organizer Greg Garnett as he ran through the Rules of the Ride before setting off into Wisconsin's driftless area west of Madison.

Oh my, the roads were everything we Miata folks desire, and this writer left her stomach back on one of the hillier hills. We drove through farmlands and woodlands, commenting on the beauty of the scenery, despite the weather.

Traveling through small towns is for me a bonus on these drives. To see how people live and where they shop, I always wonder where they work and what they do for fun. Somewhere along the way we passed a Victorian home with a large front- and side-yard filled with outdoor furniture, garden supplies and flowers. We speculated it was either a bed and breakfast or a store selling the same.

Culvers in New Glarus was our first pit stop. Lengthier than usual, we had time to snack, chat and do our business as required.

The second leg of our journey gave us a bit of excitement. The requisite U-turn had to be made when Greg and Cindy missed the turn, but only by 3 cars. Further down the road, a deer ran right in front of their lead car! Being in the car immediately behind them, my heart momentarily stopped! I can only imagine how Greg and Cindy felt. We reminisced then over the FM radios about the deer that jumped over Jim Loeffler's car on a previous Miata drive. Other critters spotted on this drive included wild turkeys, several cows and a pheasant. The rain had stopped for the rest of the day.

Unusual names of some roads in this area piqued my curiosity: Dividing Ridge, Holstein Prairie, Yankee Hollow, Loyalty and of course, Puddledock. OK, what the heck is a puddledock, you ask? I had to Google it. From Wikipedia:

"In an article on Puddle Dock by Charles White in 1920 he describes it thus: Puddle Dock is situated at the Western extremity of Upper Thames Street, near our Blackfriars station (in England). It is a square opening in the river bank, between two blocks of warehouses, a place where the dark, drift-strewn waters of the Thames flow right up to the streets of the City. Barges still put in here to discharge their cargoes, as they have done for many centuries. It is the smallest of the draw-docks of Thames-street...Puddle Dock appeared to be one of the outlets for the London sewers before the great Victorian reforms in that area with numerous complaints in the 1830s, and in 1849 an account stated that 'in the course of mid-day, not only waggons arrived loaded with putrid filth, but bones in the worst state of decomposition'..." There you have it.

At precisely 5:00 pm we arrived at Buck and Honeys restaurant in Mount Horeb for an amazing dinner and much lively chatter.

Kudos to Cindy and Greg Garnett for a wonderfully developed and perfectly executed fabulous drive on gorgeous roads. Thanks to Henry and Laura Netzinger who served as Sweep.