



Open Road



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Slower Traffic, Keep Right!

Steve Jacobson, President, Indy Miata

Presidential Review of the Fussin' and Cussin' Rally

Bob Wiley and I started out the day with our usual "trash talking" to Gary Collings about how we going to clean his clock and win the hardware again! Bob and I won the Fussin' & Cussin' together in '99 and had a podium finish last year so we were eager to get the top prize back. Bob is one of the original Bobs that started the F&C Rally back in 1994 so I'm glad to have him on my team for this rally. He and I work well together – he drives and I am ever ready with the binoculars for those hard to see clues. (They came in handy again this time!) But little did we know that our "trash talking" would backfire on us! And up for grabs this year were some very cool trophies that Eric Knight had made — pistons mounted on a wood base. One painted gold for 1st place, one done up in silver for second, and one in bronze for 3rd. Last place took home a burned and blacked piston that really needed to be thrown back into the junk pile! Also, the winners would be the next to have their names engraved on the new President's Cup commemorating the Fussin' & Cussin' Rally.

One of rally-master Eric Knight's first warnings was to watch out for license plates from county #32 (Hendricks). He's a resident of the county so he knows firsthand that they tend to pull out in front on you and drive **below** the speed limit! The other warning was something about driving and enjoying the route first then do the clues later. Yeah, like we would ever leave any blank spaces on the clue sheet just because we were joy riding! Bob lives out that way too so we had the advantage of knowing area a little better than your average Miata driver. So we thought.

Well, we're off. Bob and I chose go last out of the 20 or so cars as to not let anyone see where we are finding the clues along the way. And so he could take some pictures of us all sitting in the line waiting for our instructions. By about the third or fourth stoplight we encountered one of those #32 plates. We were minding our own business waiting to turn left when all of a sudden I hear a voice from over my shoulder inquiring about the lady in the car directly in front of us. (Why does riding in a convertible make you prone to all sorts of unexpected conversations started by complete strangers?) It seems that the lady asking all the questions had moved out of the turn lane because she thought the car in front of us was stalled or something when in fact it just had to wait through a couple of lights before it could proceed. But this had confused the "question lady" and so she turned left from the **right lane** in front of several other cars. That's when we saw the answer to all of our questions! A #32 on her license plate! I really wasn't sure how she could see out of her little Subaru anyway because she had so many dog-nose smudges on every glass surface!

The rally was a great drive through several of the small western Hendricks county towns. Eric and Michelle worked very hard to lay out a nice route and they did a very good job. The weather was very muggy but a cloudy sky kept it somewhat bearable for most of the morning. Now, as for the clues they came up with, they were your usual obscure, hard to understand, good ol' Fussin' & Cussin' Rally-type clues! And the 35 clues were in no particular order on the sheet! So that made for a very interesting time of constantly reading over the clues again and again.

The real fun started once we reached Frank & Mary's. A great little place in Pittsboro, that did a wonderful job fitting us all in and getting our food out to us in record time. Bob and I sat at the rally-master table and got to watch over the grading of the scores. It was then that we realized what Eric had up his sleeve.

Remember when Eric told us to drive the route first then try to answer to clues afterwards?