The Chapman Report

Published by the Golden Gate Lotus Club www.gglotus.org March/April 2012

(Photo Credit: Phil Mitchell)

Phil Mitchell pilots his classic Elan Coupé through the Gold Country and around Lake Tahoe, see story page 2.

San Jose State Unveils Formula SAE Racer at Dietsch Werks

by Jenni Dietsch

Join Dietsch Werks and the GGLC in a fundraiser featuring a first look at SJ State University's Formula SAE Racecar at Club Autosport Friday, April 20.

Food from the grill available at 6 PM in the back parking lot. There will be plenty to eat and do for a $5 minimum contribution to the team.

March/April Meetings

Friday, March 16, 2012 – 7:30 PM

Host: Pete and Noni Richen

Friday, April 20, 2012 – 6:00 PM

Special Event: Food and Fun

Fundraiser for SJSU Formula SAE Team
Dietsch Werks / Club Auto Sport (back parking lot)
521 Charcot Ave.
San Jose

Directions from 880 or 101*:
Exit at Brokaw Rd. and go
West from 880 or East from 101
From 880, Right onto Junction
From 101, Left onto Junction
Charcot is the next street, and 521 is on the NW corner of Junction and Charcot
*driving North from San Jose area

Lake Tahoe Road Trip in my Elan S4

700 miles of trouble-free driving in N. CA

by Phil Mitchell

Sound impossible? Not really, if you plan and prep for your trip. I decided to enter my Elan at the Ironstone Concours in Murphys, CA, last Sept. This was my 4th time at the show, and it has become one of my favorite outings. I also decided to visit Lake Tahoe after the show since I was already halfway there.

My adventure began with a Friday departure from San Jose and a gentle 2.5 hour drive to Murphys. Braving the big rigs over the Altamont Pass, staring at their wheel centers, is not that scary once you have made a couple of these trips! I arrived at Murphys in time for a cold one before dinner and in time to clean a few bugs off the Lotus.

I stayed at the historic Gold Rush Era Murphys Hotel, which is a popular watering hole, judging by the noise coming from the saloon. For a small town, Murphys has several good restaurants and tasting rooms, not to mention a great bakery.

The Ironstone Concours is a relaxed, casual event held on the grounds of the nearby Ironstone Winery. This year, Lotus was well represented with Dave Bean and his S2 Elan, an original factory press car, and Dan Rose with his Lotus 7 S2. I even picked up an Award of Merit for my S4 Coupé (in spite of some jealous Healey guys in our class) so I was pleased.

After a great dinner, I prepared to start the second leg of my trip to Lake Tahoe. I headed N. on Hwy 49 to Placerville to connect with Rt. 50 to S. Lake Tahoe. These are all great driving roads perfectly suited to the Lotus. I found Rt. 50 was in excellent condition and traffic was light. Even as I climbed up to

Echo Lake, the Elan ran great and easily carved through the corners. I'm still amazed at how comfortable and balanced the Elan is. The suspension is supple, and you don't need high horsepower to enjoy the drive. Driving a coupé is especially comfortable and remarkably civilized as you are sheltered from the sun and chilly mornings. You can also pack a lot of gear in a coupé—including the requisite wine box.

The views along Rt. 50 are amazing with rivers and tall trees right along the road. I arrived at S. Lake Tahoe and decided to drive along the NV side to Kings Beach. The roads and traffic were all suited to the Lotus. After a good night's rest and an excellent breakfast at the Old Post Office, I visited Herb Hall at the Sierra Boat Co. for a tour of his incredible wooden boat restoration business. I'll never complain about restoring old cars after seeing what it takes to restore old wooden boats. I then had a full day driving along the N. shore and stopping at Squaw Valley.

The fall weather is spectacular—warm and sunny with gentle winds—and the summer crowds are gone. However, fall is also the season to finish up road work before the winter snows hit, so you can expect road delays.

I have to say the highlight of my trip was heading to Truckee and up old Hwy 40 to the original Donner Pass summit at 7200 feet. Even though the Lotus was down on power at this elevation, I had no problem reaching the summit and staring out at Donner Lake and Truckee far below.

You meet Lotus admirers everywhere, and the Donner Pass lookout was no exception. People always smile and talk to you when you show up in small English car! I capped off the drive by returning to Kings Beach via Rt. 267 and relaxing by the motel pool and a great dinner at Garwood's. Life is good in N. CA!

Tuesday was spent returning to San Jose, starting with a great breakfast at the Log Cabin and driving down the W. Side back to S. Tahoe. (One round trip tour of Lake Tahoe completed.) I then headed back on Hwy 50 to Sacramento and eventually San Jose. I arrived home and put the Lotus in the garage for a well-deserved rest. After 700 miles of uneventful driving, lots of bug smashes and great memories, I can't wait to do it again.

Drive your Lotus: there is no doubt they are built to be driven and enjoyed!

Living with a Plus 2 in the Provinces

Journey to LOG 31 / Another Perspective

by Lee Cohee

After reading Kiyoshi's entertaining write-up of his, Laura's, and the Carneys' experiences surrounding the Las Vegas LOG in the last *Chapman Report*, I was motivated to submit an account of my own. I am one of the club members living in a far-off region of CA who might be called "members at large." During my several years of GGLC membership, I have met only a couple of other members since a trip to the Bay Area from where I live in Jackson, CA, requires a drive of over two hours. Although my remoteness keeps me from sharing in most of the club's gatherings, a big advantage of living in Jackson is that I am only about 15 miles from Dave Bean's doorstep.

In fact, it was my long-distance telephone relationship with one of Dave's sales reps that inspired my move to Jackson from Tallahassee, FL, three years ago. I have been buying parts from Ken Gray for my 1971 Plus 2S since I bought it in 1998. My wife, Chris, is a native Californian and wanted to move back after I retired in 2007. So, on a trip to visit one of her friends who lived in Carmel Valley, I accepted Ken's invitation to swing by the shop for a tour. Afterward, Chris and I drove up Hwy 49 through the gold country and booked a motel in Sutter Creek. We were impressed by the beauty of the foothills and the charm of the old gold mining towns and thought this might be a good place to buy a piece of property and build a house after retirement. This dream was fulfilled a couple years ago.

I had not been to a LOG since Aspen (or to Las Vegas since the 60s) so the LOG 31 venue was perfect. Even better, it would provide another opportunity for the Plus 2 to stretch its legs. It may not be fully appreciated by those that don't run an Elan luxo barge, but the red-headed step-child of the vintage Lotus family is an excellent GT car that truly can carry a family of four and their luggage (provided the kids are not above average) 500 miles a day in relative comfort as Chapman's ads trumpeted.

Drives to Corning for LOG 19 and to St. Louis for LOG 25 from Tallahassee proved this point, as did Kenny Mance who

(continued on p.4)

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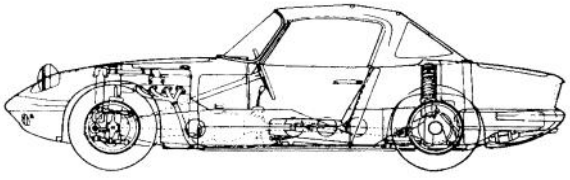

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won the long distance award at LOG 31, when he and his wife drove their car from Yonkers, NY, to Las Vegas, traveling over 3,000 miles!

Chris was keen about the trip because she loves to ride in the Plus 2 (I have been blessed in that way) and the trip to Las Vegas would be an opportunity to take our first extended drive through the Sierra. I was also aware that the LOG organizers were continuing the practice of a judged concours in addition to the peoples' choice awards. Even though the paint on my car is probably close to 20 years old with noticeable crazing, the car is very original in appearance so I decided I would take the time to prepare the car for the judged concours.

Getting ready

For weeks prior to the LOG I went over the entire car cleaning the engine bay and the underside of the body and chassis, stripping the interior to clean the headliner, carpets, dash panel and vinyl seats and panels, and cleaning and painting the wheel wells. I then went down to my local auto paint store and had them shoot an image of the body paint color (close to Wimbledon white) and mix up a few ounces of paint for touch up. I tediously applied this mix with a tiny brush and detail applicator and turned all the black scrapes and scratches white. After the touch-up paint dried, I applied a pre-wax cleaner and finished with a wax job. Such were my efforts to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse.

Of course, before embarking on a trip of over 1,000 miles, much mechanical prep was done as well, including bleeding the brakes, changing the oil in both sump and gearbox, and making sure all the other fluid levels were topped up. One other thing I did at Ken's suggestion was to fit a top to the Nalgene bottle which I had been using to vent the engine. Rather than running the oily mist from the breather tube into the intake air box as the factory did on Stromberg heads, Ken had previously run plastic tubing from the breather opening in the side of the head into a cutout on the side of the bottle. I drilled the plastic bottle top to accept a length of 3/16" vinyl tubing that ran down under the car so that the oily fumes would not filter back into the passenger department and prevent Chris from smelling the sagebrush while we traversed the East-

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Calendar

Date	Activity	Location
March 16	Social/Club Meeting / meet Giles Cooper	San Francisco
March 17	Impromptu Run	TBA
April 4	Track Day	Laguna Seca
April 20	SJS SAE Team Fundraiser Club Meeting	San Jose
April 21	AutoX	Marina
May 12	AutoX	Marina

See www.gglotus.org for additional information about upcoming events.

ern slope of the Sierra. What I didn't do was check with Ken about what size tubing I should fit to avoid pressurizing the engine. As you shall see, this was a big mistake.

On the road

After dropping our medium size terrier and her folding crate off at the kennel (those rear seats in the Plus 2 really do come in handy) we left for Las Vegas on Thursday morning heading east up Hwy 88. The weather was perfect and as we got higher and higher, snow from an early fall storm still lay alongside the road. We were glad the roads were open because the scenery was divine.

Through most of the morning we swooped and dived between mountain passes hovering between 7,000 and 8,000 feet. While I'm sure I had lost horsepower because of the thin air, the Plus 2, even with Strombergs, nevertheless pulled strongly. Turning south onto 89 through Markleeville, then down 395 to Lee Vining, we stopped just north of town at a scenic overlook to take in the grandeur of Mono Lake with snow covered mountain peaks in the background.

Our plan was to stop for gas in Lee Vining because the gauge had dropped to a quarter tank, and in this part of the country gas stations were few and far between. We were also in the mood for some lunch. Chris consulted the AAA tour book and found a restaurant that sounded good but as we drove through town we didn't see it, and by the time we realized that Lee Vining was disappearing in our rear view mirror, we were south of town at the junction where we were to turn onto Hwy 120 to begin heading east to NV. At that point, contrary to Chris's counsel, I decided we were not going back to Lee Vining but would press on the 47 miles to the town of Benton Hot Springs and the town of Benton a few miles further on. Surely, I reasoned, they would have a restaurant and, more importantly, a gas station.

Hwy 120 to Benton Hot Springs is full of roller coaster whoop-de-doos that would have

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(cont'd. from p. 5)

been lots of fun but for my concern over conserving the balance of our fuel tank. Benton Hot Springs was only that, a hot springs and a couple bed and breakfasts. No gas. I was putting on a brave face for Chris and trying to reassure myself that Benton, less than five miles away, would have everything we need. It was, after all, at the intersection of 120 and Hwy 6 which runs down to Bishop. My luck held, and to our relief there was a small family restaurant that made excellent burgers and fresh pie at the 120/6 intersection. Even better, a pretty gas pump stood outside the restaurant.

Fully fueled, we headed north on 6 crossing into NV before turning south onto 264 and, in turn, 266. I am here to tell you that you can pretty much travel at whatever speed you are comfortable with in these parts because there was no law enforcement presence and hardly any other vehicles. We did have to pull up short to allow some free ranging cows to cross the road, in their own sweet time, of course.

Finally, we headed south on 95 for the run down to Las Vegas. It was then that I saw something that was really worrisome. On my Plus 2, the oil pressure gauge could not be further away from the driver. In fact, it sits right in front of the passenger. Since the engine rebuild a few years ago, the needle on my oil pressure gauge always sits at 60 psi regardless of whether the car is idling or under full throttle. It is so predictable that I seldom ever consult it. However, out of the corner of my eye something looked different and commanded my full attention. The gauge's needle was no longer sitting at 60 psi but had dropped to 45 and, if I accelerated, it sank to 30!

I pulled into the next gas station a few miles down the road. We were still about an hour's drive from Vegas, it was late afternoon, and the light was beginning to fade. I grabbed a flashlight and paper towel, popped the bonnet, pulled the dipstick, wiped it off, and reinserted it into the sump. When I pulled it out, my heart sunk; no oil was visible on the stick.

Playing the flashlight down the engine I saw that the entire left side of the block was awash in oil all the way back to the fuse boxes. I theorized that my vinyl tubing was too small in diameter and had pressurized the engine forcing oil out of the engine wherever it found an opening. As darkness was closing in fast, I removed the top of the Nalgene bottle and the vent tube so that the large plastic tubing running from the opening in the side of the head to the bottom of the bottle could again breathe without restriction.

It took three quarts of oil before the dip stick read full. Since the car only holds four and one half quarts, I was probably only one quart away from disaster. We motored on as nightfall was upon us. The oil pressure gauge again read a reassuring 60 psi.

One unexpected delight from the unplanned oil stop was that we reached Las Vegas after sundown. Under a full harvest moon, the city shimmered with light in brilliant contrast to the darkness of the desert. It was ab-

solutely beautiful. We pulled in to the Red Rock Resort about 7:15 pm. It had been a long, eleven hour trip of 535 miles. And despite my earlier claim about the civility and comfort of a Plus 2 on long trips, we were pretty well knackered, as they say across the pond, on arrival.

We had reserved a room on the side of the hotel that overlooked Red Rock Canyon, so when we thrust open the curtains the next morning we were greeted with a stunning view of the Canyon at the first light of day. I hustled downstairs to Starbucks for a couple of cups of dark roast and muffins as we watched the sky brighten over the mountains.

Fun at LOG31

My mission on Friday morning was to get the car and oil drenched engine compartment cleaned up for the concours the following day. Checking with the concierge, I was told that the hotel had no hoses for car washing but that there was a coin-operated car wash about a mile away. We drove to an auto parts store and purchased a bucket, bundle of rags, bottle of Simple Green, and a couple rolls of quarters. I had brought car wash solution and towels from home. So armed, we staked out a space at the car wash and spent the rest of our morning feeding the machine quarters. I lost count, but I think we probably dropped over $10 into the slot before we were finished. A few more quarters into the vacuuming machine and we were on our way back to the hotel, clean again.

During the reception that evening I again succumbed to the siren's song of the book sellers and, afterward, we joined others to watch the movie *Senna*. The film provided a sensitive insight into Senna's life, both on and off the racetrack. I especially found fascinating his ability to access a level of consciousness that took him to racing achievements not even he could fully understand.

Saturday began warm and sunny. Even in mid-October the weather was heading into the 90's by noontime. This year, for the first time, I was early in getting my car to the concours parking lot and thus gained a spot on the first row next to a Lotus 6 and an Esprit. I have driven my car to three other concours in the past and have never seen another Plus 2 with a sunroof. You can imagine my surprise when I saw that three of the four Plus 2's attending had sunroofs! All were in excellent condition, especially for cars that are 40 years old. As I walked through the cars marking my peoples' choice ballots I noted that the newer cars (Elise, Exige, and Evora) are now outnumbering the old cars perhaps reflecting a growing younger membership.

That evening, we made several new friends at the cocktail hour, including Tom and Cherie Carney. We sat at a table with Barry Mills from New Mexico who spoke of finally getting his Series 2 Lotus Seven back on the road after 25 years. I told him that I was beginning to gather information on Sevens with the thought of purchasing one. He put me in touch with the Seven web list and I've been monitoring their chat room since then and learning lots about the Seven and the passion owners have for those early cars.

Later, at the banquet, we were delighted to be awarded the "Judged Concours" trophy for the Plus 2 class donated by Dave Bean Engineering. The trophy came from good old England and is easily the nicest trophy I have ever received in my 20 years of entering pretty car shows. The substitute banquet speaker, Steve Hallam, was the perfect choice to follow the Senna movie because of his involvement with Senna as Lotus team engineer.

Heading home

Sunday morning we were up early to pack up the car and head southwest towards Barstow on Hwy 15. We were greeted, and rapidly passed, by an Exige about an hour out of Las Vegas. The Plus 2 was running well and the oil pressure needle was again happily pegged at 60 psi. After a quick stop in Tehachapi for lunch and gas, we headed north on Hwy 99 through Bakersfield, Visalia, Fresno, Merced, Modesto, and Stockton. We finally found relief from the semi-trucks, pickups and SUVs when we turned onto the countryside tranquility of Hwy 12 and headed for Jackson. The trip home was a 610 mile pull and, even for the Plus 2, a long, tiring day dodging the Lotus crushers, the heat and noise, and the seemingly never ending strip of concrete that is Hwy 99.

In sum, but for the slog home, it was an excellent adventure.

Thank you LOG organizers.

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
First Track Day of the Season
February 21, 2012
by David Anderson

The day was fully subscribed with two groups of 35 cars each that were lucky enough to enjoy absolutely beautiful weather on the Monterey Peninsula. This was another great track day organized by John Zender and Scott Hogben.

Laguna Seca has several ironclad rules: first, no more than 35 cars on track at once, second, cars exceeding a 92db sound level at the measuring station get black flagged, and third, all cars must have numbers (masking tape can be used to make adequate stick on car numbers). In general, each driver gets to choose his/her car number independently, although in my case, Scott Hogben just announced 'I get number 38!'.

By simply counting our class-stickers for each class and disallowing the practice of switching groups, we can easily enforce the first rule. Starting at 9 AM, each group ran for 30 minutes—Restricted Passing on the hour and Open Passing on the half-hour—with a 20 minute break at noon followed by a 20-minute Restricted Passing session and a 20-minute Open Passing session, which brought us back to the hour and half-hour sessions for the afternoon until 5 PM. Yes, that schedule allowed each driver up to 3 hours and 50 minutes of track time. But with that much track time available, most do not try to be out on the track at every possible moment!

Over the lunch break, the track Starter told me that 10 cars had broken the track sound restriction, but, on the plus side, that was fewer than some other track day groups that regularly use the facility. It was interesting to find premium unleaded gas (91 octane) available at the track for $5 per gallon, which is the same price they have been using for a few years now. This seemed kind of strange since some local stations outside the track are currently charging $4.50 per gallon.

Seven clones prepare for a track session.

My count of Lotus cars on track included: 7 Elise, 3 Exige, 3 Europa, 3 Seven, and 1 Esprit. Long-time GGLC member Barry Spencer was not on the track but was there nonetheless at the back of the paddock doing low-speed fuel metering tests with his very powerful 3-rotor-Mazda engined autocross Europa special.

Stawsh Murawski was having fun with his Kawasaki-powered S1 Elise, but had a problem when the hydraulic line from the clutch master to the slave cylinder touched a moving part and wore through. So no more clutch for Stawsh. He went back on track with no clutch and regrettably wound up stuck with no gears, which is more serious. Oops.

Scott Hogben had rather a tough time all day. He had major oversteer on every corner. The likely causes of oversteer are well known to all Europa owners, but somehow we just could not pin down what Scott's particular problem was during this day at the track.

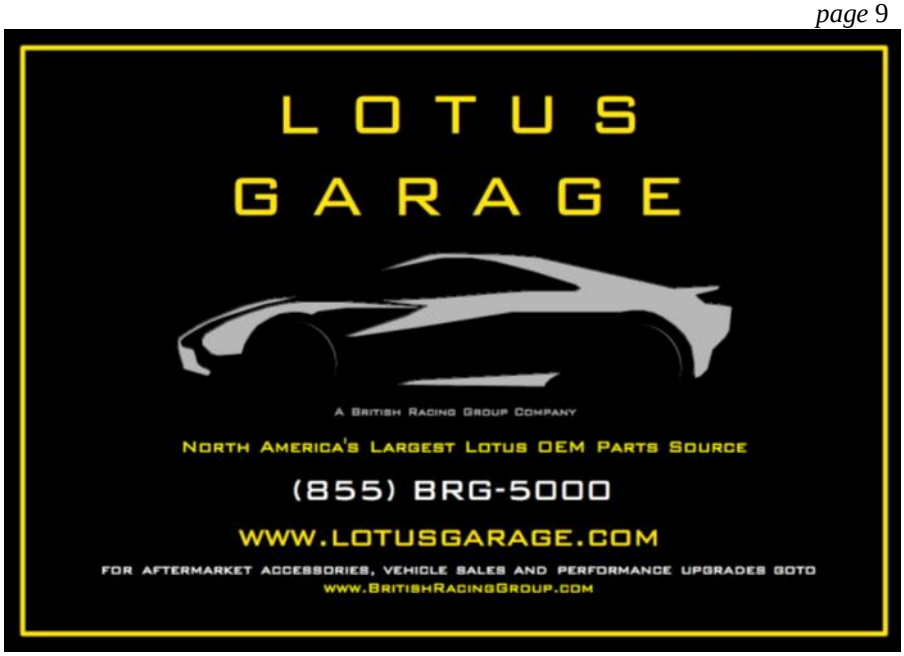
In my case, this first track day of the season was an opportunity to check out several new systems on my Zetec-powered Europa: NG3 gearbox, 4-wheel disk

brakes, oil cooler, and cable shifter. All of it worked really well for a while. However, the cable shifter eventually failed probably due to a weak spot. So my Europa went onto the trailer about 1:15 PM. But I have to call the day a success overall because the car was working very well right up to the point of that failure.

Varying approaches to satisfying the sound police at Laguna Seca.

Rahul Nair in his Seven clone had to call it a day when his engine apparently broke. Nothing seemed obvious on a visual inspection, but the engine refused to run, and Rahul had to pack up not too long after the lunch break.

Total entries for the event were rounded out by folks driving Corvette, Porsche, Mazda, BMW, and other marques. We thank them all as the GGLC could not afford to rent the track without their participation.



In this configuration, Stawsh Murawski's Kawasaki-Elise develops an impressive 4 manpower.

Rob Dietsch has a chance to drive his rent-a-racer on the track for a change.

The next GGLC track day is April 4, also at Mazda Laguna Seca. Registration should open near the beginning of April.

Plan to read the track day information on gglotus.org carefully before you sign up.

Book Review:

Lotus the Early Years

By Peter Ross

Reviewed by David Anderson

There are many fine books about Lotus Cars, but this one is a unique and detailed report of the very earliest years of the company (1951-1954) as told by people who where involved. This first-hand knowledge suggests that the history is correct.

Peter Ross' writing is a wonderful evocation of the circumstances that contributed to starting Lotus in the late 1940s and of the nature of life in England at the time. The pictures and the sepia tones of the book add significantly to the sense of history. A few napkin-drawn suspension diagrams also add to one's understanding of the times.

If you are interested in the history of Lotus, this is a must-have book. Whether you get the Standard version, or the signed by the author and numbered Limited Edition version, you will not be disappointed.

Editor's note: Please submit your own review of a book you think is of general interest to club members, and I will be happy to print it.

An Invitation:

From the Editor's inbox

The Adairs (Dennis, Kevin and Sue) who are long-time GGLC members invite all GGLC members who attend the Monterey Reunion and the Sonoma Historics vintage races (as well as the CSRG and HMSA vintage races) to stop by their Pit area in the paddocks of these

events to visit and chat. The Adairs regularly participate at the invited-only West Coast events driving their ex Jay Chamberlain 1959 type 14 Elite racer, and they also run a 1955 Elva Mk I sports racer. (Their street Lotus is an '06 Exige.) They would love to have members stop by their Pit to chat, and they will provide shade, water and snacks.

For more information and their 2012 schedule, contact Sue via email: sadair4371-at-aol.com.

Autocross and Track Day Dates are Confirmed for 2012

editor

So it's time to mark your calendars, dust off those cobwebs, refresh those fluids, and get ready for a new and busy season of fun with your personal sports racer.

John Zender and Scott Hogben, GGLC Track Day Events co-chairs, and Colm Gavin, GGLC Autocross chairman, have recently completed their respective negotiations to establish event dates and locations for 2012. As usual, the year promises to be quite busy for enthusiasts and participants of both activities.

The first of 5 scheduled track days for the year was held February 21, at Laguna Seca, and you can find David Anderson's report of this event on pages 8-9 of this issue of the newsletter. The following dates and venues are confirmed for the remaining 4 track days planned for this year:

Wednesday, April 4, Laguna Seca,
Wednesday, July 11, Thunderhill,
Tuesday, September 25, Thunderhill, and
Tuesday, October 23, Thunderhill.

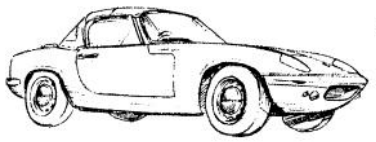
On the Autocross front, Colm has set up the following full schedule of 8 events, which will all be held at the Marina venue:

Saturday, April 21,
Saturday, May 12,
Monday, May 28 (Memorial Day),
Saturday, July 7,
Saturday, Aug 18,
Monday, Sept 3 (Labor Day),
Saturday, Sept 15, and
Saturday, Oct 13 (season finale with a BBQ lunch).

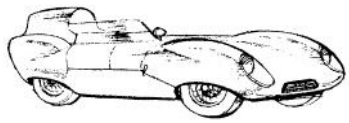
Colm has also announced that there will be a few changes to the classing system this year, Those changes are still being finalized as we go to press, however, so stay tuned for the official announcement. Registration for the first Autocross event will open sometime in the middle of March.

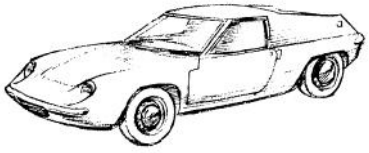
Classifieds

(non-commercial ads are free to GGLC members and will run for 2 issues before requiring renewal)

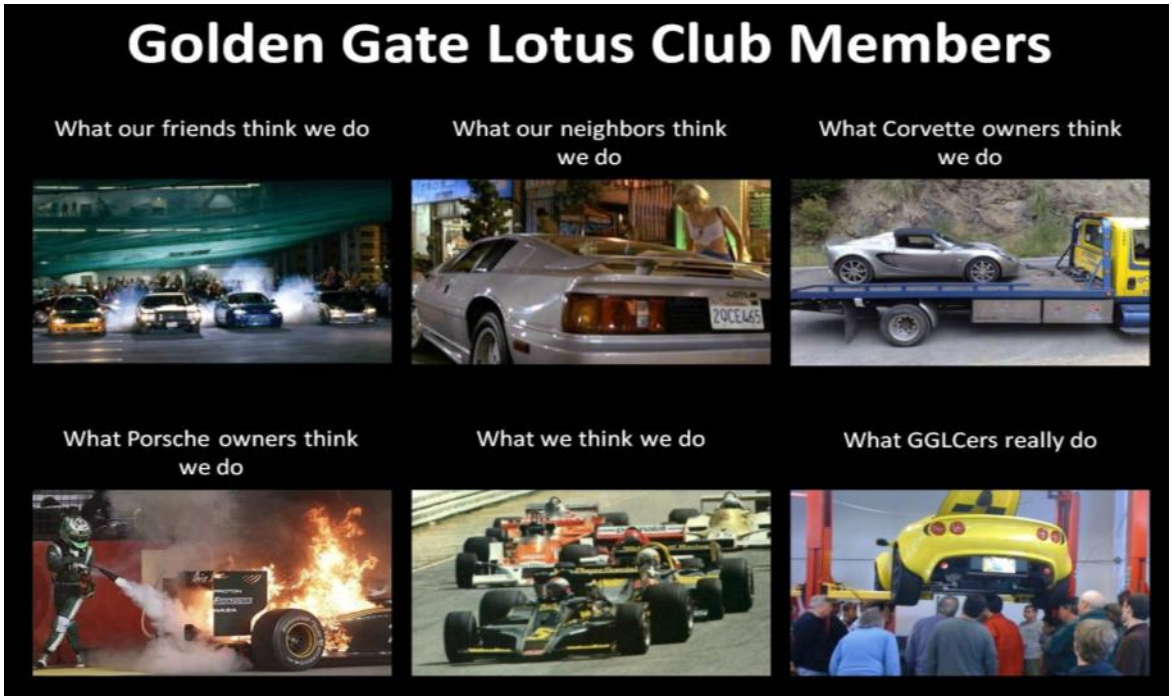


For Sale: Close ratio 4-speed tranny for early Elan, same ratios as 26R. This gearbox was originally used in the European 2L Merkur, and it is stronger than standard Elan trannies. Purchased new 28 years ago and has 20-30 street hours of use. Complete with alloy flywheel, clutch, and driveshaft. Contact – Vladimir: (510) 787-9866





For Sale: Original Elan S2/S3 full-width radiator. Recent professional refurbish. Drilled and tapped for thermostat. Asking $225, plus shipping (from Northern California). Photos available on request. Contact: Lee Cohee at vancoh@volcano.net or 209-223-1502.



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