

# Tire Tracks

## Sedona Car Club

Photo: Jim Thomas

September 2023

Vol. 42

No. 9

## President's Letter

Hello Everyone,

Good thing we moved the date of the car show up. It's still hot and doesn't look like it will be much cooler by the old car show date. Hopefully, it will be cooler by our current car show date. Downside is, by the way the seasons have been changing recently, it might be cold by then. Naw! It'll be just fine.

Speaking of the car show, it is coming along just fine. Mike Clark, great organizer that he is, has all of the scheduling moving along well. Entry numbers, so far, seem to be a little low, but then that is not uncommon. We always get a big rush of entrants in the last few weeks. If you have a car that you are planning on entering and haven't done so yet, please send in your application. In fact, even if you do not have a car that you would have entered, maybe it's too new to be eligible, give it a wash and put it in the display class. This is a show by our members and for our members; help support the club show.

Yes, it's only September, but your board has been working on Christmas Party plans for a couple of months already. It is difficult to find a restaurant that will hold a Christmas banquet for a reasonable charge these days. So we're going to have a change. We nine board members think it's a good change, and I hope you will also. We don't have all of the details yet, but we have decided to have a Christmas luncheon this year instead of a Christmas dinner. It will be at the Sedona Golf Resort, whose dining room has beautiful views of the golf course and mountains, their food is very good, and the cost will be a fraction of what a dinner would have been at any of our local restaurants. We'll have all of the details for you soon.

At our General Meeting, next Tuesday the 12th, fellow member, Jim Schubert, will give a presentation of his experiences as an amateur car racer, including racing at Laguna Seca. I know that many of you, like me, are wanna' be racers. This will be very interesting. I hope to see you there.

David





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## Anniversary Congratulations

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### Editor's Note

Thanks to all who have sent car stories. Please keep them coming.

Send stories or story ideas to:

[raymond.michalowski@gmail.com](mailto:raymond.michalowski@gmail.com)

## August Events

**Next Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 12**

### Events

**Sunday Sept 17 - 2:30pm**  
**Lunch and wine tasting at**  
**Cove Mesa Winery Room**  
**1210 S Western Drive**  
**Off Cornville Rd.**

**Tuesday Sept 27 11 – noon**  
**Car Display for the residents**  
**of Haven Health of Sedona**  
**505 Jacks Canyon Rd, VOC**

Call or text Craig @ (415)385-6937 if you CAN make it to any of these events.

## For Sale

**2012 Mercedes Benz**  
**E 350 Cabriolet**  
**302 HP, Agility Suspension**  
**One owner - 9,547 miles.**

**Email your phone number to [Diana](mailto:dianahagemann@msn.com)**  
**([dianahagemann@msn.com](mailto:dianahagemann@msn.com))**  
**Or Egon ([egon@sedona.net](mailto:egon@sedona.net))**

**All reasonable offers considered.**



# Upcoming Activities

NEXT MEETING - September 12

**Jim Schubert**

**My Experiences as a Racer**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**SAVE THE DATE**

**\*\*\*\*Saturday, October 14\*\*\*\***

**40<sup>th</sup> Annual Sedona Car Club Car Show  
Sedona Airport Featured Car: Corvette**

**!!!Alert!!!**

Entries for the car show must be submitted by September 30. Entry forms can be found under the CAR SHOW tab on the car club website.

**Find info here:**

**<http://www.sedonacarclub.com/2023-carshow.html>**

**Thursday October 26**

**"Autumn Leaves and Trees Drive" and Lunch at  
Crosswinds Restaurant/Payson Airport.**

**Meet at Burger King parking lot/Camp Verde at 10:30am.**

**Depart 10:49am and drive east on Hwy 260 to Payson.**

# Member Story by Jim Schubert

## Mid-Life Crisis

Oh boy! What to do? Half a life gone. I needed a challenge. No kids. No college debts. No mortgage. Great wife. Good jobs, etc. etc. But not enough cool cars.

Before the crisis, the family cars were a 1988 2-liter Alfa Romeo spider, a 1989 Toyota MR2, and a front wheel drive 1989 Lotus Elan. The Alfa represented the art of the sports car from the 50s. The MR2 was the first affordable and dependable mid-engine car (apologies to Fiat X-19 and Porsche 914 fans). The Lotus was an affordable avenue into exotic car ownership.

All of these cars were fast enough, two allowed top-down motoring and two got 35 miles to the gallon. But when you drive them long enough, you just get bored.

Being involved in racing and living near the exotic car dealership is a blessing and a curse. The first thing you are aware of is that racing car manufacturers often build street cars.

Enter the first crisis car—a Panoz Roadster. Panoz built front-engine GTP (Grand Touring Prototype) racing cars for the International Motorsports Association (IMSA) series. The road-going Roadster was a hand-built car using a Mustang Cobra engine, manual transmission, differential and disc brakes and a custom aluminum frame with an aluminum body, cycle-fenders, hand made leather interior and a canvass roof. Weighing only 2600 pounds, it had no nannies to keep you from spinning it under hard acceleration. What a blast!

... Only, it wasn't weatherproof. So, after 3 years and about 3 thousand miles, I traded in the Panoz and bought a Lotus Elise 72-D (black with gold stripping in homage to the Johnny Player Special paint on mid-seventies Lotus Formula One cars.)

The Lotus Elise was light and the controls immediate and direct. It had no power assist for brakes or steering. It was so low, my wife had to develop a technique for modesty when getting in and out in a skirt. The Elise came with track tires with so few tread blocks that the car aquaplaned on the highway at 55 mph. But, when it was dry and our favorite twisty road had no traffic, you couldn't go fast enough to unsettle it in the corners. And the Elise was as close as I had gotten to driving a racing car on the street... But, the lack of a glove box, a miniscule trunk and several incidents when

we almost got hit because other traffic didn't see us forced us to trade it in.

Part two of the crisis solution. I convinced my wife that we could "rotate" through a number of sports cars as daily drivers to see what different cars were like. Thus, we sold the Alfa Romeo to purchase a Porsche 911, a yellow manual Corvette C4 coup followed about a year later in trade for the Porsche. We traded the Toyota MR2 for a blue manual Porsche Boxster S. Then we traded the Corvette for a white manual Subaru WRX STI with factory custom racing graphics. The Subaru resembled a turbo charged rally car with an aftermarket pop-off valve that whistled and hissed every time you took your foot off the accelerator. It was like driving a stunt car in the "Fast and Furious" movie franchise. But we sold it for a Nissan 350 Z

with racing graphics and a sweet sounding V6.

... On a roll, lets get crazy! Our first truly exotic purchase was a 2008 Lamborghini Gallardo. The Lotus was a trade-in for the Lambo. The Gallardo was a 2-seat coup in silver with a black interior and 30,000 miles on the odometer. It had a 10-cylinder engine that revved to 8500 rpm and made a noise that echoed through tunnels and under overpasses like a 1990's Formula One car racing through city streets. The Lambo used four-wheel drive to distribute 550 horsepower in an effort to keep drivers from dashing off into something other than the intended direction. Weighing just over 3000 lbs. and capable of 200 MPH, I finally owned a car like the ones on my childhood posters. It doesn't disappoint when everywhere you park

someone wants to take pictures. But it did encourage the hooligans that would try to coax us into a street race from time -to-time. The Lambo was a car with a semi-automatic gearbox and a corresponding clutch the size of a teacup saucer. And replacing that tiny clutch was a regular and costly maintenance item-- a concern.

While the Gallardo occupied the garage with the Boxster, the Nissan was on its way out. We traded it in for a BMW Z4; the hardtop version with the double-clutch transmission. But that ownership experience didn't last. The BMW was used and I should have known better than to take a chance on it when it had 8 service records in its first year of ownership. In the brief time we owned it, I had to install new fuel injectors, a window motor and new spark plugs;

plus have two ECUs rebooted. The engine never wanted to run smoothly. The problem was the transmission logic had it shifting at less than 2000 rpm for fuel saving but the plugs fouled causing the motor to run poorly. The head technician admitted the first-year motor in our car, which was replaced in model-year two, was a motorsport derived engine that had to be revved to the redline in each gear to keep the plugs from fouling.

... Lost my patience. Off to the Mercedes dealer to trade the BMW for an AMG C63 V8 with a flat plane crankshaft that revved to 9000 rpm and produced 400 hp. The motor screamed like the racing engine it was based upon. A 4-door sedan with racing seats and a Bang Olufsen stereo was a treat. We would have kept it but.... We traded the Mercedes C63 for a Mercedes AMG SL63 which was a 2-seat hardtop convertible producing

577 horsepower and 650 lbs. ft. of torque. With Harmon-Kardon surround sound stereo, heated, cooled and massaging seats with saddle leather and carbon fiber interior treatment and a custom matt-silver factory paint job our daily driver lineup improved significantly.

In the interim, The Lamborghini dealer telephoned to ask if we would consider buying a new rear wheel drive limited edition Valentino Balboni Gallardo with a manual transmission. Sweet mother! I've died and gone to heaven! A racing car without the safety net of four-wheel drive. Price negotiated, we swapped the silver Gallardo for a white one with factory painted stripes and 800 miles on the odometer. It was even signed on the motor cover at a special Lamborghini owners' get-together by Valentino Balboni himself.



Enter the demise of our Boxster. We had a water pump hose crack and inexplicably the Porsche dealer made a comedy of errors resulting in three tries to make the repair, a coolant-soaked trunk and a motor that never seemed to run as smooth as it had prior to the leak. The Boxster was my wife's favorite; so, the best way to mitigate the aggravation, was to buy another exotic car.... of course.

In the northeast we located a McLaren 650 S Spider with 1000 miles on it. It was Sapphire Black (very dark blue) with a tan interior. McLarens are essentially built like racing cars using a carbon fiber "tub" in which the passengers sit with the front suspension and the rear motor, suspension and transmission bolted to the tub. The body is part carbon fiber and part glass reinforced plastic. The motor

is derived from a design actually raced at the Le Mans 24-hour sports car race. It even has scissor-style doors that open up rather than out. A hardtop convertible with the ability to do 200 mph top up or down. The car fits the wife who has been around racing longer than I have. Her McLaren can accelerate to 60 in 2.9 seconds and take the breath from your lungs. But you can also saunter around with the top down and the stereo playing in the cool evening air.

You might have guessed my "crisis" outlived mid-life. But life goes by so fast! I'm glad I started driving, so it didn't pass me by.

# General Information

## Club Meetings

Meetings of the Sedona Car Club are held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Sedona Library except in June when our meeting is the Annual Picnic and in December when it is the Annual Christmas Party. We do not meet in July.

**Please attend and bring a car-loving friend.**

## Board Meetings

The Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Christ Lutheran Church. All members are invited to attend.

## Tire Tracks

Tire Tracks is published eleven times a year for information on events and activities of interest to members. The editor is RAY MICHALOWSKI. Look for it on the club website before the monthly meeting.

Submissions are due by the 1st of each month. Email them to: [Raymond.Michalowski@gmail.com](mailto:Raymond.Michalowski@gmail.com)