

PIT STOP



February 2026

The Official Newsletter of *Empire Sports Car Association*

P.O. BOX 2242, SANTA ROSA, CALIF. 95405

Volume 63-2

ESCA Autocross Dates for 2026 are here!

All dates except for our Double Point Autocross will be on **Saturdays**.

The last Autocross, which is our Double Point event, is on a Sunday - so, mark your calendar now!

- **March 21** **(03-21-26)** **Saturday**
- **May 02** **(05-02-26)** **Saturday**
- **June 06** **(06-06-26)** **Saturday**
- **August 01** **(08-01-26)** **Saturday**
- **September 05** **(09-05-26)** **Saturday**
- **November 01** **(11-01-26)** **Sunday**

ESCA Meeting

February 3, 2026

7:00 p.m.

ESCA Meetings are In-Person/ZOOM

Round Table Pizza, 1791 Marlow Rd, Santa Rosa

Link for ZOOM meeting will be sent before the meeting.

**PLEASE WELCOME
NEW MEMBER ...**

ERIC MINER

Mazda Miata

AutoX Meeting

February 12, 2026 - Thurs. 7pm at 1558 Townview Dr., Santa Rosa (Round Table Pizza)

Zoom link will be sent by email.

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Amped Up

By **Stephanie Brazell**



24 Hours of Lemons: Arse-Freeze-Apalooza at Sonoma Raceway

There's cold, and then there's Sonoma Raceway in December. When I arrived for the 24 Hours of Lemons—this round dubbed 'Arse-Freeze-Apalooza' by the organizers—I quickly understood why. The chill cut straight through my jacket, but the promise of puppet-delivered penalties at the gate was enough to make me forget my frozen fingers for a moment. This wasn't just racing; it was a spectacle of creativity, chaos, and humor, and I was there to take it all in."

Lemons is often described as zany, endurance-based, low-budget racing for "real people." Duke had shared stories from his Lemons adventures at autocross, and from his tales (and others I'd heard), it sounded approachable—like anyone could jump in. Pretty quickly, I realized that wasn't entirely true.

The cars were a spectacle in themselves. My favorites included a '64 Ranchero sporting what looked like a suction plate—presumably to improve speed and handling for the boaty gentleman's pickup. There was also a GMC Rambler, a Ford GT, and a VW Golf minus the rear hatch- transformed into an anglerfish with a gaping mouth, glowing lure, and teeth. Oddly, a Chevy Bolt appeared early on, then vanished. We never saw it again and could only wonder how they managed to recharge it.

The paddock was just as colorful. One driver wore monk robes over his racing suit, and their pit was adorned with prayer flags—a perfect Lemons vibe. My takeaway from the experience was though for amateurs, with cars valued at \$500, some financial planning is involved, and real skill and focus is needed to whip around the track without colliding into your neighbor. I am properly intimidated. There were many near misses and skids at turn 9.

I loved the intensity of the laps—until the cold became unbearable and heated seats called me home. The good news?

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Lemons returns to Sonoma Raceway on March 21-22. If you missed this one, mark your calendar. Hopefully, Spring will have warmer weather.

PS- I have a humble ask for anyone that has read this far, can you email me a blurb about a favorite driving road and why it is a favorite. I am working on something different for next month and it will be more fun with input! If you do not want to email, come to the next meeting and tell me about it in person.

Stay safe out there!



**CURRENT ESCA
MEMBERSHIP**

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Tick Tock, Tick Tock....

By Gary O'Connor

In my last article I had about 45 days until I had to load up my roadster and head for the Pomona Fairplex. While it sounds like a lot of time it has a funny way of slipping away. As I type this I only have 17 days left. The one variable I hadn't counted on was the weather. I normally pull the truck out of the shop to have the entire floor available but when it's raining I have to work around everything, slowing progress. It's predicted to rain for the next several days so I'll be tripping over myself to cross things off the check list.

Last month I was waiting on two new cylinders to replace a couple that had been damaged during the engine's delivery from Idaho. The rebuilder hadn't wrapped the engine securely before the drive to Santa Rosa and it accumulated a lot of dirt and road grime. The rebuilder took it back home to clean it out but there was still a lot of grit in the cylinders that he missed which after some time had etched two of them. The rebuilder was very apologetic and stood behind his work, promising to send two new cylinders. After some delays they finally arrived and so started the engine assembly. The cylinder installation is an odd process.... I guess the Corvair's entire assembly is an odd process. Every time I took a step forward there were some parts needed that were steps back. Unfortunately, I can't just run down to NAPA and pick up what I need but just as fortunately, Clark's Covair in Massachusetts has everything and quick delivery. As I type this the engine is in and the oil pump

continued in the [next column](#)

is primed. I hope to start it in the next day or two.

Another setback was a plastic plug in a fitting in the oil pan ending up IN the oil pan as I tried to pull it out. The lazy part of me figured it would just float around but the part of me that just paid big bucks for a rebuild wanted to give it the best chance for success. I spent about two hours taking much of the top end apart so I could shine a flashlight into the bottom of the engine and look for the plug. I finally spotted it and was able to pull it out. UGH!

Last month I was talking about the need to repaint things first painted 40 years ago. Every time I painted something the item next to it looked worn. I was trying to avoid repainting the wire wheels but they looked beat up when the other parts were painted. Sanding wire wheels is a tedious process and like any paint job the prep is the tough job. I have a little wheel spinner that make the painting quick and easy. The car has to look it's best so that means that all of the chrome and stainless pieces have to be repolished. A couple of the wheel rings had some denting so I found two new ones but was able to polish out everything else.

I still have to paint the rear suspension and two wheels and start the engine but much of the rest is done. I think it will come together quickly in time to try out the ramps before the trip south. By the time you read this I will have been to the show and back (or not!) Wish me luck!!

ESCA DUES ARE DUE

Dues are \$18.00 per year for a single **ESCA** member, plus \$2.00 per year for **ESCA** members residing at the same address.

You can pay 1) the Treasurer, John Schliemann, at a meeting, or 2) use your credit card on MSR (there is a small service fee and your card will be charged immediately) at

msreg.com/ESCA2026Membership

or 3) send a check made out to **ESCA**, to:

ESCA P.O. BOX 2242, SANTA ROSA, CA 95405

For questions about paying dues on MSR contact Marci Jenkins secretary@empiresportscar.org

Please note for all dues paid by check or credit card, your **ESCA** membership card will be mailed within two weeks.

Redwood Sports Car Club

Redwood runs their autocross' at Samoa Dragstrip on a Saturday & Sunday of the same weekend.

They also run a HillClimb at Korbel.

Their web site is <http://www.rsc.net/>

more information is on their FACEBOOK PAGE.

Redwood Sports Car Club's 2026 Autocross & Hillclimb Dates

► February	14-15	► March	14-15
► April	11-12	► May	09-10
► June	13-14	► July	18-19 <i>Korbel Hillclimb</i>
► August	08-09	► September	12-13
	► October		10-11

Nice Day for a Drive

By Bob the Beard

It was a nice, clear Friday in January, and it had not rained in several days. So, as there were three of us, we took the Lexus and headed out. We were headed to Marin County, but I decided to go through Sebastopol. As always, the traffic through Sebastopol was heavy, but we were in no hurry, so it was not a problem. However, following a big slab-side van whose driver had to hit the brakes at every bend in the road, all the way to the Valley Ford turn-off, was kind of a drag. The traffic then cleared up as we sailed through Valley Ford and made a pit stop in Tomales before continuing down Highway 1. We were just cruising along, enjoying Tomales Bay, when we came upon a Lexus Station Wagon whose driver had to hit the brakes at every bend in the road. (Must have been a "brakes" day) So, as the road is all double yellow-lined, I just took the next pullout, and we enjoyed the great scenery of Tomales Bay for a few minutes before heading out again. Luckily, we did not catch up to the Lexus before we reached our destination, the Heidrun Meadery on the outskirts of Point Reyes Station. The Meadery, a place we found on an ESCA tour long ago, was almost empty, a big difference from a weekend. After loading up on honey, we headed into Point Reyes Station for lunch at Café Reyes at 11101 Highway One. They have indoor and outdoor dining, and the weather was a nice 66 degrees, so we sat outside. The food is mostly wood-fired pizza, oysters, and salads. We went for pizza and salads, and they were great.

continued in the [next column](#)

2026 AutoX Info

Hello everybody and welcome to our 2026 autocross season. I will be the Autocross Chair again this year. So, if you have comments or concerns feel free to contact me at craig@hammondautowerks.com

We have secured 6 dates for a total of 7 events at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds

Five Saturdays and one Sunday. We are on the standby list, should other dates become available.

- Our 2026 dates are : ► March 21 (03-21-26) Sat.
- May 02 (05-02-26) Sat. ► June 06 (06-06-26) Sat.
- August 01 (08-01-26) Sat. ► September 05 (09-05-26) Sat.
- November 01 (11-01-26) SUNDAY (DOUBLE EVENT DAY)

We are looking for EVENT CHAIR and Co-CHAIR People for these days.

We will be holding a AUTOCROSS MEETING at a Round Table Pizza located at 1558 TOWNVIEW DRIVE (near Farmers Ln and Bennett Valley Road) with a 7 pm start time on 2-12-26 (Thursday).

The room holds 30-35 people, so you may want to arrive a bit early. (We will be allowed overflow in to the main restaurant if needed and if space is available). We will also be Zooming the meeting for those who can't make it in person. The Zoom link will be emailed.

We will discuss multiple topics such as SAFETY, POINTS SYSTEM, HELMETS etc...

John Castallano will be speaking as to the track limitations and course design for those who would like to design a course.

Please come if can or zoom in if you can't be there.

Thank You,

Craig Hammond 707-538-4325

craig@hammondautowerks.com

Nice Day for a Drive

continued from [previous column](#)

We came home on the Point Reyes/Petaluma Road and the traffic was light until we hit Petaluma, but we worked around it and came up Stony Point Road which was good until we crossed Hwy 116 and then it was bumper to bumper so when we hit Todd Road we went left and then took a right on Llano and traffic was light the rest of the way home. Another nice drive in Sonoma/Marin.

ESCA 2025 Remembered



More ESCA 2025 Remembered



History of ESCA Christmas Parties (1963 - 2025)

The first party in 1963 was a humble affair in a building on the grounds of the *Villa Chanticleer* in Healdsburg. It was a BYOB affair with the club supplying chips, dip and a record player.

In 1964 the second party was held at the *Coddington Saddle and Sirloin* and was on the order of what we do now, with a sit-down dinner and installation of officers.

For 1965 we left town for one of our five ('65, '68, '72, '73, & '76) trips to *Sonoma Joe's* in *Petaluma*. Then it was back to the *Saddle and Sirloin* for 1966 for the last time, as it went out of business.

We tried the *Green Mill Inn*, in 1967 and 63 people attended. For '69 we went to the *Highland House* and liked it so well we went back the following year. We went to the *Holiday Inn* on Santa Rosa Avenue in '71. For '74 we went back to the *Holiday Inn*, and started the tradition of the official pre-party, something the Kistner's had been hosting for years.

The following year ('75); we went to the *Oakmont Inn* and Terry Larson's band played for the first time. The *Flamingo Hotel* was the site in '77 and Bill Diekmann started another tradition with his slide show.

Next, it was out to *Jeremiah's* in *Rincon Valley*, where we had their disco room all to ourselves. The *Black Forest Inn*, also in *Rincon Valley*, hosted the parties in '79 and '80. For '81 it was the *Cricklewood* and '82 was *Fiori's Pub & Cafe*, both in *Santa Rosa*. For '83 it was back to the *Oakmont Inn*.

Then we tried the old restaurants with *Negri's* in *Occidental* in '84 and the *Washoe House* in '85, where Terry Larson's band tried to play "all night long", before the owner pulled the plug.

In '86 we tried the *El Rancho* on Santa Rosa Avenue. In '87 we broke tradition and had the party on a Friday night and went back to the *Oakmont Inn* for the third time. In '88 we went back to the *Flamingo Hotel* for the second time.

Then in '89 we had a catered dinner in the big room over the *Diekmann General Store* in *Tomales*, and Terry Larson's band played again. For '90 we tried the *Cattlemen's* in *Montgomery Village*. In '91 we made our third and last trip to the *Highland House*, as it burned down soon after the party. In '92 we again broke with tradition, having the party on Monday night at *La Gare's* in *Santa Rosa*, thanks to Justin Bowen and we also ended the tradition of having a pre-party.

In '93 we went to the *Golden Bear Lodge* in *Kenwood* and Terry Larson's band played for the fourth time. In '94 it was back to the *Oakmont Inn* for the fourth time. In '95 we went to the *Old River Inn*

in *Petaluma*, and in '96 we went back to *Petaluma* to the *Cattlemen's Restaurant*.

In '97 we went to *La Grande's* in *Santa Rosa* and for '98 we headed back to the *Oakmont Inn* for the fifth time, which ties it for the most times to host the party. For '99 we again tried something different, with a Sunday, brunch at *Charlie's Bar & Grill* at the *Windsor Golf Course*.

For 2000 we again had a pre-party, the first since '92 and dinner was at the *Los Robles* in *Santa Rosa*. For 2001 we went back to the *Los Robles*, but this time it was a Sunday brunch, and for the first ever, children came. For 2002 we where headed back to *Oakmont* for dinner, which would have been a record 6th time; but, due to a giant storm that knocked out power, the party was canceled for the first time ever.

For 2003 we went back to *Oakmont* for a record 6th time and this time there was no storm. Again in 2004 we returned to *Oakmont* for a record 7th time, but for a brunch. For 2005 it was dinner at *Oakmont* for the 8th time, and it looks like we have found a home.

For 2006 it was again back to the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont* for dinner. For 2007 we gave a catered dinner another try with the party in a hall at the *Faith Lutheran Church*, and got the best turn out in many years of 54 people. For 2008 we went to the *Villa Restaurant* on a Sunday night for dinner.

For 2009 we returned for a dinner at the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont*, our 10th visit. For 2010 we went for brunch to the *Flamingo Hotel*, our third time there. For 2011 we returned to the *Flamingo Hotel* for the fourth time and had a Sunday brunch.

For 2012 we again went to the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont*. This time for brunch, which made our eleventh visit to the restaurant. In 2013 fifty-three members and guests returned to the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont* for brunch and a record twelfth time. For 2014 it was brunch again at the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont* for the thirteenth time, with a turn-out of 62 people, just one off the record set in 1967 of 63 people, and it looks like we have found a home.

For 2015 it was back to the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont* for the fourteenth time and the fourth time in a row, with a 44-person turnout. For 2016 we were off to the *Flamingo Hotel* for the fourth time with a 47-person turnout.

For 2017 we were back at the *Quail Inn* at *Oakmont* for our fifteenth time for a Lunch Banquet. 2018 found us returning to the *Quail Inn* for our Sixteenth, again for a Lunch Banquet. For 2019 we went to the *Cattlemen's* in *Santa Rosa*, the first time we had been there since 1990 and we had around 40 people attend.

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ESCA & Other 2026 Calendar

February

03 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
07 TRC Gimmick Rallye, from Mt. View
12 [ESCA AutoX Meeting - 7pm](#) (1558 Townview Dr., SR)
14-15 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa

March

03 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
14-15 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa
21 [ESCA Autocross](#)
22-29 GT World Challenge America at Sonoma Raceway

April

07 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
11-12 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa

May

02 [ESCA Autocross](#)
05 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
09-10 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa
29-31 Velocity Invitational at Sonoma Raceway

June

02 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
06 [ESCA Autocross](#)
13-14 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa
27-28 NASCAR at Sonoma Raceway

July

07 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
18-19 Redwood Sports Car Club Korbel Hillclimb

August

01 [ESCA Autocross](#)
04 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
08-09 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa

September

01 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
05 [ESCA Autocross](#)
12-13 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa

October

06 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
10-11 Redwood Sports Car Club AutoX at Samoa

November

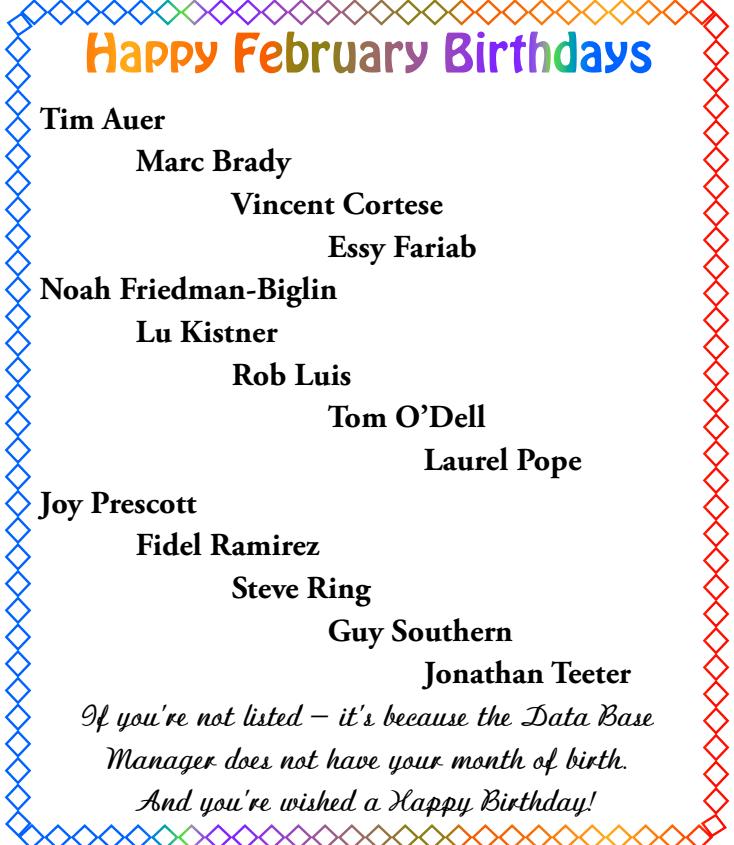
01 [ESCA Autocross Double Points \(Sunday\)](#)

November

03 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
December
01 [ESCA Regular Meeting In Person & ZOOM](#)
05-06 [24 Hours of Lemons at Sonoma Raceway](#)
TBD [ESCA Annual Meeting](#)

TBD = To Be Determined

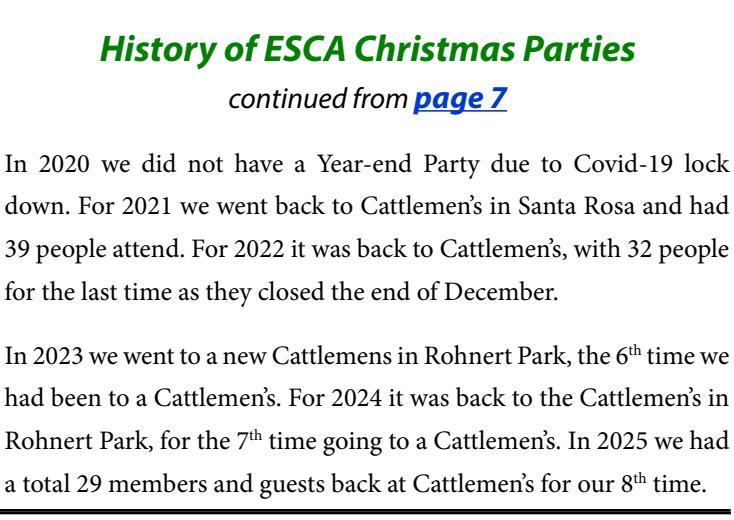
Check websites and Facebook for the latest information to learn if the events are going to happen as scheduled.



Happy February Birthdays

Tim Auer
 Marc Brady
 Vincent Cortese
 Essy Fariab
 Noah Friedman-Biglin
 Lu Kistner
 Rob Luis
 Tom O'Dell
 Laurel Pope
 Joy Prescott
 Fidel Ramirez
 Steve Ring
 Guy Southern
 Jonathan Teeter

If you're not listed – it's because the Data Base Manager does not have your month of birth. And you're wished a Happy Birthday!



History of ESCA Christmas Parties

continued from [page 7](#)

In 2020 we did not have a Year-end Party due to Covid-19 lock down. For 2021 we went back to Cattlemen's in Santa Rosa and had 39 people attend. For 2022 it was back to Cattlemen's, with 32 people for the last time as they closed the end of December.

In 2023 we went to a new Cattlemen's in Rohnert Park, the 6th time we had been to a Cattlemen's. For 2024 it was back to the Cattlemen's in Rohnert Park, for the 7th time going to a Cattlemen's. In 2025 we had a total 29 members and guests back at Cattlemen's for our 8th time.

PIT STOP ADVERTISING RATES:

ESCA members: 1/2 price on below, except, Classified text is FREE. \$1.50 PER MONTH FOR PHOTO; ROOM PERMITTING.

Classified	\$2.00	per month	5 lines max.
Business Card	\$3.00	per month	3 1/2" X 2"
1/4 Page	\$4.00	per month	3 1/2" X 5"
1/2 Page	\$8.00	per month	7 1/2" X 5"
Full Page	\$16.00	per month	7 1/2" X 10"

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MERCEDES

VOLKSWAGEN

VOLVO

Open Committee Chair Positions

Entertainment - Rallye

These Chair positions are to coordinate 2026 Activities:

The **Entertainment Chairperson** coordinates the Annual Summer Birthday Party and the Annual Banquet, and can schedule other entertainments. such as speakers at a meeting, (using the membership as our speakers or getting outside speakers).

The **Rallye Chairperson** assists the Rallymaster as needed and brings other club's rallye dates to the meetings. The Rallye Chairperson can also be the Rallymaster.

Cars & Coffee - All FREE events

1st Sunday of the Month: 8am - 10am

- Montecito Shopping Center, Santa Rosa
- Marin County at 132 Vintage way, Novato 6:30am - 10:00am

2nd Sunday of the Month: 8am - 10am

- Coddington Park Lot, Santa Rosa
- Petaluma at 389 S McDowell Blvd.

4th Sunday of the Month: 9am

- Penngrove at 10070 Main St.

Last Sunday of the Month 8 am – 10 am

- Rohnert Park at 459 Rohnert Park Express-way

Car Shows every Fridays 4 to 7 pm AND

Car Shows Every Sunday 11am - 2pm

- Machado Burgers
406 Larkfield Center Santa Rosa

For Bay Area Rallyes check out the :

RALLYE CLUB WEBSITE INFORMATION

<http://www.therallyeclub.org>

REDWOOD REGION PCA

<https://redwoodpca.org>

A Brief Survey

Do you print your PIT STOP? - **Yes**

Do you print your PIT STOP? - **No**