

November/December 1991

7th Year of the Club... 42nd Year of the Marque

LotusLines

Year End Wrap Up by Bob Crichton

Last news letter of 1991! As I sit here and think of the last year strictly in terms of Lotus cars and the experiences I have had this year. I go back to some pretty fun times with some very neat people with a lot of really awesome cars.

We started this year at Bayside Lotus where the meeting consisted of John Daniels asking for any nominations for Chairman of the club. As I was the only one nominated it was an easy clean campaign that lasted about 30 seconds or so. I might point out that John Daniels was the person who nominated me.

Our next meeting was put on by Bob Cross at Gayle Hart's apartment. We had guest speakers on Solo II and also were able to see our first 129 thousand dollar Lotus Esprit. Quite a nice car. It was a couple of weeks later that Dwaine and Shirley Urquhart and myself and Jim Taylor met with the Morgan Club for a romp and rally on the back roads of Whidbey Island.

Then came the trip I look forward to the most, John and Nikki's Fun Run to the Ocean, the only problem was Shari and I could not go do to an impending birth. But from all accounts it was as much fun as ever. I might add that the birth did not come for more than a month or two, but on June 2, 1991 Shari and I were blessed with a little girl "Collyn Virginia"

Our next big day out was a meeting at the Maltby Cafe which was a jumping point for the All British Field Meet in Vancouver B.C. It was a strange spectacle when we left the cafe all going to the same place in every direction. We all made it and saw some great cars in a wonderful back drop.

The summer breezed by with the second annual Bellevue All British Field Meet going off without a hitch. I also attended the second annual Lotus track day where I continued my attack of the track and maintained the record of the slowest times with the biggest grin.

I made my way through the summer with a meeting at Dwaine and Shirley's where we had a short introduction to spec racing put on by Scott Crichton and an invitation to go to some of the Vintage races in the local area. The end of the summer came at Terry and Lezlee Elmore's Lotus picnic where we had more Lotus's in one place than I have seen in my life. But what really set it off was that you could drive any one of the Lotus's you wanted to. It was a dream come true.

The Portland All British Field Meet, which has always been my favorite, never materialized for me. In the pouring down rain I set out only to have an electrical failure in my wiper which sent me limping home before I even got started.

In September, we had our meeting at the Auto Gear Car show in Bellevue. It was a great success in that we had a good turn out of Lotuses but we also recruited three new members. We also had our third track day where we saw some really good driving and saw some off the road excursions, it was a sobering experience.

October saw us at Frank and Ronette Grabner's new house in Lake Forest Park, a tour of the house had us gawking at the likes of a sound proof room and a grease pit in the garage. We all were impressed and had a good time. That pretty much brings us up to date. I would like to thank every one that let us into their homes to have meetings and to all the people that showed up on the track days to help and have a good time. See you at the Christmas Party on Sunday, December 15th at 1:00.

1991 Calendar of Events: Past, Present and Future

(any questions about the events in the calendar can be directed to the club's contacts as shown on the Newsletter's cover page)

September -

9th thru 13th, Monday thru Friday, SCCA National Championship Solo II Competition in Salina, Kansas.

21st, Saturday, Auto Show at Overlake Shopping Center, sponsored by AutoGear. Monthly meeting will take place at 1:00pm, entry not required.

21st, Saturday, Alfa Track Day at SIR, be there by 7:30am.

25th, Wednesday, Track Day at SIR, starts at 9:00am thru 5:00pm.

29th, Sunday, SCCA Northwest Region Solo II Competition in Kent.

October -

19th, Saturday, meeting at Frank and Ronette Grabner's home.

November -

No monthly meeting

December -

15th, Sunday, Holiday party at Noel and Bobbie Keefer's home.

Gift exchange game and potluck lunch/dinner, lots of fun, limit of \$20 max for gift.

Track Days ... A Liability? by Terry Elmore

I've been doing some thinking after hearing some of the reports from the last Lotus Club Track Day. I have some concerns I would like to share with you over what has been happening, more to the point, what potentially might happen. I want to state here that these are my own opinions and concerns and I would welcome your comments and responses. I was unable to attend this last Track Day, in fact I haven't been able to make one yet, so I am relying solely on secondhand reports. These

have me greatly concerned for the potential financial risk we run, both the club in general and the officers in particular.

If you read the enthusiast automotive press, you may be familiar with the Silver State Challenge - this is an event, held for several years now in Nevada and sponsored by a vintage race group, wherein a section of highway is closed to the public and the participants are able to run flat out. The event organizers require of course that all participants, (including drivers and their passengers, which are allowed), sign waivers of liability which are, I'm sure, more involved and full of legalese than the form we drafted up for our use. Well, a few years ago a driver ran his Ferrari off the road and his wife, she was his passenger, was killed. In spite of the signed waiver he sued the event sponsors. I'm not sure of the disposition of this case or even if it has been resolved yet, but some of the legal commentary that accompanied the reports on this event noted that, technically speaking, you cannot sign away your rights by signing any waiver.

The last Lotus Track Day saw its share of "incidents", none involving a Lotus as I understand it, but including one rollover of an open car without a rollbar, which fortunately involved no injury but certainly had the potential for catastrophe.

The Evergreen Lotus Car Club has, from the beginning, been run very casually, perhaps too much so in some respects. We have never been incorporated or registered as a non-profit group or any of the other procedural things that I guess most other car clubs or other enthusiast groups do in other hobbies. As a result, should an incident happen at a Club event, whether it's a track day or anything we put on as a club event or function, we set ourselves up for a potentially ruinous lawsuit. Whether the suit has any merit or not, just defending yourself in a suit, even if you win, can cost a lot of money. My name appears on the letterhead of each newsletter as a club officer and this potentially sets me up as a party to be sued, along with Bob and Jim, should some unfortunate incident happen. While it's all very good for the majority of our members to say "Oh, I would never sue you guys", its amazing (and depressing) to know that your next of kin might not be so magnanimous - regardless of whose fault it was.

While these track days have been "promoted" as Lotus Club events, in reality we have very little control over who may or may not participate, or in how they are run. Our host, who has been most gracious in allowing us to participate in these days he has arranged, at considerable expense to himself, has our appreciation. He quite rightly should be able to invite his friends out for the day as well. I certainly have no problem with this, but I do have very real concerns for my and the club's liability, if and when the (to me) inevitable injury accident occurs.

So, what am I suggesting? I believe that until such time as our club is sufficiently organized (in a legal sense) to cover the liability of the club and its officers from a lawsuit, and/or we can ascertain that the waiver we are using or a modified version will in fact shield us from

attention to our Club as a sponsor of the event. I'm sure that Terry and Bob will be investigating the options and perhaps getting examples from other clubs in the coming months. We'll report the findings here in the newsletter as they come up. In the meantime, please take Terry up on his offer, give him a call and state your concerns and ideas.

The following is from a Lotus Cars U.S.A. Product Training manual dated 1989 which was given to Terry and he left it with me so that I could include bits and pieces from the manual in our Newsletter - Jim Taylor.

A Development Engineer's Perception of What a Lotus Really is:

It is very difficult to put into words a description which fully justifies the sensations, feelings and pleasures experienced when driving a Lotus. It is not a description which can be measured in any way and, although vehicle performance can be measured by instrumentation, I think performance figures are in some way irrelevant to what I am trying to describe.

A Lotus is a unique vehicle which offers the driver the ultimate in integrated driving experience. It is a package which has been developed to enable a driver to experience an efficient means of transport which will respond instantly, yet progressively to the driver's every demand. A vehicle in which the driver may not fully understand how the last corner was negotiated with such a lack of physical effort and drama, but would experience the pleasure and satisfaction of making safe, smooth, efficient progress in a responsive vehicle.

A Lotus is a vehicle which instills in the driver a sense of extension of personality, a vehicle which can be driven with flair or docility. A Lotus is a vehicle in which the driver is essentially an integral part of the vehicle; he does not sit in it or on it, he is part of it. A Lotus is not a vehicle with just the best chassis or exciting performance, it is ergonomically designed and developed to provide the complete integration of the driver with the vehicle. The relationship between pedals, steering wheel, seat, gear lever and other controls is one of the fundamentals in achieving this integrated package. The ease with which the driver is able to move hands and feet rapidly between ideally positioned controls, those controls being precise and positive, yet progressive in action and response. Steering which requires little physical effort, but provides a high degree of precision and feel, the driver almost unconsciously being able to position the vehicle with the utmost accuracy in any situation on any road surface condition. The chassis which provides the key to the Lotus legend, the development of vehicle handling and ride comfort to a degree always ahead of other vehicles.

A Lotus is a vehicle which can probably only be fully appreciated and understood by a small percentage of drivers who have an inherent sense of balance and sensitivity towards vehicle behavior, but these are the drivers for whom a Lotus is the ultimate in driving experience. A vehicle for drivers, developed by drivers, allowing those who are

competent to fully extend themselves, but also to flatter those whose driving is less competent.

It is no longer possible to maintain an advantage over other vehicle manufacturers by producing a vehicle which excels in only one area of design or performance. A complete package must be presented which sets new standards in all aspects. Quality and reliability cannot be retrospectively achieved, they must be designed and built into a vehicle.

The Lotus legend has been achieved and maintained by people who understand and are competent in high performance driving, and desire to achieve in a vehicle those criteria which result in the levels of pleasure and satisfaction a Lotus can provide.

I think care must be taken in decisions which result in producing vehicles which utilize technological advances to reduce the amount of control which can be exercised by the driver. This may sound contradictory to current trends but I think vehicles must continue to be produced which offer the driver complete control. A Lotus can never become boring or characterless.

It Maybe Hell..., But Somebody's Gotta Do It... by Kiyoshi Hamai
reprinted from The Chapman Report,
newsletter of the Golden Gate Lotus Club, October 1991

Yeah, I can hear all those tiny violins squeaking away out there in Lotus-land... The guy was "forced" to drive a new Elan from the San Francisco Bay Area to Seattle, then spend two days driving around Seattle International Raceway (SIR) and then drive home...

It's about 840 miles to Seattle from my home in Palo Alto and add another 200 for bopping around Seattle and Portland meeting people and then another 250 on SIR and you've got 2,000 miles in six days... and the red Elan NEVER skipped a beat, running for 11 hours at freeway speeds and then PERFORMED Lotus magic on the SIR with no brake fade, or ill-handling, just solid REAL performance while the Porsches were blowing clutches and burning up their brakes... But, back to the beginning of this tale...

Exit Palo Alto - 5am

I left Palo Alto at 5am on Tuesday, wanting to avoid the morning commute and was in Oregon by 11. I opted to run with the top up and the Elan was returning 33 mpg at speeds between 70 to 75. By noon I was in Grants Pass, Oregon. And by 4 I was in Portland for a layover.

No sooner had I arrived in my room the phone rang. It was Dave Alford of Lotus Northwest, the Portland based Lotus Club. I had arranged with Dave to be a guest at their club meeting. I gotta admit one of the nicest things about being the temporary Lotus Rep is getting the opportunity to meet Lotus-nuts all across the country. These guys and gals were terrific and have all the same concerns about the cars as you

and I. I didn't make it back to my hotel until around 11pm, tired but with a smile. It had been a long day.

To Seattle Via Some Stops

Wednesday morning, I met with the Portland dealer. Then it was on the road to Seattle, a 3 hour drive. In Seattle I headed to Bayside Porsche-Saab-Lotus where I checked in and got the specifics concerning their annual performance driving school at SIR. Bayside offers a one day school for their customers. They obtain the use of SIR for two days, the first day is usually for more experienced drivers and the second for the inexperienced. The sessions are used as a marketing tool to educate their customers in the use of their newly purchased car or prospective buyers are invited to the track to enjoy an on track demonstration.

Day One and Two at SIR

In the cool air of the early morning, I joined the Bayside customers and staff at SIR. There was a brief driver's meeting and then some basic driving exercises to get everyone accustomed to driving at speed and on the race track. Bayside uses the services of the local region of the PCA (Porsche Club of America) for driving instructors and corner workers. Since I had never been around SIR I pulled up the rear to learn the driving line.

SIR is about 2.3 miles long and is based on a drag strip. SIR runs counter clockwise with the start/finish on the front straight (the drag, 5/8 mile). At the end of the straight the track bends to the right at about 45 degrees and leads into a long sweeping 3rd gear 180 degree left, turn 2. Exiting turn 2, the course heads steeply downhill as you up shift into 4th. Then brake heavily, dropping from 4th to 2nd into a tight right-hand downhill hairpin and then a short squirt to turn 3B, a left-hand hairpin. This leads onto the back stretch (accelerate to 4th) which rises and then dips before rising steeply into turn 4, a 90 degree 3rd gear left. Turn 5 is a righthand 90 and turn 6 is an uphill left. This constitutes sort of an esses. Its then uphill for a cresting 45 degree left hander, turn 7, taken flat out in 4th. This leads into turn 8, another sweeping 3rd gear 180 degree left. Then it's turn 9, a 45 degree right, taken flat out in 4th, leading onto the front straight.

SIR is badly in need of re-paving, its bumpy and rutted and the tarmac is deteriorating. The track is plenty wide enough on the front straight, but beyond turn 2 to the exit of turn 7 the course is not more than 30 feet wide. Run off room along this stretch is minimal, if not non-existent, with at most 15 feet of grassy area between the edge of the roadway and the pine trees that line the course. There is really no room for passing along this stretch and certainly no room for a screwup if you happen to fall off the black stuff.

The driving line as illustrated by the PCA instructors was the "911" line, which meant that they sorta made sweeping turns into "L" shapes, staying wide and turning into the corner REALLY late, then trying to turn as little as possible and clipping a very late apex. At the esses, they would try to get real wide on entry and then hit a REALLY late apex. And, in riding with them they worked the cars REALLY hard, man-

handling, tossing, wrenching and jerking the cars around to get them to respond... all the while the instructors continued to harp on "smooth". It only took one corner to realize that the Porsche line was NOT the "Lotus" line and so I developed the "Lotus" line... For example at turn 2 I turned in A LOT EARLIER, made a sweeping smooth arc, with a long apex and then powered out. This technique was even more apparent at the exit of turn 8 and through turn 9. The Porsche guys were exiting the sweeping left of turn 8 by using an extremely late apex and pinching off the exit. The theory was that by staying to the left out of 8 they would create the widest arc for turn 9, entering the main straight. But, the Elan could hold turn 9 under full power in 4th gear, there was NO advantage in attempting to widen the arc, so I was letting the Elan run wide out of 8 under full 3rd gear acceleration, bang 4th and sweep out onto the main straight at a higher speed than the big engined 911's.

It soon became very apparent that the Lotus Rep was using a "funny tight" line and doubters were evident, cuz I was the only one doing it that way... Also evident was that the little red Lotus was doing competitive times. Even down the long front straight I could hold even the more powerful Porsches. Through the twisty stuff it was simply no contest, the Elan was the fastest thing through them. And, I was only using about 80 to 85% of the car... allowing me to talk to the passenger and illustrate the capability of the car.

I did have some fun at the expense of the Porsche guys... I'd bank into the big 3rd gear 180, load up the Elan then say, "And this car is so stable..." and then in the middle of this corner I'd jerk the steering wheel back and forth and the Elan would dart from side to side... "you can do this... or this..." As I would commence jumping on and off the throttle. The Elan would respond without drama, simply tucking into the corner a bit and the passenger would become white with fear for if such things were done in a 911 we would have certainly been eating pine needles! Then we'd get to the esses and I'd say... "This car just absolutely loves this stretch..." As we braked, crested, then turned left, accelerated, turned right, accelerated, turned left under full acceleration and headed up the hill. No drama, no sliding, no wrenching at the wheel, no tossing; just steer and accelerate.

Perhaps the response I got from the chief Porsche driving instructor was the best indication of how the Elan fared... Going through the esses, with him driving, a huge grin swept across his face as he retorted how much fun the car was... and then as he stepped out of the Elan... "Thanks! That was incredibly FUN!!!" I doubt he'll buy an Elan, or admit to anybody how good the Elan is (after all he's got a major investment in being a dyed in the wool Porsche fanatic), but at least he'll never say anything nasty about the Elan...

And one last anticdote... An ex-Solo II National Champion and roadracer drove the Elan for a couple of laps, he was amazed at how good the car was, but I never really got a firm impression of how the Elan impressed him... until at day's end while he and I were conversing and a student approached and asked... "So, when will the Elan be available with all-wheel drive?" I answered, "Well, we don't have any plans on doing an

all-wheel drive car cuz..." And before I could finish my answer, the Solo II Champ jumped in and said, "The car DOESN'T NEED IT!!!"

I Crash a Party

On Thursday, after the day's events at SIR, I headed over to a restaurant I'd seen the day before. Next door to the restaurant was a little specialty store, "Life in the Fast Lane", specializing in car memorabilia. (Editor's note: this sounds like 'Zoopa', a salad/soup bar restaurant at Southcenter, good food) I had noted the 10 to 6 hours the day before and it being 7:30 it struck me odd that the lights were still on and there were people inside milling around. Open? I walked in and as I browsed I noticed the bowl of snacks, sodas, coffee and cakes... I had crashed some private party... So, descretely I decided to first find out what was up and then slip out. About then a chap comes up and says, "Where did you get your sweatshirt?" I had forgotten I was wearing a gray Lotus sweatshirt and then explained my position. Inquiring, I learned that the "party" was a meeting of the Formula 1 and Indy Car Fan Club sponsored by the store. Needless to say I ended up talking about F1 racing from the last 20 odd years and I didn't get to the restaurant as I finally left at 10:30!

I Meet Evergreen

On Saturday, I met with the members of the Evergreen Lotus Car Club at a car show. (Editor's note: this was the meeting at the Overlake Car Show in Bellevue put on by AutoGear) The planned hour and a half visit became three hours... as the talk went from LCU to Formula 1 and the 1992 Lotus Convention. It was a pleasant visit and an opportunity for me to put faces to some of the folks I've spoken with on the phone. It was off to Portland and homeward. Home port was found Sunday evening, the 2000 mile, 6 day trip was complete...

The Real Scoop on the Track Day by Jim Taylor

This was the first time that I had my own car to drive at SIR. I learned a lot about the car, my 1974 Elite, and about my abilities as well. I had driven Bob's Seven at a previous Track Day, but was unwilling to push it as hard as I would my own car. So this time I got to push the limits, which is what I enjoy.

The day was hot, in the eighties, there were about eight to ten Lotus in attendance from the local area and Canada. There were also a gaggle of Porsches, Corvettes, Nissans and assorted other cars on hand to give the Lotuses and their drivers some varied lap times to compare to their own. This always proves interesting, since invariably the larger, more powerful cars get by us on the front straight and then we're hugging their bumpers around the rest of the track.

There were a total of about 20 to 25 cars at the track, so someone suggested that we split into two groups. A slow group and a fast group. I assumed that these participants were new to the track and hadn't seen a Lotus perform before. The suggestion was ignored and we got out onto the track. Dwaine and Shirley were our time keepers and corner worker

distributors. They both did a great job and on behalf of all the participants I give them a great big THANKS! It was good to see our neighbors from the BC Lotus Club be able to come down and enjoy the day with us, they had two Lotus with them. Thanks also go to Pete Wolf for getting the radios and to Rob Roberts for arranging the other corner worker equipment and for being our liaison with Brian Gordon. And of course, our thanks once again to Brian Gordon for inviting the Lotus Club to share the track with him and his friends.

For the most part the fast lap times were turned by the Porsches and Corvettes, higher top speeds on the straights will do that, of around 1:45 to 1:55 minutes per lap. Its about 2.3 miles around the track at SIR, so that's a pretty fast average speed. The Lotuses came in around 1:55 to 2:05 for the faster of the cars and 2:05 to 2:15 for the other Lotus. The few sedans and other cars were pretty much spreading there lap times between 2:00 and 2:30.

After doing a few laps of my own, I rode along with Maury Montag for some laps in his Esprit. He had just finished a driving course down in Portland and he pointed out to me the correct lines to follow to get around the track quicker. It helped me a lot to understand where the best places were to position myself on the track. When I got back into my car and followed those lines, I drove quicker, safer and it was easier too! Thanks Maury.

For myself, I had never pushed the Elite that hard and was still pretty unfamiliar with its handling. I took it easy in the morning and pushed it harder in the afternoon with lap times of about 2:00 minutes and a top speed on the straight of 105 mph indicated. My speedometer registers about five to ten percent too slow so I was probably going about 110 to 115 mph! That was the fastest I have EVER driven. I also found that the Elite is definitely not a track car, even though it performed as well as some of the 911's, 944's and even an Esprit or two, it's just a big car (for a Lotus) and is far more suited to fast street driving and cruising at high speeds. My big smile of the day was when Maury wanted to know what had been done to the engine in the Elite as I could pull away from him on the front straight! In all fairness, his Esprit was not running as well as it could have. But I had little trouble keeping up with most of the normally aspirated cars. Well that's enough about my time on the track!

This Track Day was a lot more eventful than the previous two. A 930 Turbo lost it at turn five and put himself up into the embankment. There was minor but expensive damage to the car, so he parked it after that. In turns 2, 5 and 6 the Porsches liked to get real loose and spin, so I nicknamed them 'Spinners'. (All in good, clean fun. I like Porsches actually, they're good cars.) In the early afternoon we had an incident that could have resulted in a very serious injury, but luckily didn't. This is the rollover that Terry mentioned in his article. The driver got just a little too wide out of turn 2 and caught the grass just right and it flipped his convertible over. He was unhurt, just some bruises and real sore muscles the next day, but the car didn't fair so well. The only panels on the car that weren't damaged were the hood and the drivers side door (it rolled over on the passenger side). Even

though we say "come on out to the track and have some fun!", this is a good reminder to the rest of us that it really is dangerous and the speeds which these cars can generate makes even small errors turn into big errors real fast unless you are very careful. But, it is fun and exhilarating to push yourself and your car to the limits at the track, it's the only really safe place to explore those limits with a Lotus or any other high-performance car.

See you at the next Track Day!

From Lotus Cars U.S.A. Product Training manual (mentioned previously)

Summary of Lotus Street Car Production

Seven	1957 - 1972	3,300
Elite	1957 - 1962	990
Elan	1962 - 1973	12,224
Elan +2	1970 - 1973	5,200
Europa	1966 - 1974	9,230
Elite	1974 - 1982	2,531
Esprit S1	1976 - 1978	994
Esprit S2	1978 - 1980	980
Esprit S2.2	1980 - 1981	46
Esprit S3	1981 - 1987	1,412
Esprit Turbo	1980 - 1989	1,981

For Sale

1970 Triumph GT6+ with spare engine and electric overdrive, \$1000.00, call Bob Cross at 883-8814.

1977 Caterham Super Seven S3, Lotus Big-Valve TwinCam engine, polished aluminum body, full weather gear, roll bar, heater, seven Caterham wheels, stainless steel exhaust, oil cooler, electronic ignition, 8000 original miles. Make offer or consider trade for other Lotus. Call Pete Wolf at home: 788-2793 or work: 867-8634.

1977 Esprit S1, great shape, new interior (mohair, two-tone blue), white, recent complete body detailing, 42,000 miles, two sets of wheels and tires, two sets of carbs (Zenith Strombergs and Dellortos), asking \$18,500.00 call Don Anderson at 271-0781.

1974 Elite, 3000 miles on rebuilt engine, transmission, differential and rear brakes. All new suspension bushings, tie-rod ends, ball joints, rebuilt trunnions. New u-joints between steering column and rack. Rebuilt steering rack. New Comp T/A tires. Needs some cosmetics, but runs great and is reliable. Want to sell so I can get back to working on my Europa. Best reasonable offer or trade for a Seven or Elan of similar value (likely in pieces). Call Jim Taylor at home: 232-2237 or at work: 587-2053.

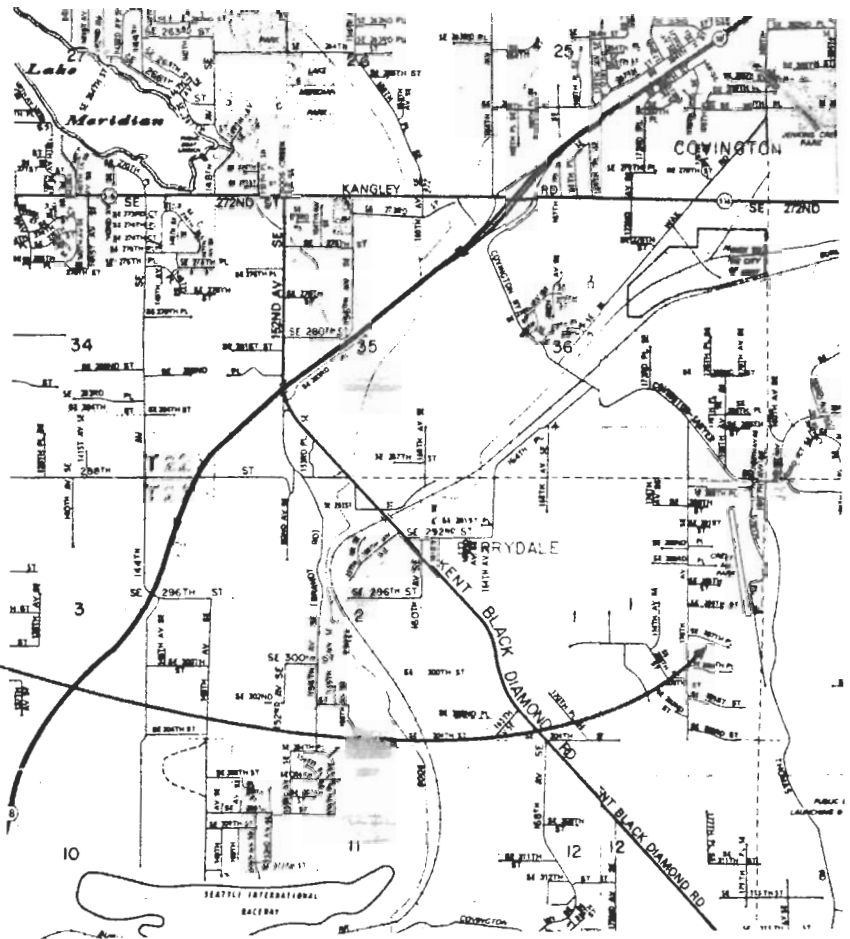
Meeting Locations

November Meeting - None Scheduled

December Meeting

Sunday the 15th at 1:00pm
Holiday party and gift exchange
Noel and Bobbie Keefer
17673 SE 297th Place
Kent, WA
(206) 630-4843

Here
it
is



Club Information Contacts:
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Jim Taylor, Newsletter and Membership, 232-2237



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