



ROAR

Official Publication
of Top Cats — Illinois

President's Corner...

by Gary Brandt

Greetings Top Cats

We are approaching election season. Not just the national and local ones we have been hearing about for several years, but our own internal election process. Each year we elect new members to our board. Some years are more difficult than others. The process which is overseen by the past presidents is simple enough. Find passionate, qualified members willing to serve for a year or two, and get them on the ballot. Since our term lengths are different for officers compared to directors, we don't always have the

same number of positions open. The process has served the club well. While we do not tell a person that they can or cannot run for an office, attempts are made to balance the experience and needs of a position between those willing to serve. The end result is hopefully a smooth election and transition for the new board members.

But the needs of the club do not stop with the board. In fact that's only the beginning. The real work gets done by the committee members. We have seen membership back on the increase the past several years, and many

new members have already begun to serve on committees or with special projects. In order to keep the Top Cats experience one that attracts and keeps the best, we need this type of support. Don't sit on the sidelines. You will get to know your fellow Top Cats much better by being involved, even if it's just a little.

In November we will hold the first G.R.A.S.S. class since earlier in the year. If you haven't been to a class in over a year, it would be a good idea to come to this one. Each year the safety committee makes changes to our riding protocol and the class

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THE BIKERS WHO MEAN BUSINESS

TOP CATS—Illinois is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts with similar interests. Members consist of responsible Leaders, Presidents, Chairmen, Owners, Proprietors, Partners, principals, CEO's, and other 'Top Cats' of large, medium and small organizations, institutions, and companies. The content and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Top Cats—Illinois.

ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Gary Brandt cgb002@comcast.net
Vice President	Bob Carmody bcarmody@email.com
Treasurer	Tom Malia tmalia@cfaip.com
Secretary	Mike Bradbury bradbundy@comcast.net
Past President	Chuck Prettyman topcats2003@aol.com
Director	Greg Smith vethog@comcast.net
Director	Andy Konsewicz andy@Konsewicz.com
Director	Eileen Perry eprhia@comcast.net
Director	Wayne Kirkpatrick wkirkpa177@aol.com
Founder	Carl 'Virgo' Bender 1941-2001

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President's Corner Continued

itself. It's hard for road captains to always get these changes out during pre-ride meetings. This is also a chance to voice concerns and make suggestions. This year the annual road captain meeting will take place after this class. So your suggestions would be fresh in their minds. Take advantage of this.

General Election Information

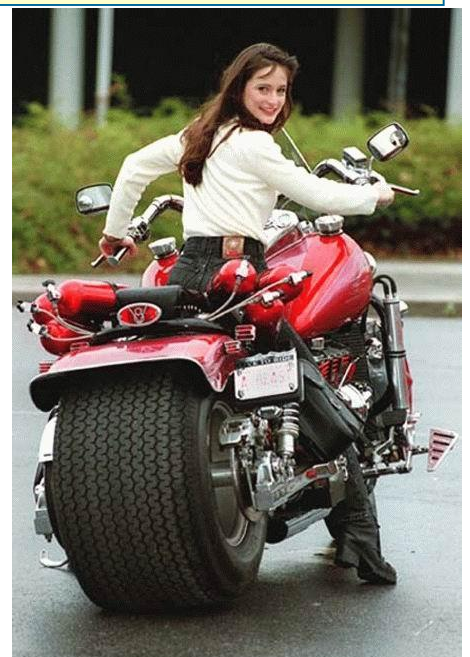
Note from Chuck Prettyman.

The 2009 Candidates for Top Cats offices were asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1) What is your experience in Topcats? i.e. committee head, committee member, previously on the BOD, road captain, attend most meetings etc.
- 2) What do you consider the most favorable part of being a Top Cat?
- 3) List two things you feel the Board of Directors (BOD) should accomplish during your term.
- 4) What do you feel needs to be changed (addressed, eliminated, amended, or modified) to improve the club.
- 5) Optional: One or two sentences describing yourself.

Wisdom from the Ole' Saddle Sage As told to Chuck P'man

"Good coffee should be indistinguishable from 50 weight motor oil."



General Meeting Minutes...

October 7, 2008

Gary Brandt, (President) called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

The following guests were introduced to the meeting; Jeff Smith from City Limits Harley Davidson, Kevin Smith who has been at a meeting before and Bill Lowry. Also introduced by Dennis Dougherty were Jan Wilcox and introduced by Pat Machaud was Larry Tyma.

Some storage bins containing club material were water damaged recently at the Village Bar and Grill where we store them. Gary offered "slightly damaged" first aid kits for only \$5.

Club dues are the same for 2009 as they were for 2008. Membership will be releasing new information soon. Dues for regular members are \$75, for associate members \$65 and for family membership \$125. Please pay promptly.

Ed and Sue Apel have generously donated a Kendon two rail motorcycle trailer to Top Cats to be sold / auctioned with the proceed to be donated to NISRA. An email will be sent to the membership including a picture file with auction information. The bidding will start at \$400. Check your email for auction progress and to bid. The auction will end on October 20th.

Chuck Prettyman, (Past President) introduced and announced the election committee's slate for the open positions of officers and director for the 2009 Top Cats year. The slate is Carl Marcyan for President, Mike Bradbury for Vice President, Tom Nichols for Treasurer, Joan DeRango for Secretary, and Dennis Dougherty for Director. The candidates will

be responding to questions the committee has issued and will speak to the group at next month's meeting.

Randy's Cycles in Huntley is going out of business. They are having a sale starting next Thursday by invitation only. See Chuck if you want to go. They are selling everything.

New members to Top Cats were announced by Gary and presented with their club flag, patch, and pin. Jill and Paul Hansen, Mary Walters and Joe Rominski are all new Top Cats. Welcome to the best club in the area. We now have 104 members in our club.

Greg Smith, (Activities Director) presented future activities of the club. There are no club rides scheduled in October.

Rolling Thunder Chapter 2's Toys for Tots Never Forget Ride is coming on October 12th. The ride starts at the V.A. Hospital but if you want to go together, Gary is leading a group from the McDonalds at Highway 12 and 120. The meeting time is 9:00 AM with a depart time of 9:15 AM. Bring a new, unwrapped toy. The ride ends at the VFW in Lake Villa on Grand and Highway 83. This is an escorted ride that includes area police and fire departments. This benefits the veterans and your support is needed and welcomed.

The Activities Committee is looking for a couple of volunteers. Planning for next year is starting in the next few months. See Greg Smith if you are interested in joining the committee.

For winter activities, Andy Konsewicz, (Director) is organizing a group to see the Trans-Siberian Orchestra perform at the Allstate

Arena on January 3rd. This is their annual holiday concert and according to Andy, is an amazing 3 hour show and has been a fun event in the past. Tickets are available a month in advance. Send Andy an email if you are interested. An email will be sent to membership with information about this event.

If you have any ideas you would like to see for winter activities or in general, contact Greg Smith. He is looking for more ideas from the membership.

Joan DeRango, (Charity Ride Committee) presented the committee's progress and ideas developed so far for next year's event. A list of ideas was handed out that was generated from their last meeting. The committee is seeking help and ideas for the 2009 event. Leaders are needed to take charge for the different functions of the event such as the raffle, advertising and promotion, flyers and posters, registration, the ride itself, food, the silent auction, vendors, entertainment and corporate sponsorship. Already Tom Malia has volunteered to lead and manage the ride itself. Other road captain volunteers to lead groups are needed.

A lot can be generated for the Charity ride from early registration. This is helpful too in case the weather is poor and the "ride in" turnout is low.

The NISRA charity ride is scheduled for July 26th.

Jeff Smith from City Limits Harley Davidson spoke and presented to Top Cats a discount of 20% on most all purchases at their dealership. This includes Wild Fire Harley Davidson in Villa Park and

General Meeting Continued...

October 7, 2008

a new dealership under development for O'Hare Airport. The discount requires a sign up available at the meeting for a V.I.P. pass good at their dealerships. City Limits has made changes and now offers more merchandise and accessories. You can also sign up for emailed notices of events, promotions and sales.

Wayne Kirkpatrick, (Director) noted to the meeting group that hand signals were not being carried all the way back through the ride group on the recent Fall Colors ride. This is a problem where the signals are stop-

ping at guests and has happened on 2 or 3 rides recently.

Ric Case, (Safety Committee) advised the meeting that the next G.R.A.S.S. class will be on November 9th and starts at 9:00 AM. Continental breakfast and coffee will be available. The road captain's G.R.A.S.S. session will be held afterwards and the senior road captains will meet after that.

John Lunde, (Safety Committee) presented the meeting's safety tip. Riders should look at their general health at the end of the riding season the same as we do maintenance checks of our motorcycles. Eyesight, hearing, and overall general physical status including a stress test

should all be checked and done. We all need to take care of our bodies in order to ride safely.

Winter is a good time of the year for purchasing accessories and gear. With the Cycle World International Motorcycle Show in February and other events and promotions, this is a good time to get deals and save money.

No general comments were given.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Mike Bradbury

Build a house around this...



Election Bio's

Carlton R. Marcyan, for President

- 1) Experience with TopCats:
Treasurer for 2 terms.
Road Captain for 3 years.
Attends almost all general meetings and when an officer attended vast majority of board meetings.
Have lead rides as Road Captain over the past 3 years.
Participated in the TopCat Sturgis ride for the past 5 years and led the ride this year through Spearfish Canyon.
Have assisted in teaching GRASS classes for the past 2 years.
- 2) Most favorable part of being a TopCat:
The quality of the membership is #1. Great people. Great riders. Great friends.
Number of rides offered is #2.
Quality of training, safety classes and presentations comes in a close 2nd.
- 3) Two things for the Board to do during the next term:
Supplement GRASS classes with internet accessible safety classes such as provided by counties and municipalities.
Expansion of membership to maintain a representation across the spectrum of age demographics.
- 4) Changes:
Meeting location review.
Continued enhancement of variety of rides.
Programs on motorcycle care and repair.
Invitation to dealerships to participate in meetings and activities.
Expansion of charity event.
Public relations effort to let the general public community know about TopCats and who we are and what we do.
- 5) Myself:
Chicago native born and bred. Have been practicing law since 1981 and specializing in domestic relations matters. Practiced accounting immediately after college.
3 children and 1 wife. No need for any more in either category. Eldest child a junior in college at Carroll University, middle child a first year cadet "knob" at The Citadel and in the USMC ROTC. Youngest child is 16 who enjoys life. My wife is also a lawyer who rides horses but did finally agree to meet me in Sturgis this year and ride with us through the Black Hills. I greatly enjoy the friendships I have made through Top Cats and look forward to many more years of riding and camaraderie.

Mike Bradbury, for Vice President

- 1) Secretary and board member for 2008, Road Captain since 2007, Lead 2 rides during 2007, Lead 5 rides and hosted picnic in 2008.
- 2) The most favorable part of being a Top Cat is riding safely with my fellow members on great rides with great roads in the best motorcycle club in the area.
- 3) Producing an awards program as discussed by the board in 2008 awards for individual achievements and accomplishments. I would review the Road Captain system to develop more road captains for more ride diversity and ideas as well as creating guidelines for more senior road captain involvement.
- 4) Publishing the ROAR on time electronically on our web site.
- 5) Even though I do not have a Harley Davidson, I believe we are all motorcyclists at heart and I am constantly looking for ways to be involved and contribute to my club, the Top Cats. Even though I do not have a lot of experience in my short membership term, I hope that the club members vote for me and give me their support for the opportunity to serve and represent them as a Top Cat officer.

Dennis P. (Wombat) Dougherty, for Director

I appreciate the opportunity to run as a candidate for Director of the Top Cats. I am excited about the possibility of serving the membership as a member of the Board.

1) My Experience with the Top Cats

I have been a member since 2003, a Road Captain for the last three years, and have been Tail Gunner on many rides. In addition, I am the club photo archivist. I collect and archive all photos from members, and manage and upload the photos that appear on the Top Cats website. I have also provided content and presentation material for G.R.A.S.S. Class and Road Captain training. I participate in almost all Top Cats rides and monthly meetings except those when I am either out of town or unable to attend due to family or business commitments.

2) Most Favorable Part of Being a Top Cat

Like most of you, I was attracted to the Top Cats by the quality of the members, their passion for sharing the road with fellow motorcycle enthusiasts, their obsession for promoting safe riding, and being with a great group of people with a predisposition for having fun.

From my perspective, the most favorable part of being a Top Cat is, first and foremost, taking part in some great rides in a safe and friendly riding environment; secondly, meeting and riding with some great business people who have become friends; and finally having the opportunity to contribute to the club and charitable causes.

3) Two Things the Board of Directors Should Accomplish During My Term

I decided to run for Director for several reasons. First of all, I wanted to be able to contribute more to the club than in my current capacity as a Road Captain, resident photo archivist, and part time photographer. Most importantly, over the last few years, the club has gone through many changes...mostly for the good....as the club continues to evolve with the times. From my perspective we are still a 'work in process' with much exciting potential. We have always been a very strong club with deeply rooted traditions and a great culture, yet I believe our best days are still ahead of us. I want to be a part of helping to set the club on its path for the future and putting those plans in place.

Top Cats Vision 2010

I believe one of the challenges for the new administration will be to set clear and specific goals and objectives for the club to achieve next year and beyond and hold those in a position of power accountable for delivering the results to the membership. We need to set some priorities for 2009 as part of a longer term vision for what we want the club to be like over the next few years. This needs to be clearly communicated to and embraced by the members. I believe failing to do this could result in the Top Cats culture slowly decomposing into 'just another motorcycle club'. I have more than a few ideas I look forward to putting on the table for consideration.

Raise the Bar... Get the Membership Engaged

This is not meant to be an indictment of current or former administrations, but I believe we need to raise the bar of performance of the officers and board as well as the members themselves. We, as a club, are only as good as all the members are willing to make us. This takes commitment and involvement from everyone. We have a lot we can do to make the club better, stronger, and more robust. Everyone should get engaged and support the club in some way, big or small.

4) Proposed Improvements and Changes to the Club

I see the Top Cats as an elite group of riders. We differentiate ourselves from other clubs by our professional membership profile, highest standards for safe riding, and commitment to each other as both friends and riding colleagues. We continue to be a strong club, but there are things we can do to help improve it, insure the club's legacy, and clearly communicate our identity.

Balance Core Values and Traditions with Change and New Traditions

Over the years we have established some traditions that are at the core of our culture. As we continue to evolve we must remain true to those traditions while at the same time embracing change. It is not an easy task and sometimes hard to let go. I would propose our theme for 2009 to be 'Back to the Future'. We need to find the right balance between old and new that will encourage growth and change yet preserve our core values and culture. We need to put personal biases aside and work together to create what is best overall for the club, now and into the future.

Dennis P. (Wombat) Dougherty, for Director Continued

Market and Promote the Club More Aggressively

We are now a club of over 100 members. How big should we become? As we create a vision for the future, we should set some guidelines for how big we want to be and put an aggressive membership campaign in place to bring new members into the club. Some ideas include:

- Assign members to become Top Cats Ambassadors to targeted clubs and organizations to promote the Top Cats as well as exchange ride and event information. This is done somewhat ad hoc today. We should formalize it.
- Attract members that clearly meet the club membership criteria. We are an elite group of riders and professionals. We need to continue in that tradition and invite only those into the club who meet the established criteria maintaining the elite distinction without arrogance.
- Use the annual banquet as the premier kickoff event for the riding season. Hold the event in March prior to the kickoff ride. Have the officers and board present the 2009 plan in addition to the past year's awards. Invite potential new members, alumni, lapsed members, and possibly key members of other clubs and preferred vendors.

Reengage our Alumni and 'Lapsed' Members

Why is it that people leave the club.... life changes, lost interest? Why do people lose interest? What can we do to keep people engaged and create a compelling environment for members to feel a void if they don't participate in an event. Let's actively reach out to our alumni and lapsed members and find out why they are no longer active and find ways to reengage them. They are all part of our tradition and heritage.

Create Additional 'Value' for Our Members

As part of further extending our reach into the motorcycle community and attracting members, we should find ways to create additional value for our members. Some examples include:

- Assign members to keep the online calendar updated as the 'most comprehensive' list of motorcycle events in the area. Who knows, it may even draw people to our website... and the club.
- Implement a Top Cats Preferred Vendor Program establishing preferred relationships with a few key suppliers of motorcycle and riding products and services. In exchange for discounts for Top Cats, they can be provided a small ad space for free in ROAR and possibly our web site.
- Continue to bring in a guest speaker at all Top Cats meetings. Create an annual list of topics, solicit speakers, and publish the monthly speaker list on the website.
- Create an annual editorial calendar for ROAR. Line up writers and content well in advance. Invite outside contributors... publish ROAR on time.
- Continue our tradition of great ride experiences. We had some great new rides this year. All the members and Road Captains need to continue to come up with new and innovative rides, events, and motorcycle experiences.

'Ruthlessly' Promote Motorcycle Safety and 'Walk the Talk'

The Top Cats are passionate about safety and safe riding. This is not only a very good thing for the members, but also a key opportunity for the club to differentiate ourselves from other clubs and a great way to attract new members. Wayne Kirkpatrick recently was asked to put on a G.R.A.S.S class for the Combat Veterans of America, in Ohio. There were over 35 attendees from the east coast. We should continue to upgrade our G.R.A.S.S. curriculum and presentations, and seek ways to align ourselves with other safety organizations and present G.R.A.S.S. to other motorcycle clubs and at dealers to help promote the Top Cats.

We have about 25 Road Captains in the club... almost 25% of our membership. We have very specific ride protocols that we ask all members to follow. As a Road Captain, nothing is more frustrating for me than to see Top Cats members not passing hand signals up/back, not maintaining our ride formation spacing, or violating some other protocol. While we want everyone to relax and have a good time, the Top Cats ride protocols are proven and are for our personal safety. They need to be followed by everyone. Almost as important is for every member to set a good example of ride safety for new members and guests. All members need to closely follow the protocols to the very best that they can on each and every ride.

Road Captains need to hold each other to the highest standards. The RCs are responsible for safety. They need to be diligent in doing detailed and complete ride briefings each and every time, no matter how experienced the riders, and follow our ride protocols to the letter. Members and guests have the right to expect con

Dennis P. (Wombat) Dougherty, for Director Continued

sistency and only the best from our ride leaders.

Some of these ideas may have been tried in the past. If they weren't successful then we need to find out why, fix them, or come up with new ones. The point being that we need to continually find and implement new ideas in the club that are both relevant and meaningful to keep the club fresh, interesting and inviting.

All this being said, we are after all a social networking club with a professional bias and a common passion for motorcycle riding. We are all volunteers. Where and how we take the club forward needs to be done with a strong spirit of fun and based in great riding experiences. That's what keeps us all coming back.

5) About Me

As for me personally, I was born in Oklahoma City a long time ago, grew up in St. Louis and have lived in Barrington for 20 years. I am divorced with no children. When I'm not riding or taking photos, I now run my own management consulting firm specializing in operational strategy and implementation primarily for high technology firms. I spent the last 16 years working for a couple of leading international consulting firms and have worked in several countries including Australia, Canada, Mexico, Norway, Hong Kong, Italy, and the Caribbean. I have a BS in Physics degree and an MBA in Finance. I am also an instrument rated pilot with a seaplane rating and enjoy scuba diving, and sailing when not cruising the road with the Top Cats.

I look forward to serving the club as one of your Directors. I hope I can count on your support.

Tom Nichols; candidate for Treasurer 2009

1) What is your experience with Top Cats? i.e. Committee head, committee member, Road captain, lead rides, regularly attends meetings.

Top Cat Experience: 2+ years with club, road captain for one year, Head of this year's charity ride committee, I have led a few rides in last year and designed charity ride route. I have attended over 80% of meeting since membership.

2) What do you consider the most favorable part of being a Top Cat?

The camaraderie and the various views of the different members, all within the common bond of motorcycling

3) List two things you feel the Board of Directors should do during your term.

Run the club per the bylaws; also recognize trends that might warrant exploration and keeping the membership updated with vital information.

4) What do you feel should be changed, (eliminated, amended or modified) in Top Cats?

I think the board should determine where the club is moving, does it want to remain the same or adapt to the times and current membership. Is the membership interested in different types of rides, how we can get the "silent" members of the club to be more involved?

5) One or two sentences describing yourself to the membership.

I am a soft spoken rider that understands that everyone has somewhat different desires but share common interest. I realize there is more gray than black and white and I understand that compromise is a good way to obtain black or white

Joan Durango, for Secretary

1) What is your experience in Topcats? i.e. committee head, committee member, previously on the BOD, road captain, attend most meetings etc. I joined Top Cats almost 2 years ago. I knew of the club because I had participated as a rider in the annual charity ride a few times and was always impressed with the number of members that participated in the event and what a tremendous job they did. I then became friends with Dan and Peggy Strickler and they were kind enough to sponsor me, we'll that and the money I paid them. Since then I have participated in as many rides and meetings as I can. I help with set up and registration for the Charity Event for the passed couple of years and this year I will co-chair the event along with Eileen Perry. Finally, I'm thrilled to say I recently became a Road Captain.

2) What do you consider the most favorable part of being a Top Cat? Getting to know the members. What a great group of people and best of all they love to ride as much as I do!

3) List two things you feel the Board of Directors (BOD) should accomplish during your term. Increase the number of "active" members and since that involves meetings, rides, extra activities and the charity event I feel that is enough of a challenge.

4) What do you feel needs to be changed (addressed, eliminated, amended, or modified) to improve the club. Being a group of successful business men and women I would like to see all of us use the talents that brought us our own success to benefit others i.e. the Charity Ride. Especially now, when our economy is in such a state of flux and so many people are in need and that number is growing I feel it is even more important that we set an example for others by giving of ourselves. I'm a true believer in the old saying "to give is to receive". Not sure what that means? Join our club's event and find out.

5) Optional: One or two sentences describing yourself. One or two sentences?!? That's it? Anyone who knows me knows I can't stop at one or two sentences so if you really want to get to know me talk to me, I always have something to say! :-)

Safety Article by Bard Boand

Here is to looking up your rear view mirror....

Tailgaters drive me crazy! Are you one of those who are right on my ass or in my blind spot? Are you on or in someone else's?

If the 1 second / 2 second spacing rules doesn't work for you, or you are challenged by math, here is an easy technique you can use. It works for me.

1/ Locate the rear view mirror of the bike to your right or left in front of you.

That means to your oblique front, or aprox. 20 degrees front right or front left.

2/ Can you see the riders eye balls or sun glasses? Or do you see blue sky?

3/ If you see his eyes / glasses, you are probably one second behind him exactly where you should be. A bonus: he / she can see you.

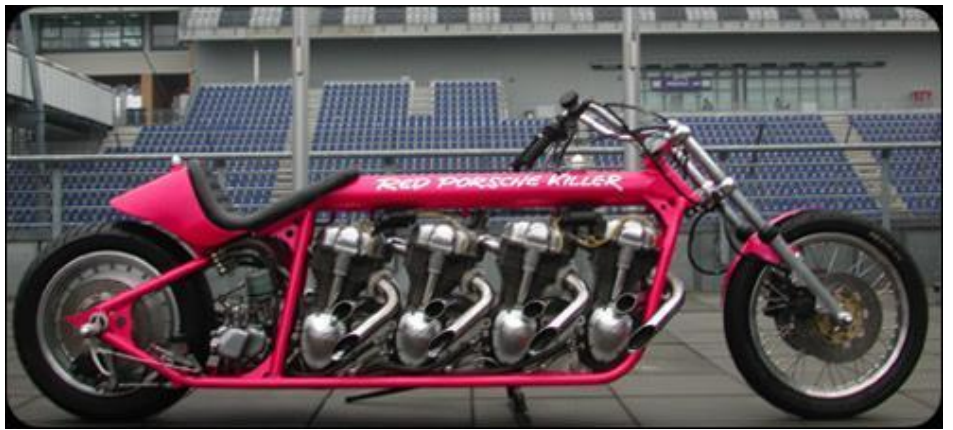
4/ If you see blue sky, you are either too close or too far behind.

5/ This only works if his / her mirror is properly adjusted, so always adjust your mirror once out on the road way.

6/ If you still feel too close, or too far behind due to improper mirror adjustment of the bike to your front oblique, go back to the one / two second rule you learned in GRASS or MSF Class.

7/ Additional safe spacing distances may vary due to weather or road conditions.

Lot's of engines...



Lot's of seats...



Lot's of junk...





Activities Calendar



Date	Ride/Event	Location	Destination	Time	Leader
Tuesday, November 04, 2008	General Meeting	Village Tavern & Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30p m	Brandt
Sunday, November 09, 2008	G.R.A.S.S. Class	Village Tavern and Grill	Buffalo Grove	8:30a m	Case
Tuesday, November 11, 2008	Board Meeting	Ginos East	Lake Zurich	7:30p m	Brandt
Tuesday, December 02, 2008	General Meeting-Election	Village Tavern & Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30p m	Brandt
Tuesday, December 09, 2008	Board Meeting	Ginos East	Lake Zurich	7:30p m	Brandt
Tuesday, January 06, 2009	General Meeting	Village Tavern & Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30p m	Brandt
Tuesday, January 13, 2009	Board Meeting	Ginos East	Lake Zurich	7:30p m	Brandt

This is why I don't like being the tail gunner...

