



NorCal **VIPER** News

Fall **2017** Edition

President's Message:



For this issue of our newsletter, I am putting my message on the first page as I have several important issues to discuss with you. Otherwise, the last page would have been perfectly fine for my comments!

First, we missed our Summer Newsletter issue since our Communication Director stepped down from his position, and the rest of us couldn't get this done in time. We decided to wait until the end of the year and provide a newsletter for all the events since our Spring issue. So, this issue is much longer and has a summary of all the events since April.

Also, we have changed our delivery format and will be sending out the Newsletter in a digital format, similar to the National VOA Newsletter. This will save some printing and mailing costs (about \$1,000 annually) and more importantly will provide us unlimited space for giving you more details and better pictures of the events. You can print this newsletter at home or at the office if you wish to keep a hard copy. The same PDF version will also be posted on our website, so you will always have access to it.

Second, our Elections are coming up and we need to select a new Board for 2018-2020. Some of us may be running again but have not made a final decision yet. Regardless of our decisions, we want more members to step up and be part of the leadership of this Club, and even take on our positions with new ideas and energy. You can run for any of the positions including the vacant Communications Director. Remember, your co-member (wife/husband/SO) is also eligible to run for any of these positions and they should be encouraged. The voting will take place in early February and the new Board will take office on March 1st. Please email me directly and let me know if you want to run for any of the positions or if you want to nominate someone. I will be sending out more details on this soon.

By now, you should know that NVE3 has been sold out and there will be over 800 members and 400 Vipers that will be going to Las Vegas for one of the biggest car club gatherings and partying. We have 29 members from NorCal that have registered and will be caravanning to Las Vegas. A few will be shipping their cars. There is a waiting list if you are still considering attending this event. I think the fact that the Viper production ended made this event more special as everyone wants to keep this car and this club alive for many years to come. Hope more of you can attend the next one in 2020!

And lastly, I think we had a pretty good year with many varied events that brought out about half of our total membership. We hope to provide even better events in 2018 so that more of you can attend and enjoy your membership to this club. We will start the planning of the events for 2018 soon and would love to hear from you as to what you like to see. Just drop any of us a note. Thanks.

2017 NorCal Viper Club Calendar

Feb. 25	Indoor Go Karting – Mystery Driver
Marc 11-12*	Viper Tracks 3 @ Bondurant School
March 17	Club Kickoff Party – Joe Sharino Band
April 8	Guns and Vipers III
April 22	Mountain to Beach Cruise
April 30*	Autocross @ Marina
May 7	Tequila Tasting and Pool Party
May 14*	Sonoma Speed SF
May 20	Viper Track Setup & Cruise to Alice's
June 3-4*	Thunderhill 5 Mile for Beginners
June 25	Drive, Dine & Dive – Triple D!
July 16	Hot Cars and Hot BBQ
July 22	Lake Tulloch Water Escape
August 4-6	Mendocino Coast Getaway
August 19	East Hills Poker Run & Pool Party
Sept 16-17*	Thunderhill 5 Mile
Sept 29-Oct 1	25 th Anniversary Bash – CA Regions
October 8*	Autocross @ Sonoma
October 14	Buttonwillow Track Day
November 4	Wrap Up Rally – Gold Country Cruise
Nov 18-19	Laguna Seca Track Day – 105 db

Stay tuned for 2018 Calendar of Events!

**Events Not Sponsored by Our Club but May Include a Club Sponsored Activity*

Club Officers

Sanjar Chakamian

President

schakamian@gmail.com



Jim Bray

Secretary

Silver8@sbcglobal.net



Aaron Lukianow

Treasurer

alukianow@comcast.com



Barbara Drummer

Event Director

bdrummer@sbcglobal.net



Vacant

Communication Director

Tequila Tasting & Pool Party – May 7th

Story and Photos by Maurice Liang and Sanjar Chakamian

This event was fully publicized in the Viper Quarterly with all the details and pictures by Maurice Liang. Here is a recap of the event and a few more pictures.



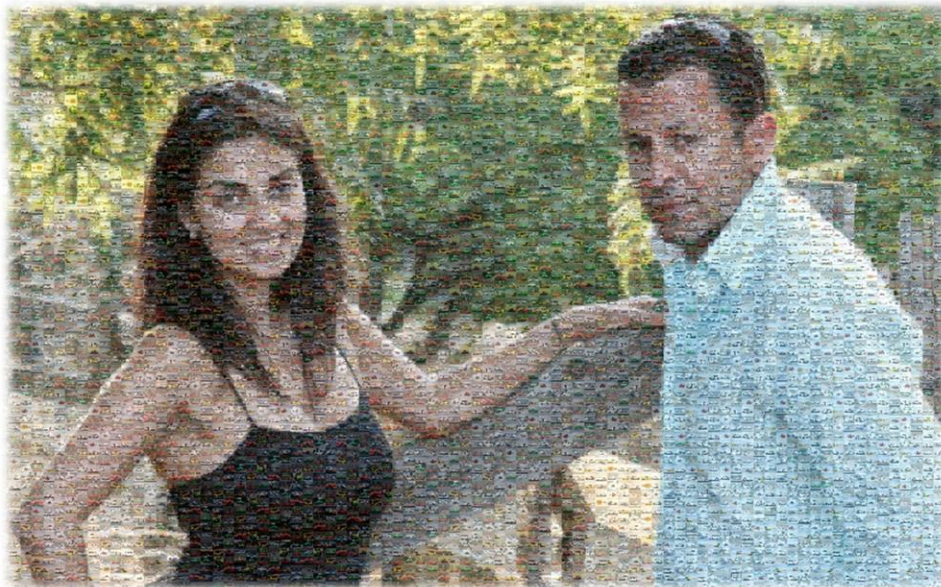
This event was coordinated by **Maurice Liang** and hosted by a friend of the Club, **Shahab Moradian** and his wife **Afi Moradian**, who opened their beautiful home in Walnut Creek to over 30 club members for a special tequila tasting and a wonderful lunch pairing by the poolside. Shahab is the importer of a boutique, small-batched artisanal premium tequila brand, El Fogonero. He also arranged for a spirit expert to tell us a bit about the mystique of tequila and how it's produced.

As usual, we met at Golfland and drove up to Shahab's home in Walnut Creek. Thanks to **Seth Green** and his two-way walkie-talkies, the group was able to stay together and make a beautiful caravan of Vipers along the way. Once we got there, we did the usual group photo and moved inside for the tasting and partying.

Shahab, his tequila expert and his chef gave us an overview of tequila's history and how it should be paired with food. We tasted the Blanco, Reposado, Anejo, and the crème de la crème of El Fogonero, Extra Anejo. All were paired with different foods that highlighted each tequila's character.



After tasting, it was time for lunch. The Chef, **Shane Valentine**, planned a gourmet fajita bar where everyone made their own fajitas. For dessert, we had Mexican churros and puff pastries with more drinks. We were also given instructions by our spirit expert on how to make the perfect Margarita! We all enjoyed our Sunday afternoon by the pool relaxing and catching up. Thanks to Shahab and Maurice for pulling this fun and educational event together. On behalf of the Club, Sanjar presented Shahab and Afi with a special portrait of them made of thousands of pictures of Vipers and Porsches as Shahab owns a Porsche GT3.



Sonoma Raceway Track Day – May 14, 2017

Story and Photos by Todd Solomon

Brilliantly, I organized this fun escape on (what I didn't realize was) Mother's Day. I was in the clear, having taken my mom out to a steak dinner the week before, but would others have thought ahead too? Surely not! Boy was I wrong. Nine Vipers showed up to attack the corners at this historic track.



It was inspiring to see a father and son team, **Rick and Nick Bawden**, each driving their own Viper. Nick is near graduation at San Diego State and his reward is his father's gorgeous track-prepped Gen 2 Viper silver bullet. Sharing your passion with your son is what every father dreams of.

My partner in crime, **Rich Erickson**, was tracking his bad ass SSG ACR, along with track rat Noel in his GTS-R Blue Gen V, and friend Charlie in his Gen IV Vert. Four of the beasts were Gen V ACR Extremes, including **Manu Emanuel**, myself and **Dan Gallmeister** in his Lava Orange - a Porsche color, taboo on a Viper, lol.

Also in an ACR Extreme was open wheel veteran racer **Chris Bender** from Reno. Having run the first race ever at Sears Point, Chris is a pro who knows the line. Beginning with the first session, Chris sped ahead of everyone including me, a frustrated Radical racer. I was poking around four or five seconds off of his pace trying to figure out the line. He graciously offered a lead-follow lap which revealed an issue right away: I was braking in turn one while he was flat out and braking just before turn two!

Learning he was able to stick to the track, I swallowed hard and fell in behind him. It was an honor and a thrill to keep pace with him on the last session of the day. Full disclosure: he had a passenger weighing him down but let's keep that between us! If you ever have the opportunity to get coaching from a true pro like Chris, seize the moment.



Drive, Dine and Dive – Triple D! – June 25th

Story and Photos by Sanjar Chakamian

On a beautiful early summer day, 22 members of the Club got together for a backroad cruise followed by lunch and relaxation by the pool as well as a surprise for one member! The name of our event was inspired by Guy Fieri's Food Network show, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.

Since this event was in the South Bay, everyone gathered at the usual gathering spot off of Bernal Road. We had a new member joining us so everyone got to meet **Andre Simone** who has a Stryker Green GTS. (He has raised his hands in this picture, can you spot him?)



For our first “D”, we drove the twisty backroads of Santa Clara County. This included McKean Road passing by Uvas Reservoir and ending in Gilroy where we got back on Hwy. 101. Then we headed on Hwy. 152 to our lunch destination in Hollister.

For our second “D”, we dined at The Grove by Leal Vineyards. This is a very large restaurant with a huge outdoor area where people can have their food under the olive trees and enjoy the live music. We had a

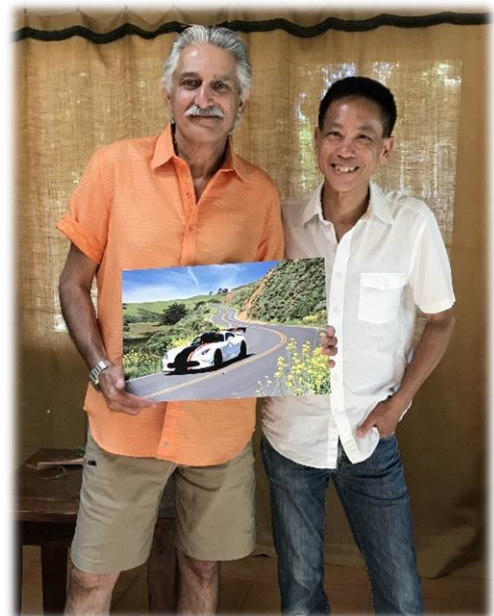


reserved parking area in front of the restaurant where the Vipers parked to create a beautiful scene for all onlookers. Everyone enjoyed either a brunch or lunch entrée and a few took advantage of the Bloody Mary bar. After lunch, we drove through some more backroads and arrived at Sanjar and Sheri Chakamian's house.

For our third “D”, everyone relaxed at Sanjar’s house by the pool and a few took a dive in the pool, or at least got their feet wet. And now the surprise: We celebrated a belated birthday for our Founding



President, **Maurice Liang** with cake and gifts which totally surprised him. Several people had gifts for him and **Sheri Chakamian** gave Maurice one of her paintings that we knew would be a hit! Maurice also surprised Sanjar with a beautiful picture of Sanjar’s new ACR that was printed on a metal panel.



Everyone had a great day and the Triple “D” was a fun event.

Hot Cars & Hot BBQ – July 16th

Story by Barbara Drummer

Photos by Sanjar Chakamian

Does “fall off the bone” describe the best BBQ? Read on to find out the answer.

On a typically hot mid-July Sunday, a string of snakes rumbled into **Barbara and Doug Drummer’s** Santa Clara neighborhood for the fifth annual Hot Cars & Hot BBQ.



Cruisers met at Panera Bread for coffee and pastries and then snaked around the South County roads led by **Jim and Carla Kermode**. Lining up the Vipers and taking the group pictures was quick. I think the guests were ready for Arnold Palmers.

As we gathered under the shade of the patio umbrellas, Doug & I put the finishing touches on the meal. Everyone was so busy chatting, I’m not sure they noticed! Doug sliced 50 pounds of brisket, 12 racks of ribs and 5 pounds of German sausage (we had substantial leftovers for the first time). With the smoker at 225 degrees the brisket took 14 hours to reach a level of tenderness that was enjoyable enough to eat so Doug had been up all night. Actually, preparations started six weeks earlier when we purchased the brisket and began aging it. BBQ cuts are from the working part of the animal so they



are tough and require a “low and slow” cooking process. Sliced brisket is from the “flat”, fatty “burnt ends” are from the point...we offered both. All agreed they were pretty delish!

Doug's ribs are pretty delicious too so I'm including a picture for your viewing enjoyment.



As is traditional, we wrapped up the meal with a tequila tasting. Sips are small so as to be enjoyable but not so much that we attract unwanted attention when on the road home.

Dream'n Bout Que competition BBQ team

We continue to be humbled by our competitors at the Silicon Valley BBQ Competition and the San Jose State Sparta-Q Rib Cookoff. Still, we soldier on with support from Viper Club members who commiserated with us. Thanks to **Young-Ae, Marcos, Jim & Carla!**

And finally, the answer to whether “fall off the bone” describes the best BBQ. This is from a Kansas City BBQ Society (KCBS) BBQ judge, “Ribs – believe it or not – should not fall off the bone. If all of the meat slides off with the first bite, they're too tender. Judges are looking for a bit of bite to the meat.” That said, our guests seem to like “fall off the bone” best.



East Hills Poker Run & Pool Party – August 19th

Story | Andy Hoepfner & Scarlett Reed

Photos | Maurice Liang and Sanjar Chakamian



The day started clear and warm. While gathering at Golfland, a Milpitas Police officer came to check us out. Lon took the opportunity to ask about the laws in California – what he might get pulled over or arrested for. Wine tasting at Big Dog was low key and delicious. We had a great parking spot overlooking the valley. After some time in the sunshine posing for our cameraman, we headed up the road. The drive was quite spirited until it turned into one lane. We stopped at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve to punch our third card for the poker run. Sadly, the normally expansive view was hidden by the haze from the fires. We arrived at our home and punched the last cards. NorCal Viper President Sanjar Chakamian was the winner (\$40!). Todd Solomon had the lowest hand, winning a remote-controlled Viper as a consolation prize. After snacking on copious amounts of antipasti up on the deck, we migrated to the pool, getting quite “prune” as the afternoon passed.



See more pictures on the next page.



Mendocino Coast Getaway, August 4 - 6th

Story and Photos by Jim Bray

This story was fully publicized with extensive details and pictures on our website. Here is a short summary.

NorCal Viper Club members explored Mendocino County for three days taking in the sites unique to this beautiful part of California.



A drive along well maintained windy roads on Hwy 128 led us to Boonville where we had lunch at *Lauren's*. The afternoon stop was the Greenwood Ridge Winery followed by another scenic drive up the coast to Ft. Bragg.

Our next leg was cruising through Jackson State Forest on our way to Willits, our home for two nights. This evening's special event was a catered dinner in the vineyard at the lovely home of Testa Vineyard owners Maria and Rusty. Chef Cruox, his team and Amanda, our hostess, greeted us as we arrived and feted us all evening with great food and wine.

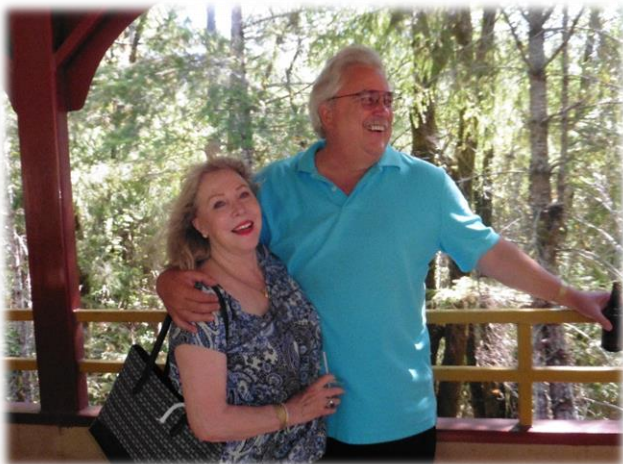


The next day we visited Ridgewood Ranch the home of legendary racehorse Seabiscuit. After a two hour tour of the Ranch and a visit with some Little Biscuits, his descendants, we headed for lunch and then took a ride on the famous Skunk Train.

Chugging through the redwood forest with drinks in hand, listening to Greg the train singer and admiring the trees and some old growth redwoods, we reached our destination, Northspur where a wonderful BBQ meal was waiting for us in this peaceful setting.



Returning to the hotel around 8:00 P.M. left plenty of time for a pool and hot tub party at the hotel. Following a leisurely breakfast the next morning, some members headed to other destinations and home while the rest of us visited Jaxon Keys Winery and Distillery. After lunch, our group pointed their Vipers back to the barn.



Please see the complete story, a movie and photos of the event on the Club website.

Auto-X: At the Limit of Traction – April 29th

Story and Photos by Andy Hoepfner

Auto-X (pronounced auto cross) is a competitive event where drivers negotiate a course of traffic cones while one-by-one racing against the clock. This is a perfect opportunity to learn how your car behaves at the limit of traction with few consequences. Enjoy auto-X as a fun social event by racing against your own personal best time or by racing the times logged by your peers. Regardless, any car can compete and everyone is guaranteed a fun, exhilarating time.

The first of two auto-X events for 2017 was held at Marina Municipal Airport near Monterey on April 29th. Thanks to our hosts, our own **Andy Hoepfner** and the Western States Corvette Council (WSCC), all we had to do was show up. Eight club members took part in this event. WSCC set up the track and all that is needed to host a two-day Auto-X event. We participated in two run groups on Sunday that ran the track five times each. The objective is to improve your driving skill so that each run is quicker, no small feat.

Some details about Auto-X...

Everyone must wear a helmet and loaners are available onsite. Passengers are generally welcome in any car, just ask. Everyone who drives must pay back the club by performing the duties of a course worker. This means you will be assigned a location on the track where you will stand for the full 2-hour session while watching for violations like moving a cone. Even this can be a learning experience.

Plan to join our future Auto-X event, we promise you will have a really fun time.

Hoosiers, Gyrodiscs and Margaritas – Thunderhill Raceway September 16-17th

Story and Photos by Todd Solomon

Seven Vipers gathered at Thunderhill Raceway for a weekend of tracking and fun. I will let the pictures do most of the talking, but a few technical things I'd like to share:

Girodisc Rotors and Raybestos ST43 pads: After a couple of years of tracking on the OEM CCM carbon brakes, the rotors were worn out. They were flawless in performance, but went from pads lasting 4+ days in the front to just 1-1/2 days so it was time to try something new. I sprung for the Girodisc iron conversion set up. They were fantastic and pad wear was minimal (I need to take a measurement, but they look nearly new). My priority is to make tracking more economical and the replacement pads are reasonable, so this is a big step in the right direction.



Hoosier R7s: Tracy, a fellow ACR Extreme owner, came all the way from Washington with his lady Jody to track with us. Tracy graciously offered to let me borrow his front Hoosier R7s for a session. He had run them for 3 days (probably 15 sessions), and they were still soft to the fingernail. To my pleasant surprise,



lap times were nearly as good as with the Kumhos, despite the session being hotter. The ride height in the front was too high as well, due to the Hoosier's 1+ inch greater height. Feel was fantastic regardless, no complaints about the Hoosiers. I think I'll get about 4 days out of the Hoosiers vs. only 1 day out of my front Kumhos. Just bought a front-rear R7 set, 295/30-19s and 345/30-19s. In mid-October, I'll be heading to Buttonwillow Raceway to do a full Hoosier/Girodisc weekend. I just re-calibrated ride height, corner-weighted and aligned it to

compensate for the Hoosiers. I'll keep you posted how they do.

Ok enough talking, I'll let the pictures tell the story. We tracked with a bunch of Porsches, modded Corvettes and other fast machines. The ACRs once again held their own and were the classiest of the field.

Saturday eve, we enjoyed a round of margaritas compliments of Jim, who brought his brand spanking new Competition Blue ACR.



25th Anniversary Bash – California Regions – September 29th – October 1st

Story by Sanjar Chakamian

Photos by Sanjar Chakamian and Maurice Liang

After last year's successful weekend in San Simeon/Paso Robles with members of SoCal, CenCal, and NorCal, the three regions decided to meet again this year. The discussions started during the SoCal Holiday Party when all three regional Presidents agreed to organize it again. Since the planning and work for last year's event was done by the SoCal and CenCal Presidents, I offered to host the event in NorCal and treat our friends to our hospitality.

Initially we planned the event in the Monterey area but it turned out not to be feasible. Finding venues with adequate parking for our Vipers proved to be difficult and very costly. So, we moved to South Santa Clara County where things are more reasonably priced.



Eighty members from the three California regions along with their 45 Vipers gathered in Morgan Hill for the three-day weekend. Most people, except a few locals, stayed at the event hotel at a special rate. FCA co-hosted the Friday night cocktail hour and brought two new cars to show off: a Jeep Trackhawk and an Alfa Romeo Giulia Q.V. On Friday night, members parked their Vipers and, before going to dinner, they got to kick the tires of the two featured cars. FCA deserves a very special thank you for hosting the appetizers and drinks at our restaurant. It made the evening very special.

This fun filled weekend started with the Friday night dinner at a local Morgan Hill restaurant where we enjoyed delicious, plentiful appetizers and a hosted bar thanks to FCA. Camaraderie and fun discussions abounded as the evening activities wrapped up with a dinner planned especially for us by the chef. It was delicious!



On Saturday, we gathered at a Starbucks location in Morgan Hill. After the drivers' meeting, we drove twisty backroads until we arrived at **Sycamore Creek Winery** for wine tasting and lunch. As usual, it took us a while to get 45 Vipers into the driveway and park them in a way that Maurice could take a group picture.



After the photo op, we enjoyed the wine tasting along with our delicious wood fired pizza and salad. A few people took advantage of the bocce ball courts and had some friendly matches! Lots of wine tasting and socializing made for a perfect midday.



For our second venue, we drove to the private residence of one of Sanjar's friends who has an attractive Tuscany-style home with very beautiful landscaping. A local winery, **Medeiros Family Wines**, was brought in to give us a private wine tasting of their local wines. Once everyone got their wines, they wandered

around and enjoyed this massive and beautiful backyard. The owner of the house, Dr. **Bas Wafelbakker**, had plenty of stories about how the backyard was designed and built down to how each tree was planted and how they are cared for. It was very informative and interesting. This wine tasting ended about 4:30 PM so everyone could go back to the hotel to get ready for the dinner party.

The dinner party, themed, *The 25th Anniversary of the Vipers*, was held poolside at **Sheri and Sanjar Chakamian's** home. People arrived around 6:00 PM and filled the street with all the Vipers which drew many of the neighbors out to see. Guests were treated to appetizers and drinks while a Jazz Trio was playing some great tunes. Dinner was served on the lawn at one long table that sat 80 people! Guests were treated to homemade gourmet food by Sheri and Sanjar along with all the drinks and wine.



This was a great opportunity for members from the three California regions to better get to know each other and forge some friendships.

On Sunday morning, we offered an optional brunch to send off our out of town guests. About 35 of us got together at the hotel to drive to Hollister for brunch at **The Grove by Leal Vineyard**, on the way to I-5. Reserved parking for all the Vipers in front of the restaurant created a nice car show while everyone enjoyed brunch in the outdoor section under the olive trees, listening to live music.

Overall, this event proved to be successful, enjoyable, and memorable for our members. Many encouraged us to do it again next year. In light of NVE3 in 2018, it is unlikely, but we will see.

The NorCal VOA Gallery has more pictures at www.norcalviperclub.com/gallery.



Wrap Up Rally – November 4th

Story by Karen Hallstein

Photos by Shelly Shisler

The NorCal Viper Club wrapped up the 2017 driving season with a drive to Murphys, CA on Saturday, November 4. Fifteen people departed Golfland in Milpitas and drove through a couple bands of rain before meeting Glen and Denise in Lodi. The drive to Murphys was beautiful, the fall foliage spectacular. We arrived at the Ironstone Winery, and, after a group picture, enjoyed lunch at the Gold Leaf Deli in a reserved area of the Tasting Room.



After lunch, for dessert, **Shelly Shisler** surprised the group with gourmet cupcakes created by a local bakery. The cupcakes had the Sneaky Pete, Fang, and Stryker logos. We were also thrilled and excited to offer an event t-shirt designed by Shelly Shisler, the first of many we hope. **Interested to purchase a t-shirt? See the next page!**

Before departing for the Bay Area, many members, family, and friends did some wine tasting, toured the grounds/gardens, and visited The Heritage Museum and Gallery. Special thanks to our four devoted club members, **Rich Bontempi, Randy Davis, Glen McAdon,** and **Armand Stephens** who “braved” the



temperamental California drizzle in their spirited Vipers. We were thrilled with the great turn-out for this rain-or-shine event.



NorCal VOA "Wrap Up Rally"
T-shirts for Sale
Especially made for our last event of 2017

Contact Karen.Hallstein@comcast.net, 1-408-309-8665
Pick-up/delivery: \$20 each; Mail: \$22 each



Best wishes to **Seth Green** and **Laura Velando**, who will be heading to their next assignment in northern Alabama shortly after the New Year. We certainly enjoyed getting to know them, and wish them the best life has to offer. We hope they have fun with the Alabama-Tennessee club who will be lucky to have them.

