

# The Day The Mini Coopers Come To LeRoy August 8th

by Lynne Belluscio

The note was on my chair. “A man wants to know if the Mini Cooper Cross Country Road Rally can stop at the Jell-O Gallery. He says there will be 350 Mini Coopers and wants to know if there is enough parking.” Before I gave it much thought I called Roger back and said, “We’ll find the parking. We certainly want to welcome you to the Jell-O Gallery.”

What I learned was that the Mini Coopers will be arriving on the morning of Friday, August 8. They will only be in LeRoy about an hour. They are leaving Buffalo about 9 am and will be arriving in LeRoy about 10 am and they will check in and then leave for the Finger Lakes, finally arriving in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for the night.

The next day, they will leave Bethlehem for their final stop in Boston. These cross-country Mini Cooper Rallies have been going on for several years. This year the group will leave San Francisco on July 26 and will stop in Reno, Nevada the next night. Then it’s on to Wendover, Utah, Grand Junction, Colorado, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Lubbock, Texas and Austin.

On August 2 the Mini Coopers will arrive in Dallas, the next

night in Memphis, on to St. Louis and Chicago. On August 6 they visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland and then drive to Buffalo.

Roger told me that they like to visit interesting sites along the way, and what could be more interesting in Western New York than the Jell-O Museum? Early the next morning I called Chris Heyward, Chief of Police and told him my story. Chris told me “No problem. We can do that!” He will make sure that 350 Mini Coopers will be able to get into LeRoy and back out again.

A day later, I told the folks at the Rotary meeting about August the 8th and Kim Cox, Superintendent of LeRoy Central School told me that they could help out with parking behind the Auditorium off Trigon Park. We’ll be putting up some welcome tents on Trigon Park with some Jell-O exhibits because it will be impossible for 500 to 750 people to get in and out of the museum in an hour.

I have never been in a Mini Cooper, so while I was having my brakes worked on at Bob Adams’ Automotive I asked him if he still had the little silver Mini Cooper for sale. Sure enough, it’s still for sale, and for a nano second I thought it might be fun to have it for a second car, but I have to admit, it’s like sitting on the road, and I really like my Tundra truck.

Mini Coopers were the English competition of the German Volkswagen. They were designed by Sir Alec Issengous and manufactured by the British Motor Company. The radical design with a front wheel drive made them roomy on the inside and in 1999, they were voted the second most influential car of



the twentieth century – second to the Model T Ford.

They were introduced in 1959, after the 1956 gas shortage of the Suez Canal Crisis. The Mini Cooper won the Monte Carlo Rally four times between 1964 and 1967. I read that one of the design features was the sliding glass windows in the hollow doors, that were sized to accommodate one bottle of Gordon’s Gin. Eventually, John Cooper, a friend of the designer and owner of the Cooper Car Company, collaborated to create the Mini Cooper. For a while they did not meet the safety regulations in the United States, but that has changed. Today, the Mini Cooper is part of the BMW Company.

Of course, since I learned of the Mini Cooper Rally,

the New York State Department of Transportation has announced that they will be resurfacing Route 5 so I am not sure what will happen now. And it’s going to rain for ten days, and the parking behind the school off Trigon Park may have to be changed because it will be too muddy. So Chief Haywood has put together “Plan B” and “Plan C” just in case. But if you’re not doing anything on Friday morning, you just might want to come down to Main Street and see the Mini Coopers. It should be a sight you’ll never see again!

