



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS

Miata

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 4

AUGUST 1996

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



August 10
Twilight Fun Run



August 13
Wheels 'n Meals
Raintree Bar & Grill



August 18
Wheels 'n Meals
Claim Jumper



August 25
Wheels 'n Meals
101 Cafe



August 29
Wheels 'n Meals
Boll Weevil



December ??
Christmas Lights & Party

Key to Icons



Wheels n' Meals (Social)



Fun Run



Internet



Tech



Autocross

From the Editor

Fluids

find the title rather ironic. As I'm writing this article, I'm out at sea watching the water go by, hoping I can maintain a modicum of dignity (and dinner), as I think about some of the fluids I'll change, and have changed, on my car when I get home. Every now-and-then, my work with the U.S. Government takes me out on research cruises in the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, sea duty isn't really my forte. It can be relaxing and quite pleasant, but I sometimes feel trapped and have the urge to "go somewhere".



Funny I should think about maintenance rather than the fun I'll have when I get back on the local roads, but then I feel normal, periodic maintenance is somewhat enjoyable (yeah, I know). Engine oil is very important to the longevity of any car. I tend to push my engine hard, and I make sure I change the oil every 3000 miles using synthetic. Some feel that regular grade motor oil every 3000 miles will do just as well, and cost half as much. In many cases that is probably true, but then I like the extra security I get from a synthetic, and I use 10W-30 Mobil 1 oil. Many people on Compuserve's Miataville use Mobil 1 synthetic as well, and it does well at keeping at bay the valve clatter at startup. Mazda and MCA a while back suggested using 5W-30 oil to minimize valve clatter, while others (Voodoo Bob) suggested going to 10W-40 to keep the oil from bleeding down from the Hydraulic Lash Adjusters (HLA). It would now seem that the latter is true. So, if you feel you have some startup clatter, try 10W-40 next time and see if that gets rid of the problem. It may also be a little better for the engine in the San Diego climate during the summer months.

In the first issue, I said I started doing my own car maintenance. Changing the engine oil is one of them. You will find the article on changing your own oil in this newsletter. It is a relatively straightforward task, but can be daunting the first time. I've also changed my differential and transmission oils to Red Line synthetics. I used MTL for the transmission, and the shifting afterwards was much smoother. It's not quite as balky and notchy as before. It now seems that Red Line may be recommending 75W90 NS gear oil for the transmission instead of MTL (but this is still undetermined). The 75W90 NS is a GL5 oil, whereas MTL and MT-90 are a GL4. A GL5 oil can be corrosive on brass fittings, but Red Line's literature states that 75W-90 NS can be used in gear boxes. Mazda recommends a 75W-90 GL4 for the gearbox. The new recommendation from Red Line may be due to the fact that MTL is a 75W-80 GL4, and not a 75W-90 GL4 spec oil (like MT-90) as Mazda recommends. With today's litigious society, I can understand Red Line's recommendation. And it may very well be that 75W90 NS is a better oil

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than MTL in terms of shifter feel. If someone is near a transmission oil change interval and is willing to try 75W90 NS, then please pass along the information to the club about before and after feel and I'll include that information in the next newsletter.

Now that summer is here, you may notice your temperature gauge rising as you race your engine around the local hills. My temperature gauge would climb up to 3/4 of the way on the temperature gauge at times when running the engine hard on a hot day. At first I thought that was perfectly normal till I started talking with others on the same run with me and they reported no change on their temperature gauge. I guessed that at the 30,000 mile checkup, the guy who did the radiator change used tap water and too much anti-freeze when refilling. After getting some info from Miata folks on Compuserve and the net, I learned that the mixture ratio should be no more than 50/50 antifreeze/water. The radiator holds 6 liters, and so I drained my radiator and put together a mixture of 3 liters of distilled water, 2.7 liters of anti-freeze, and about 6 ounces of Red Line Water Wetter (I topped off the radiator with distilled water). Water Wetter increases the surface tension of the fluids, thereby allowing more liquid to come in contact with the surrounding metal surface and giving a better heat transfer. So far, my temperature needle has remained fairly constant, and only moved when I did our club's first run to Palm Desert, and then it only moved a tad past half way. Still, I forgot one thing in this whole process. I should have changed the thermostat while I was at it. If it had been the thermostat that was faulty, then the radiator fluid change would have been pointless. Luckily, that wasn't the problem. A thermostat only costs about \$10-\$15, so I should have changed that when I had the radiator drained as a precautionary measure,

because you need to drain the fluid when you replace the thermostat. Also, there is a trick to use a cooler 160 degree thermostat instead of the stock 180 degree thermostat. NAPA sells one that is thermostat part number 42. With the fluid at 160 degrees instead of 180 degrees, it makes the computer think the engine is still in the warm-up phase, so it runs the engine a little richer, giving you a few extra horsepower. Since I've already put about \$10 worth of Water Wetter and anti-freeze into the radiator, I'll wait until my next change interval to put in the cooler thermostat.

Much of the information that I have given in my articles came from Rod Grainger's book, *Rod's Mazda Miata Enthusiast's Shop Manual*. This book is a must for any do-it-yourselfer, and it can be purchased from Classic Motorbooks (800-826-6600) for \$25. It pretty much describes how to take apart the Miata and put it back together, with plenty of pictures to help guide you step-by-step. See you on the twisties...

— ROBERT "JTBOB" HOLLAND

Oil Change



An oil change is fairly simple. You first need to get the car up off the ground. I created some simple ramps made of three 2"x10" wood planks (of diminishing lengths) nailed together. With the car on the ramps, I remove the filler cap and place an empty oil pan under the drain plug (located at the base of the engine pan underneath the car) and remove the plug with a 19mm socket. It's best to have the engine warm so that most of the contaminants that accumulate will go with the draining oil. Have some rags handy to catch any spills as your hand pulls away from the oil shooting out the hole (long rubber gloves work well). While the oil is draining, I then remove the oil filter,

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NOTICES

THE SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB is an official chapter of the Miata Club of America. We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the enjoyment of—and enthusiasm for—the Mazda Miata.

SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS is the monthly newsletter of the San Diego Miata Club. Use of articles or stories by other MCA chapters is hereby granted, provided proper credit is given.

Submissions to the newsletter are welcomed and encouraged. Did you just add a new accessory to your Miata? How about writing a review and submitting it to the newsletter? Where possible, please send your electronic submissions to the newsletter editor, Robert Holland (robert@caliban.ucsd.edu). Submissions can also be faxed to the club's dedicated phone line or mailed to the club's post office box. Submission deadline is the 15th of each month.

Internet: The San Diego Miata Club has established a dedicated World Wide Web Home Page at <http://mmdshare.ucsd.edu/sdmc.html>. The club has also established a members-only electronic mail list for those members with E-mail capability. If you included your E-mail address on your membership application then you should already be subscribed to the electronic mail list. If you recently acquired your E-mail account, please contact Cindy Paloma (paloma@cs.ucsd.edu) and request to be added to the electronic mail list.

Dedicated 24-hour voice/fax phone line:
(619) 670-7948

San Diego Miata Club

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MEETING PLACES

San Diego Twilight Run

Date: Saturday, August 10

Time: Run starts at 4:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m. for pizza!

Place: Pizza Hut, 3637 Avocado Blvd., La Mesa

Run Leaders: MARK AND CATHY BOOTH

Last year's San Diego Twilight Run was very popular. We had 42 Miatas in attendance (plus one RX-7). With the combined strength of both the San Diego Miata Club and SOCALM, perhaps we can top that record number!

This one is a bit different. A leisurely ride along some of San Diego's east county roads during the late afternoon/early evening hours. That special "twilight" period when the hot summer day slowly gives way to a comfortable summer night.

Arrive at 2:30 p.m. for pizza. The run will start at 4:00 p.m. Run will finish back near the starting point at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Directions: I-805 south to Hwy. 94 east. Continue on Hwy. 94 into La Mesa.

(Watch those signs carefully, Hwy. 94 east merges off to the right near the Spring Street exit.) Stay on Hwy. 94 east and exit at Avocado Blvd.

Turn left at the stop sign. Proceed over the highway and make a right turn into the Rancho San Diego Village Shopping Center. The Pizza Hut is straight ahead.

Note: Run will be canceled if it rains. If you have any questions, please call Mark at (619) 670-3789.

Wheels 'n Meals at Raintree Bar & Grill

Date: Tuesday, August 13

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Raintree Bar & Grill, 755 Raintree Dr. (At Poinsettia just west of I-5), Carlsbad, (931-1122)

Happy Hour prices until 6:30 p.m.

Wheels 'n Meals at Claim Jumper

Date: Sunday, August 18

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Claim Jumper, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr.

(In Grossmont Shopping Center), La Mesa (469-3927)

Meet in the lounge for fantastic hors d'oeuvres and delicious desserts (don't miss the Mother Lode Cake!).

Wheels 'n Meals at 101 Cafe

Date: Sunday, August 25

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: 101 Cafe, 631 S. Coast Highway (At Wisconsin), Oceanside (722-5220)

The 101 Cafe is the oldest restaurant in Oceanside. — Fabulous 50's fare.

Wheels 'n Meals at Boll Weevil

Date: Thursday, August 29

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Boll Weevil, 9330 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. (At Ruffin Rd.), San Diego (571-6225)

Great burgers and lots of space to park Miatas. — Heaven!

MIATAS AT MONTEREY '96

There will once again be a Miata presence at the 23rd annual Monterey Historic Automobile Races to be held August 16-18, 1996 at Laguna Seca Raceway. After all, the Miata community can hardly afford to be seen as slinking away from this event in a year when BMW is not only being honored as the featured marque but has also introduced its all-new Z3 roadster.

Official sponsorship for this event has been somewhat diminished for the last few years, but Barbara Beach and Tom Matano of Mazda have been pushing hard to ensure that Miata enthusiasts will be as well-represented as ever for 1996. As a result, there will be the usual tent, parking corral, and lunch as in years past.

The fare for this year's event, which will include a catered lunch of barbecued chicken, beef, and sausage, as well as soft drinks and the usual item of memorabilia, will be \$20 per person.

If you have questions or comments regarding this year's Miatas at Monterey, please call Barbara Beach at (619) 631-1202. Those of you who plan to attend can send your checks to:

MEDIA SOURCE
1315 Buena Vista Dr.
Vista, CA 92083



UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

August 16-18, 1996
Monterey Historic Races
Monterey, CA

September 13-15, 1996
Gold Rush '96
Sacramento, CA
Hosted by: SAMOA

October 3-6, 1996
Miata Games
Atlanta, GA
Hosted by: Peachtree Chapter

November 9, 1996
Central Coast Winery Run
Hosted by: SOCALM

Viewing the automobiles in the paddock before and after they race provides a rare chance to talk to the owners and drivers. And some great photo opportunities!



which is on the right side of the engine. It is under the intake manifold, horizontally screwed into the side of the engine, about in the center of the block. Some people like to turn the front wheels full lock left, and reach from underneath to get to the filter. My hands and arms are small enough that I can reach down from the top, put my arm between the intake manifold and hoses, and remove the filter from above. Stuff some old rags under and around the filter to catch oil that will certainly leak out of the filter when removed. I use about 3 rags: one directly under the filter, and the other two covering the area where the filter will be pulled towards and it comes off the block. If your engine is too hot to get your hand onto the filter without burning some flesh, then you might try some long sleeve rubber gloves for protection. With a firm grip on the filter, spin it counter-clockwise to remove it. Mazda sells a filter cap to

remove Miata filters, and I have one, but I've always been successful using my hand to remove the filter. OK, so the filter is out, and the rags have hopefully caught most of the oil that remained in the filter. Pull the filter up and out with the O-ring side facing upwards to keep any more oil in the filter from draining out. With the new filter in hand, smear a little oil on the rubber O-ring so that it will seat properly against the engine block without binding as it is being tightened. Screw the new filter in clockwise and when the filter comes in contact with the block (resistance is felt), turn about 1/4 to 1/2 turns more on the filter to tighten. Hand tightening is enough to secure the filter to the engine. Too much and you'll regret it when you try to remove it next time, as the heating and cooling of the engine causes the filter O-ring to seal itself quite nicely against the engine block.

Put the drain plug back in and

tighten to 30 lb.-ft., for which I use a good Sears 3/8"-drive torque wrench and a small extension. With the 1.6l engines, you need to add 3.6 quarts of oil, while on the 1.8l engine, you need to add 3.8 quarts of oil. Have a rag handy around the fill hole to catch any spillage. Put the filler cap back on, and start up the engine. Let it run for a couple of minutes to make sure all the oil is fully circulated. Shut off the engine and check the dip stick. Add oil as needed. All-in-all, about 30 minutes of work that I can check and double-check to make sure everything is right (which is usually 2 checks more than a econo lube place does). A local Kragen takes my used oil, which is a state requirement for businesses selling motor oil.

Next time I'll describe how to change the transmission and differential oils.

See you on the twisties.
— ROBERT "JTBOB" HOLLAND

SIX EASY STEPS TO COORDINATING A FUN RUN

1. Select your favorite roads and/or destination.
2. Coordinate a date with the Events Coordinator, Ruth Stark.
3. Do a "pre-run" with the following things in mind:
 - Select a convenient meeting place with ample parking, easy access in and out and restrooms.
 - If needed; depending on the time of the run, look for restaurants that can accommodate a large group. (It's a good idea to talk to the manager to let them know what you have in mind and when...maybe they can work out a special deal for the group.)
 - Look for safe places to "queue up" in case the group gets split up by lights or traffic.
 - Have I mentioned the importance of restrooms?

4. On or before the 15th of the month prior to your run, send a brief written description for the club newsletter that includes at least the following details:
 - General location of where you're taking us
 - Start time and place
 - End location and approximate length of time the run will take
 - Type of restaurant and approximate amount of money we should plan on bringing with us or whether to pack a lunch
 - Whether the run will be canceled in case of rain (in Southern California???)
5. Prepare and make copies of written directions to hand out to those in attendance.
6. Closer to the date, make contact with the restaurant, or others that may need to prepare for our arrival.

A few other suggestions:

- It's helpful if you take along someone to help you make notes on your "pre-run" so you can write up directions, mileage odometer readings or road signs to follow.
- For Miata sakes — Avoid dirt roads!
- Consider combining the run with an activity like a wine tour, museum etc.
- Those that have already sponsored a run are good resources for tips and, of course, Ruth Stark can assist you if you need any help.

— CATHY BOOTH



SDMC AT MALIBU GRAND PRIX

Wednesday evening, June 19th, a dozen Miatas and fifteen would-be Fangios converged on Malibu Grand Prix, located on Miramar Road. Present and eager to try their luck on the course were: TOM and STEPHANIE GOULD, ROBERT (JT) HOLLAND, KEN EVORY, VOODOO BOB KRUEGER, prez MARK BOOTH, RAINER MUELLER and his friend DENNIS ANDREWS, ANTHONY WILDE, WOODY WOODHOUSE, RICHARD SCHERSCHEL, new members RICH TAYLOR, TAK YAMAMOTO, MIKE MARTIN, and Mike's guest SARA WIKMAN.



Malibu Grand Prix consists of a very tight and twisty

road course where one drives a scaled down open-wheel racing car against the clock. The Wednesday date was chosen as a normally slack period when we would likely have the track to ourselves. This was the case and there were very few non-SDMC drivers the entire time we were there. We eyed the layout warily as Mark collected cash money from all to buy a block of tickets at a discount, most drivers opting for ten laps which turned out to be reasonable in cost and about as much as we would be able to handle. The cars have a centrifugal clutch and only two pedals—you accelerate with the right foot and brake with the left. Helmets are provided and the drill is simple: you strap into a four point harness, hand the man a lap ticket, pull up to the starting line and wait for the green light. Every lap is a standing start and you drive as fast as you can around the course to the finish line, where your time flashes up on the scoreboard for everyone to see. You then either repeat the process or get out of the car and let

someone else have a go.

Veteran autocrosser Rainer was the first to go out, turning in a time of around one minute flat which gave us all something to

shoot for. The word also came back from the early hot-lappers that there was a puddle in the apex of a nasty right hander that was making things a bit tricky when the racing slicks hit the water. A rogue sprinkler was causing this and it was a major problem for those who have upgraded the tires on their Miatas. Drivers who spun in the water know who they are and shall remain nameless. For those of us with Miatas still on the OEM Bridgestones, it was a very familiar sensation—hit water, car goes sideways, full opposite lock, car comes back, check heart rate and continue. The Malibu guys did go out and sweep off the water, placing a tire barrier in the wet area that forced a change in line but at least kept us out of the water. We were all soon happily blasting around the course and swapping tips on which cars were the fastest and how best to attack certain corners. The driving styles were varied, with most of us having a grand time sliding around and bouncing off the curbs. It is a great feeling to know that you can take up the whole road, go as fast as you want, no one is coming the other way, and the worst that can happen is that you spin the car and don't hit anything.

As the evening wore on, everyone's lap times came down and some of us learned the hard way that the "foot hard down, braver than Dick Tracy, don't brake til you



see God" style was not the quickest way round the course. Carrying too much speed into the first of a series of turns would put you all wrong for the remainder with the resultant loss of momentum. The fastest drivers seemed to catch each apex, stay off the curbs, and avoid scrubbing off too much speed by sliding. Several drivers were now regularly under a minute and most of us were ready to call it a night when the tickets ran out. As we headed back to our Miatas, everyone agreed that this should become a regular event on the SDMC calendar.

We tried to keep track of everyone's lap times and the record shows that there was only a five and a half second difference between the fastest and slowest drivers' best lap. Rainer's autocross training showed as he turned the most consistent times, little more than two seconds separating his slowest from fastest time. Youth and skill was the hot ticket though as JT blew everyone away with a 56.74 second lap for fast time of the day. Second quick went to Dennis with a 57.36 and Woody grabbed third place on the podium with a 57.49, fastest of the geriatric over fifty crowd.

Driving the little cars is hard work and many of us were a little sore the next day but we're looking forward to the next session and hope to see more SDMC members there.

— WOODY WOODHOUSE





Flyin' Solo

3 Does that say 3 up there? 3? *Hmmm...* but this is *Solo I* month! Oh well, I guess I should have written this article first. OK, we've talked about the basics of what autocrossing is and how you can get involved, as well as a brief rundown of the various Miata-related classes within Solo II. Is that all there is?

Well, no, not exactly.

Although Solo II is by far the most popular racing class for Miata owners, thanks to its relatively low dollars spent/fun ratio, you can go completely nuts with this Miata racing thing if you're so inclined. At the far end of the spectrum, for example, are racers like the Jordan brothers of Protomotive, who run a pair of Miatas in IMSA's Endurance Championship Series. But between this extreme and Solo II are several options that are open to us mere mortals. Keep in mind, however, that as you move through this spectrum, it's not just the cost of being competitive that increases. The gap between what constitutes a competitive car and one that can be reasonably driven on the street gets wider as well.

Just up the competitive ladder from Solo II is Pro Solo, which is very much like Solo II except that it's run on shorter courses which are mirrored. That is, there are two courses that are mirror images of one another and each competitor must run them both. The best runs on each course for a given competitor are added together and the lowest cumulative time wins. During the event, the two courses are active simultaneously and each course would have

only a single competitor running on it at any given time. One of the unique features of Pro Solo competition is that it uses a "Christmas tree" of lights at the starting line much like what you would see at an NHRA drag race. The safety requirements and race classifications for Pro Solo are very similar to those of Solo II, except that Pro Solo classes are typically numeric rather than alphabetical. For example, while a stock Miata would race in C Stock in Solo II, it would race in S3 in Pro Solo. I've never so much as seen a Pro Solo race myself, but a friend of mine tells me that if you think Solo II is competitive, you ain't seen nothin' 'til you see Pro Solo!

Solo I, the next rung on our ladder of increasing challenge, is essentially a high-speed time trial...road racing without the fender banging. Rather than running head-to-head against other cars which are on the track at the same time, you once again are trying to beat the clock. Beyond that, however, Solo I begins to look a lot like the racing you see on TV. Solo I events can be run on race tracks or surface roads as well as on large, closed areas of pavement. There may be several cars on the track at any given time, but no passing is allowed

and the cars are running against the timer rather than each other. One example of a Solo I-type event that you may be familiar with is the Pike's Peak Hillclimb. Since Solo I courses are more open and longer than those of lesser events, speeds are predictably higher, often getting into three digits, and as you might expect, the safety requirements are commensurately more extensive and strict.

All cars running in Solo I must have a properly constructed, mounted, braced and approved roll bar that attaches to the car at a minimum of four points and includes a diagonal brace. This roll bar must clear the driver's helmet by at least two inches. It is this requirement that tends to make Miata hardtops somewhat scarce in Solo I, although they are allowed provided they are bolted to the car. Rollbars that clear the driver's helmet by two inches tend to interfere with the underside of a hardtop, and so open Miatas are far more common in this series. In addition to the roll bar, each car is required to be equipped with a 5 or 6 point driver restraint harness and a fire extinguisher. The driver is required to wear an approved helmet and fire-resistant (Nomex) driving suit, underwear, gloves, socks, and shoes. If the driver has facial hair, he must also wear a fire-resistant balaclava (head sock). All drivers participating in Solo I events are required to possess a valid competition driving license.

This is high-speed and, therefore, potentially dangerous racing, and the rules that deal with the protection of the participants reflect that. Again, my personal experience with Solo I is nil, but another friend who runs his Miata in this series tells me that if you shop carefully and don't go overboard, you can probably get set up for this series, not including the competition license, for under \$1000. But again, "set up" does not necessarily mean "competitive."

And so this brings us to the ulti-



mate challenge, the pinnacle for "amateurs"...road racing. Take Solo I and add the intimate presence of your competitors, side-by-side with you on the track, and you have road racing. Now you're playing Mario Andretti with your Miata and the stakes are getting really high. The obvious threat of body panel damage lurks behind every corner. Although it was road racing that formed the underpinnings of the early SCCA, and although the original concept of amateur racing was to "run what you bring" and drive it both to and from, as well as on, the racetrack, it would be naive to think that's still the case today. Road racing Miatas are specifically prepared to race and are not the kind of car whose lack of civility you'd be likely to appreciate on the street. Now we're to the point where it's you against the Jordans. Equipment like Penske re-valvable shock absorbers that can cost as much as \$2000 apiece begins to enter the equation if you're serious about winning. If you still haven't lost interest and would like to see what a road racing Miata looks like, take a gander at page 77 of the latest issue (Spring 1996) of Miata Magazine. See all those decals? You're going to need some of them too unless you're a descendent of

Howard Hughes. You don't road race competitively without sponsors or an inheritance these days. But hey, it's obviously doable. The guy who owns the car in that picture is doing it. Just don't expect to drive the car home from the track and then to work like the gentleman racers who formed the SCCA did 60 years ago. Even though it might be legal — theoretically, if not strictly, speaking — it's a long way from practical. I strongly recommend that all you aspiring road racers out there read the Miata Magazine article and a few others before tearing irreversibly into your baby.

If you're interested in competing in any of the various racing series that have been discussed in this and the two previous Flyin' Solo articles, contact your Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) regional autocross representative for more details. In the San Diego region, there is an autocross hotline at 619-441-1333. The hotline number for the greater Los Angeles area region (Cal Club) is 818-988-7223. For information on signing up for Solo II events at the Murph, call Richard Scherschel at 619-286-2412 or Steve Hart at 619-579-9093.

Good luck and remember —
Don't brake until you see God!

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the following individuals for all the great information they provided to help make these articles possible:

STEVE HART,
San Diego Miata Club

ROBERT "JTBOB" HOLLAND,
San Diego Miata Club

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San Diego Miata Club

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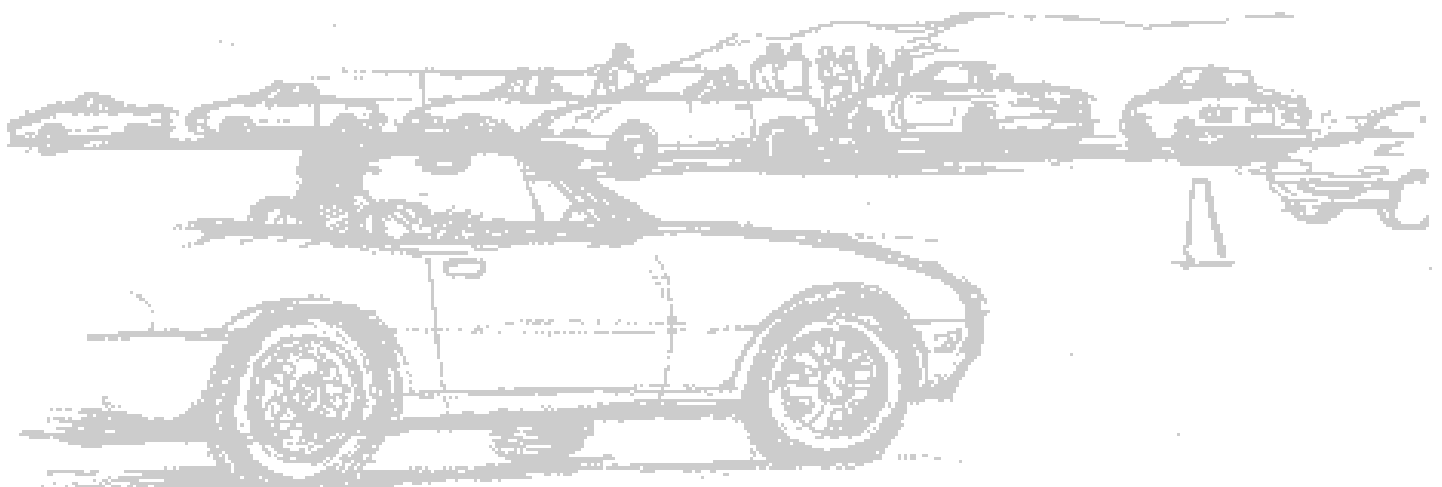
— VOODOO BOB KRUEGER

Club competitors, July 1996:

STEVE HART, CSP — 2nd place (trophy)
RAINER MUELLER, CS — 7th place
DEE ROBIDER, CSP — 7th place

A U T O C R O S S A T T H E M U R P H

	Sunday, August 11	Racing
	Saturday, August 31	Practice
	Sunday, October 6	Racing
	Saturday, October 19	Practice
	Sunday, October 20	Racing
	Saturday, November 2	Practice
	Sunday, November 10	Racing
	Sunday, December 8	Racing



New Logo

As I'm sure you noticed, our fantastic new logo adorns the front page of this newsletter. This design was the overwhelming favorite of the membership at the June 27 Wheels 'n Meals. Tom and Stephanie Gould are finishing up the final touches on the full color version(s) and we hope to have membership cards and window decals out to everyone in the next couple of months. My thanks, again, to Tom and Stephanie for all of their hard work and support!

Another Discount Dealer

Please note that Service Specialists has been added to the Local Business Discounts column. They specialize in tires, wheels and suspension parts. They offer a discount of "dealer price", that is, the same price a local dealer would pay. Member Voodoo Bob Krueger recently purchased some new shoes (Dunlop D40 M2) for the VoodooWagen and he was very pleased with both service and price.

Anyone Hungry?

We have four — count 'em — FOUR Wheels 'n Meals events in August. Even better, two of these events are being held in North County! Still better — two of them are being held on the weekends (Sunday). Check the listings for the Wheels 'n Meals event (now) playing near you! Please give me your feedback on these events. Many members are suggesting at least one Wheels 'n Meals per week. What do you think?



Christmas in August

Well, no. But it is time to start thinking about plans for our first annual Christmas Party. We need a place. Certainly, one of our members has a "party house" that we can trash...err...where we can quietly gather and share some Holiday cheer? If that's you, please let me know. Thanks!

Etc.

Nine new members since last month! Wow! It certainly seems obvious that San Diego was in need of a Miata club to call its own. Once again, my heartfelt thanks to everyone for your support and enthusiasm!

Until next month — keep that top down!

— MARK

New Members!

Kenneth & Debbie Campbell

El Cajon
1993 White A

Gordon T. Frost, Jr.

San Diego
1995 Montego Blue

James W. Hind

La Jolla
1991 Red B

Judy Holmes

La Jolla
1992 Black & Tan SE

Shawn Houghtaling

Escondido
1992 Yellow A

Jeri Jones & Sean O'Connor

San Diego
1990 White B

Natalia M. Rissolo

San Diego
1991 Red

Mandy Simpson

Oceanside
1991 BRG

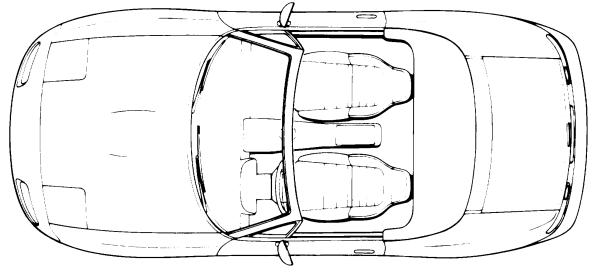
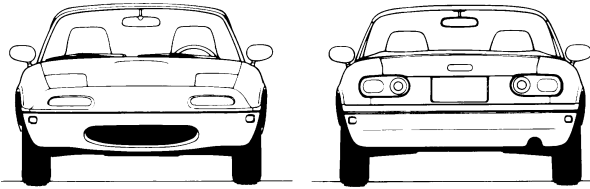
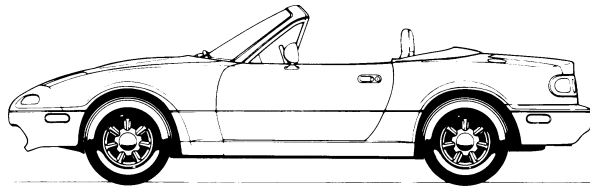
Chuck & Phillippa Warfield

Escondido
1992 Black & Tan SE

There are now 72 memberships consisting of 108 members.

24 Red
14 White
8 Montego Blue
7 Mariner Blue
5 Black
4 BRG
3 Laguna Blue
3 Silver
2 Yellow
1 Starlight Blue
0 Merlot
1 Unreported





New Miata Package

In 1997, the Miata will have a new package, called the **Touring Package**.

Below please find a short summary of our lineup.

Base Car (AM/FM Cassette, Manual Windows, Steel Wheels, Etc.

Power Steering Package, Power Steering, Wheel Trim Rings

Touring Package, Power Steering, Power Windows, Power Mirrors, Leather Wrapped Steering Wheel, Alloy Wheels

Popular Equipment Package, Touring Package *plus*: Torsen Limited Slip Differential, Cruise Control, Power Antenna, Headrest Speakers

Leather Package, Popular Equipment & Touring Package Items *plus*: Tan Interior, Tan Leather Seating Surfaces, Tan Vinyl Top

"R" Package, Sport Suspension, Bilstein Dampers (Shocks), Alloy Wheels, Body Color Rear Spoiler, Front Airdam, Rear Skirt, Torsen Rear Differential.

Packages must be ordered separately.

Options

Air Conditioning

Mazda Premium Sound System (MPSS)

- (Requires Popular Equipment Package or Leather Package)

4 Speed Automatic Transmission

- (Requires any option package, N/A with "R" Package)

Removable Hardtop with rear window defroster. Hardtop availability as a factory option:

- Manual Trans Models: Requires PEP or Leather, N/A with MPSS or ABS
- Automatic Transmission: Requires Leather Package, MPSS & ABS
- ABS (Requires Popular Equipment Package or Leather Package)

Comments: We are currently selling a high percentage of "Base" or "Power Steering Package" models, mostly because the price difference between the Base and the PEP is too large. Although many enthusiasts prefer to order a Base and put on aftermarket wheels, in general this is not the case. This means most people have to go home without some equipment they would have liked, and therefore, they give the Miata a lower value rating.

Why the mirrors and windows and just not a return to the old "A?"

Cheap LSD is not available, and the Torsen costs about \$400 MSRP, which makes it tough to include when most Miata buyers don't demand it. The average Miata buyer is 45, and clinic results show they like power windows (which makes putting the top up and down easier). Customers also complained about the flop eared mirrors being somewhat of a pain, where power mirror customers had no problems. Plus, Power Mirrors and windows are inexpensive, are used frequently by customers and don't compromise the character of the car (weight).

The PEP remains so that customers can get ABS/Hardtop/LSD with a cloth car. Dealers in markets that get snow demand this car.

This is probably the first time the hardtop stipulations have been listed, and they may seem a little weird. All cars are wired for the rear window defroster and the hardware that needs to be exchanged to "swap in" a hardtop are "1 for 1"; neither car is compromised as long as an even exchange is made.

The Hardtop variable virtually doubles the order combination list: an unacceptable situation for a car that sells for 5 months per year

and has a 3 month order pipeline! What we found is that dealers generally swap tops between cars with the proper equipment, so the order combinations became skewed towards the hardtop models with no equipment. (A Miata in any trim level with no equipment can always be sold, one with ABS or MPSS is not quite as easy.) Dealers simply have to stock one PEP and one Leather with Hardtop (one of each interior color) and swap out the top to what ever car needs it. (Of course, the dealer would then have to attach an addendum window label to each car. This is the tricky part, and is exactly why we do not make this a "policy." However, if I had a nickel for every time I saw this happen...)

Automatics with hardtops are so rarely ordered, we include all available equipment. (You could also do the process above, as the hardtops and hardware are exactly the same for sticks/autos.)

Of course, you can always buy a hardtop as an accessory.

"R" package may have a short life, as sales have dwindled this year.
— ERIC JOHNSTON, Manager, Product Marketing, Millenia-Miata, Mazda Motor of America, 73041.1402@compuserve.com posted to Miataville

