



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 1997

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



October 10-12
Run to Laughlin



October 11—Saturday
**Meguiar's
Detailing Clinic**



October 23—Thursday
Wheels 'n Meals
Boll Weevil



October 26—Sunday
Pumpkin Patch Run



November 2—Sunday
Show Off Your Miata



November 8—Saturday
**Nethercutt Antique
Car Collection Run**



November 9—Sunday
Miata Regatta



November 15—Saturday
Shambala Safari Run



November 22 - 23
**Classic Speed
Festival, Coronado**



December 13—Saturday
Holiday Party

Membership Renewal

If the month/year found on your mailing label matches the month/year of this newsletter, this is the last issue of the newsletter you will receive unless you renew your membership. Don't miss a single issue...renew today!

From the Editor

Parts Is Parts

As time goes by, and parts need to be replaced, I try to find alternatives that are cheaper and better. So the time came to replace the grommets under the washer nozzles on the hood. Over time, they become brittle and begin to crack. An errant swipe of the wash towel can rip away a part of the grommet, leaving no alternative but to replace it.

But what really irks me is that you can't buy that grommet from Mazda, unless you buy the whole washer nozzle assembly. Knowing Mazda's price structure, this is unacceptable. While up at Moss Motors on our pilgrimage to the Monterey Historics this year, member Anthony Wilde came across a washer nozzle for an MGB that looked like it would fit the Miata, and looked much better. It has a round, chromed body with a small nozzle post on each side of the nozzle body. They looked pretty cool, and better yet, they cost about \$3.50 a piece. So I got a set and went to install them. The Miata washer nozzles are like many of Mazda's parts; they snap in easily, but are a real pain-in-the-posterior to remove. You need to pull off the washer tube on the back-side of the hood to expose the nozzle bottom. It looks like there are three tabs underneath, but there are only two. The third (side) tab is really a guide for the nozzle. Using a jewelers screwdriver, I pressed in the top tab and pushed the top of the nozzle out a millimeter. Then I pressed the bottom tab and pushed the nozzle all the way out.

Sounds simple, but it took me 15 minutes and a heap of swearing at Mazda to figure that out. The new nozzles fit perfectly, but I had a little difficulty in securing the bottom nut because of the small hole through which you have to work. I got the nut and washer on the bottom, and used a flat-blade screwdriver to work the nut snug. Then from the top side, I used a crescent wrench to twist the nozzle into the proper position. If it tightened too soon, or too late, I backed it off, reworked the bottom nut and tried again until the nozzle was perfectly tight and pointing properly towards the windshield. Because the bottom nozzle post doesn't stick down as far as the stock nozzle, I had to trim the flap around the washer tube so I could push it farther up the hole onto the nozzle post.

The small nozzles on the side of the nozzle body can be adjusted with a flat-blade screwdriver. After a few attempts at watering most everything except the windshield, I finally got the adjustment just right. These nozzles definitely get two thumbs up. They are part number 361-250 (you'll need two) from Moss Motors, (800) 642-8295. If you are curious about what they look like, look me up at an event (license plate N2 TULL).

Air Horns

Many of us have air horns that replaced the anemic electric horn that came with the Miata. I swear that stock horn sounds almost apologetic. Early on, there were only a couple of replacements worth getting. The best was the Automation Air Horns that cost about \$45 a set. I don't believe those horns are available anymore,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



but you can now get a set of David DeNuzzo's Crazy Red Italian (CRI) Air Horns, (916) 454-9816, for \$48. A very good-sounding unit with clear instructions and all the hardware necessary.

My Automation Air Horns finally died, and I was thinking that I was going to have to pay another \$50 for a decent set of horns. But I was told of an alternative that uses the same compressor and horns as CRI horns, and they cost only \$20 from Auto Parts Club, (619) 442-5200 and (619) 294-7620. They don't come with any instructions or hanging brackets, but if you already have a set that is failing, this is a great replacement. If you want the horns but not the hassle of fabricating your own hardware, then the CRI Air Horns are the way to go, and Dave DeNuzzo's customer service is top notch.

Shocks

After about 50,000 to 60,000 miles, the stock shocks need to be replaced. They may "feel" like they are still working properly, but once you install a new set of shocks, you will be surprised how much more crisply the car handles. Shocks degrade at such a slow rate that the change is imperceptible. A very good shock to consider for a decent price is the Tokiko HP. It fits the Miata perfectly and has better valving than the stock shocks. Stranos, (800) 729-1831, sells the Tokiko HP for \$62 a shock, which I believe is roughly the same price as the stock shock. Better product for the same money usually gets my nod.

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



PHOTO: CATHY BOOTH

Fifty-eight Miatas! — A record number of Miatas showed up in the Boll Weevil's parking lot to lend support to the MDA.

Business Directory

At September's Wheels n' Meals, members voted to include a directory of members' businesses in the back of the new membership roster. There is no charge for a listing in the Business Directory. All members who wish to have their businesses listed in the new roster (which will hopefully be available at the October Wheels n' Meals) please E-mail Stef Gould by October 15th at tomgould@adnc.com or phone her at (619) 297-4272.

Please use the following format when E-mailing your listing:

- Type of business, or service
- The name of your business
- Your name, followed by your title
- Address
- Phone number
- Web URL or E-mail address

*Membership rosters will not be mailed, they must be picked up at an event.

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NOTICES

THE SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB is an official chapter of the Miata Club of America. We are a nonprofit 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.

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

San Diego Miata Club

P.O. Box 2286
Spring Valley, CA 91979-2286



MEETING PLACES

Run to Laughlin

Date: Friday, October 10
(Returning on the 12th)

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: North County Fair mall under the large sign parallel to I-15

Run Leader: Art Hamilton
(619) 262-1565

E-mail at ahamilton@ucsd.edu

Gambling is not required to have a good time in Laughlin. Art has planned a great road trip over; a run to Oatman (an old gold-mining town) on Saturday and a fun run on old Route 66.

Take off from work Friday and caravan over to Laughlin— or join up with the group later. RSVP to Art and...

Call now for reservations: Harrah's Hotel 800-447-8700 at \$55.00 per night.

Detailing Clinic with Meguiar's

Date: Saturday, October 11

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Tri-City Paint's classroom
9282 Miramar Road

Event Coordinator: Stef Gould
(619) 297-4272

E-mail at tomgould@adnc.com

Darrell Baker, Meguiar's sales representative, will lead a hands-on demonstration of the five-step process of how to keep your Miata looking great.

Space is limited—

R.S.V.P. is required for this event.

Wheels 'n Meals at Boll Weevil

Date: Thursday, October 23

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Boll Weevil, 9330 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. (At Ruffin Rd.), San Diego
(619) 571-6225

We already have at least one item for this month's raffle. Members JOHN AND CATHERINE GODDEN have donated Crazy Red Italian Air Horns. Plus, the club logo hat/lapel pins are now available. If you did not pick yours up at the September Wheels 'n Meals (or other event) then come and get'em.

Pumpkin Patch Run

Date: Sunday, October 26

Time: See below

Place: See below

Run Leaders: Natalia Rissolo and Jason Moorhead (619) 287-7582

Unfortunately, details for this event were not finalized at press time. When

the logistics are all worked out, details will be announced via the club E-mail list. Or telephone Natalia at the number above. Natalia can also be reached via E-mail at: street@inetworld.net. Also, as the event approaches, meeting place and time will be available on the outgoing message of the club info-line, (619) 670-7948.

Thank you for your understanding.

Show Off Your Miata

Date: Sunday, November 2

Time: 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: Qualcomm Stadium parking lot

See story on page 5 of this newsletter.

Nethercutt Collection Joint Run with VROOM and SOCALM

Date: Saturday, November 8

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: IHOP Restaurant, Newhall, I-5, exit Lyons Street

Run Leaders: John and Gerry Conn

Bring: Lunch if you don't want fast food in Sylmar (El Pollo Loco, Taco Bell, McDonalds) before the tour which begins at 1:15.

Details: This is a FREE 2-hour guided tour of functional fine art collected by J.B. Nethercutt (Chairman of the Board and founder of Merle Norman Cosmetics) and wife Dorothy who believed that beauty of all types should be preserved, enjoyed and shared. Highlights include antique and classic luxury autos, hood ornaments, and mechanical musical instruments all displayed in elegant surroundings.

The following are NOT allowed: Jeans, shorts, video taping (cameras without flash ok), smoking, and children under 12.

You must R.S.V.P. to John and Gerry, E-mail at: connjb@earthlink.net or phone (714) 441-2552 to take part in the tour, we are LIMITED TO THE FIRST 50 that call, however we will maintain a waiting list. We will reconfirm with everyone by November 6th and fill in cancellations from the waiting list. Please leave your name, number of people and your phone if you reach our answering machine or house sitter. If you don't make it in the first 50 or don't want to do the tour, you are welcome to do the run—some great roads in the San Gabriels that Steve Murray put us onto when we did this the first time in February of 1996.

Shambala Safari Run Joint Run with SOCALM

Date: Saturday, November 15

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Dennys parking lot off Hwy. 14 & Sand Canyon. (Newhall-Acton area near the 5 & 14)

Run Leader: Kathie McClelland

Cost is \$35.00 per person, a tax deductible donation. *Make checks payable to the Roar Foundation.*

Mail checks no later than October 1st to: Kathie McClelland, P.O. Box 9101, Newport Beach, CA 92658

Miss the deadline? Make your own arrangements with: Shambala

Preserve, 6867 Soledad Canyon Road, Acton, CA 93510 (805) 268-0380.

Bring a camera and your own lunch, a hot food lunch truck will be there. Wear flat comfortable shoes, No shorts and NO PERFUME! *Guests must be over 18.*

To caravan part way together, meet in the Denny's parking lot off the 5 at Chapman Ave. in Orange at 8:00 a.m.

Angeles Crest Fun Run lead by Paul and Francie Pollock will follow. The day will conclude with an early dinner at Crown City Brewery in Pasadena.

Any questions? Contact Kathie at: KMIATACAT@AOL.COM or (714) 644-4345

UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

May 22-25, 1998

"Moon Over Miata"

Golden Gate Getaway '98

Pleasanton Hilton in Pleasanton, Ca.
Hosted by: BAMA

Room rate: \$73.00 per night
Event Registration: \$195 per couple, \$165 solo

Events include: Friday Night Wine & Pasta Welcome Dinner, Sunday Awards Banquet, Monday "Getaway" Breakfast, Photo Rallye, Autocross, Funkhana, Fun Run and lots of vendors.

Also includes special Saturday Night Dinner Extravaganza: "Evening at Blackhawk" Behring Auto Museum.

The finest attire you can pack is encouraged.

Registration packets, contact Ken at (510) 484-4174

or E-mail at ken@cdec.com.



Classic Speed Festival, Coronado

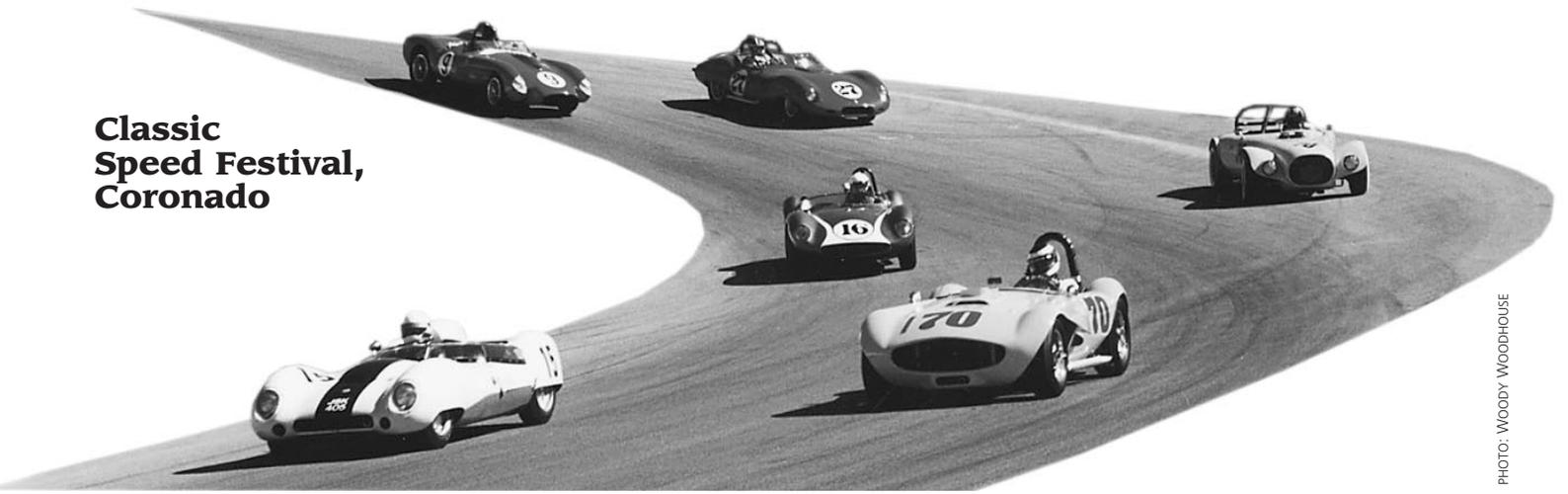


PHOTO: WOODY WOODHOUSE

The inaugural Chrysler Classic Speed Festival will take place in Coronado as part of the Holiday Bowl festivities on November 22 and 23, 1997.

This racing event is organized by the Historic Motor Sports Association (the folks who bring you the Monterey Historics) and will be one of the special events of the year. The purpose of the event is to encourage restoration, preservation and use of historic sports and racing cars—the cars are the stars in the events sponsored by HMSA.

The CLASSIC SPEED FESTIVAL will be held on the roads and a taxiway at the Naval Air Station on North Island, Coronado. The pit straight (3000 ft) runs along the beach and bay. The back straight is a major taxiway. There are seven turns and the course length is 1.7 miles.

Similar to the MONTEREY HISTORICS, the paddock area will be open to the public; there will be grandstand seating and a vendor area. Food and drink vendor sales will benefit Navy charities. *No food or drink of any kind can be brought into the races!*

There will be six race groups: 1947–1955 sports cars under and over 2000cc, late 50s sports race cars, 50s GT cars, 60s GT cars and Trans-Am cars from '66 to '72.

Gates will open at 7 a.m. both days. On Saturday there will be a practice for each group (9–12 noon). Opening ceremony at 12 noon, followed by qualifying races from 1:30 until 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, practice runs from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Races begin at 1:30 p.m. and end with the awards ceremony at 6 p.m.

Please Order Your Tickets Now

In order to enter the *Miata-Only Parking Corral*, you will need to buy your race tickets in advance. Once you have purchased your tickets, E-mail Stef Gould at tomgould@adnc.com or phone



PHOTO: WOODY WOODHOUSE



PHOTO: TOM GOULD



PHOTO: WOODY WOODHOUSE

(619) 297-4272, and she will add your name to the list for the Corral window stickers. (You will not be able to park in the Corral if you do not have an *advance-purchased* ticket in your possession, even if you do have a window sticker!)

The window stickers will be for *Miatas only*, please don't drive your OTM (Other Than Miata) and expect to park in the Corral. Stef will bring the window stickers to the November 20th Wheels n' Meals.

Advance tickets (order by mail or phone before November 1, 1997) are \$10 for one day (Saturday or Sunday), or \$15 for a two-day combo ticket. A \$3.00 advance-ticket handling fee per order. To order tickets or for additional information contact the Holiday Bowl Offices at (619) 283-5808. The gate price is \$12 per day.

Miata Club Party — Sunday

Wally Stevens, member of both the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB and SOCALM, has invited members of Miata clubs to a pot-luck open house on Sunday after the CLASSIC SPEED FESTIVAL. Wally's home is very near the gate to the North Island Naval Air Station. You will be able to drop off your contribution for the pot-luck (in coolers, please) before the races. You will also be able to pick up your Corral sticker for Miata-only parking at his house (however if you are going to the FESTIVAL both days you will need to pick up your Corral sticker from Stef). Details of the party will be announced in November's newsletter. —STEF GOULD



Tires Technology

Okay, here's the low-down on ride quality: A recent issue of *Motor Trend* (or was it *Car and Driver*) magazine did a test between 14, 15, 16, and 17 inch tires on a Honda Civic (which uses the same sizes as a Miata). They reported on everything from ride to skidpad rating.

Their findings were counterintuitive and inconsistent for a few reasons.

Ride: The 15s rode the worst, the 16s rode the best, the 17s were no

 worse than the 14s. Reason—although the 15, 16, 17 were all the same tire (Dunlop SP8000) they were made in different factories in different countries. The 15s probably had 2 plies of polyester in the sidewall while the 16, 17 probably had 1 ply of rayon.

Handling: (I won't mention the 14s) The 15s and 17s were close, but if the alignment were set up for it, the 17s should be much better (The shorter sidewall makes it react much more to camber changes.) The 16s were a little below the 17s but the wheels were a half inch narrower (7.0 inches) than the 17's 7.5 inches.

Joe Jordan with 205/40ZR17 Proxes T1 on his Miata thinks they ride smoother than the 215/40ZR16 T1 on my Miata.

More...

A while ago, on the E-mail list, I had said my 215/40ZR16 tires didn't ride any worse than my old 185/60R14's. None of your responses seemed like I convinced you of that.

I thought about it a little more and I have an explanation: One would think a shorter sidewall would ride stiffer. However, this assumes the two sidewalls have the same spring rate—which they don't. A shorter sidewall has inherently better transient response therefore it does not have to be as stiff. A taller sidewall has inherently slower transient response. Therefore the tire with the taller sidewall has to be made stiffer to have the same yaw response as the tire with the shorter sidewall. Of course a shorter sidewall cannot

absorb larger road irregularities as well as a taller one. So as long as the irregularities are small, my size tires may provide a smoother ride. As the irregularities get bigger, the shorter sidewall does not have the same envelopability of the taller sidewall. The perfect size would have a good balance between transient response (lateral stiffness) and ride quality (vertical stiffness).

Another way to look at it is this: if you have two springs, one 10-inches and one 5-inches long, is the 5-inch spring stiffer? Not necessarily, it depends on the spring rate. If both have the same spring rate (say 500 lbs per inch) , and you put 500 lbs on them , they will both compress one inch—essentially they will react the same (same ride quality). If you put 1000 lbs. on them, they will feel the same (and compress the same amount). If you put 3000 lbs. on them, the shorter spring will 'bottom out' while the taller one will be able to handle the load. Have I convinced anyone of the possibility that a 40 series tire can ride as well as a 60 series tire? The stiffness of the sidewall can be varied many ways: height of the ply turn up, addition of a steel side ply, number of sidewall plies (one or two), material of plies (polyester or rayon), cord ends per inch, diameter of cord, cord angle, etc. —KEVIN LAKKIS

[Toyo's web site (www.Toyo.com) has more information on tire technology.] —ed.

Show Off Your Miata

Date: Sunday, November 2

Time: 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A monthly AUTO SWAP MEET is held at the "Qualcomm Stadium at the Jack Murphy Sports Complex" parking lot. In November the swap meet will feature foreign cars and a foreign car show.

Pre-registration for the show is \$10.00 per car (\$15 gate registration), which includes two admissions to the swap meet (normal admission to the swap meet is \$5.00, your cost to show your car is actually nothing if you figure two admissions to get into the swap meet).

Member Phil Daoust extends an invitation to all members to join him for a SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB presence at this event. He plans to have the club banner and to give out our maps and recruiting cards. Drive your Miata, bring a folding chair, hang out and have some fun.

There is an SCCA autocross race day scheduled on November 2 as well, so you can show your car, and walk over to observe our members autocrossing.

If you plan to participate go ahead and pre-register and please let Phil or Stef know. We are arranging for adjacent spots and need to know how many places to request.

For more information contact the event directly at (619) 484-9342, or view their website <http://www.carsnet.com>

Stef Gould at tomgould@adnc.com phone at (619) 297-4272

Phil Daoust at BEARSCHILI@aol.com or phone at (760) 789-7416.



AUTOCROSS AT THE MURPH

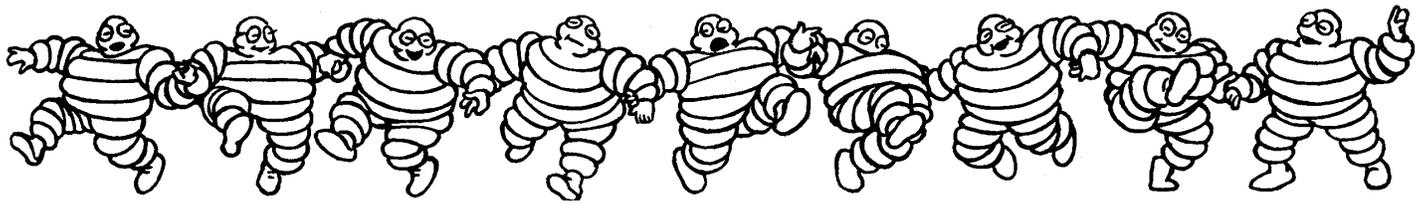
The following autocross events take place in the "Qualcomm Stadium at the Jack Murphy Sports Complex" parking lot. The schedule is still being called tentative.

October 4-5cancelled
Sunday, October 19race day, (scheduling firm)
Saturday, November 1practice day
Sunday, November 2race day
Sunday, November 23race day
Saturday, December 13practice or race

Autocross information sources:

San Diego SCCA Hotline:(619) 441-1333
Cal Club SCCA Hotline:(818) 988-7223
Steve Hart:(619) 579-9093





Stone Cold Run

September 20, 1997

Thirty Miatas assembled at the Sorrento Valley/Mira Mesa Boulevard junction at the 805 freeway. Scattered clouds gave way to clear skies as we rolled out, led by STEF GOULD. The purpose was a run in the western North County, from Fairbanks Ranch and Rancho Santa Fe fairways to Elfin Forest chicken farms; the excuse was a microbrewery in San Marcos. New members coming along were MIMI and JAY DONNELLY, LEN GARTH, NEAL HOWLAND, JOHN NEUMANN and friend Greg. Long-time members ALAN and ALECIA SILVER made their first run with the club. BRIAN GOODWIN stopped by to explain why he couldn't make the run—he had only ten percent of his front bar chassis mount left (a weak point in a Miata compounded by running heavier sway bars) and was waiting for beefed-up replacement brackets from Mazda Performance to arrive before he felt safe to drive. Also present were SDMC people KEN BARTON with friend Randy, MARK BOOTH and his friend Rick, PHIL DAoust, JULI and BOB DAVIS, KEN EVORY, ART HAMILTON, "JT" BOB HOLLAND, BARI and BILL HYDE and their son, Sheldon (in his own Miata), ANNA and CRAIG JAMESON (who brought along a photo of our youngest member—Evan, born August 31st). CYNTHIA JONES with her friend Ken, ED and MICHELLE LANGMAID, FRED LERNER, DIANE LONG, JOHN MAGINNIS and his friend Noelle,



PHOTO: TOM GOULD

ELLIOT SHEV, FRANK SHINE and STEPHEN DELONGE, O.D. SMITH, LOU STARK and friend Jim, RICH TAYLOR, MIKE THOMAS, and STEVE and LAURIE WAID. Running sweep were RAINER and MARIANNE MUELLER.

Sorrento Valley Road's office/industrial parkway gave way to El Camino Real's bedroom and commercial development. San Dieguito Road took us through horse farms and Fairbanks Ranch, along the edge of Rancho Santa Fe to the Del Dios Highway and the shores of Lake Hodges. A turn this side of Escondido, and we were on countryside rural roads: Harmony Grove, Elfin Forest and Questhaven Roads, through the burned-over hills of last year's fires, part of the devastation that cost Ruth and Lou Stark's house, now just a few months from a completed rebuild.

The next stretch, more urbanized as we approached San Marcos and Vista, was interrupted by a pit stop (honest, the parking lot was deserted a week ago, and also two days before). Next was a country road, Buena Creek, taking us back to Deer Springs Road and

up familiar Club run-roads past the Welk resort to a loop around Gopher Canyon and Camino del Rey. We backtracked to Deer Springs and on down to Marieta's Restaurant on San Marcos Boulevard, where about 40 hungry Miata drivers were joined for lunch by late arrivals CATHY BOOTH, DEBBIE and BOB LLEWELLYN, and new member BRIAN BEEZLEY. After lunch some of us moved on to the nearby Stone Microbrewery. A group of microbrewery macroenthusiasts were also stopping by on a sudsy circular run to several breweries—luckily for all concerned, by bus. Our group stayed on for a more discreet taste of the three Stone brews and a tour.

—TOM GOULD

1999 MIATA RAFFLE

Rick de La Fuente, the parts department manager at Conroe Mazda* is finalizing plans with Gary Fischman of Miata.net to raffle a new 1999 Miata. The raffle will benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Details of the raffle will be announced in the up-coming issue of *Miata Magazine* and in next month's newsletter.

*Rick at Conroe Mazda, in Conroe, Texas, (800) 9-CONROE, sells Mazda parts at a 20% discount, he also offers varying discounts on Brainstorm, Moss Motors and MM Marketing products.



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH



Brace Your Early Miata for Better Handling

In November 1994, I made a rare good move and purchased a '90 base model Miata which had been meticulously cared for by the previous owner. It had been over 20 years since I had a rag-top sports car and had an itch for a Miata since they came

 out in 1989. The more I drove the Miata, the more I loved it. It's the best sports car I've ever had for driving fun (and this includes Alfa Romeo, MGs, Triumph, Volvo P1800, and Porsche). Fine handling and even reliable (not a common trait in some of the above).

From the *Miata Magazine*, I learned that for the '94 and subsequent models of the Miata, braces were incorporated to the chassis which improved the handling and feel of the car and that after-market braces were available to modify the '90 through '93 models. In early 1995, from the ads in the *Miata Magazine*, I ordered front and rear sub-frame braces and a rear cockpit brace. They were installed in a couple of hours with the help of a friend who had an auto repair shop. No welding—just bolts.

There was a definite improvement. There is a more solid feel and a better sense of handling control. There was also a substantial reduction in the vibration at about 65 mph which I understand is common in the earlier models. The cockpit brace and the front subframe brace were ordered from Brain-Storm Products and the rear subframe brace was the Technosports Track Bar ordered from Performance Buyers Club. Similar products are also available from other suppliers with ads in the *Miata Magazine*. The total cost for me was about \$260.00. The braces were well-made and easy to install. An already great handling car made even better!

—BILL BARBOUR



The lapel/hat pins are here—The club logo in three Miata colors: red, white and blue—\$3 each. See Mark at any event.

Scattered Fallout from Steve & Frank

Hey, Miataphiles...We grinned for a long time after reading the following obituary. (No, we're NOT usually into this kinda thing!) However, when our time is up, we want to go in the style that this man went in...

The following is from the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Monday, August 11, 1997, page B-5, Obituaries section:

Gerald S. Wright, 95; Antique-Car Enthusiast

By Tanya Rodrigues, intern.

Gerald Stafford Wright's life was a passion-filled ride. Mr. Wright, an antique-car enthusiast, died Thursday at the age of 95. The afternoon before he suffered a stroke on August 3, he and Grace, his wife of 45 years, took their usual Sunday drive in their bright red Miata convertible from Mission Hills to Fiesta Island. Two days before, he continued to amaze friends and family with his other hobby—working out at the YMCA. He liked to lift light weights, walk a half-mile on the track and take steam baths. But cars were his true love.

One of his 16 grandchildren, Kathleen Doucette, remembers a Fourth of July in the 1960's when she sat beside him in Coronado's annual holiday parade. She can still hear the Model-T's deep horn and feel the warmth of that sunny day. Most of all, she recalls the sparkle in her grandfather's eyes. "He was having a ball," she said. "He was sharing something he enjoyed."

With painstaking attention to detail and authenticity, Mr. Wright restored myriad antique automobiles in his lifetime, including a 1932 Duesenberg and a 1930 English Invicta. He was past president of the Convair Sports Car Club, the San Diego Horseless Carriage Club, San Diego MGT Register, and the San Diego Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA).

For 12 years, he was on AACA's board of directors. A charter member of Fallbrook's Vintage Car Club, Mr. Wright also helped establish the Phoenix Metro Region AACA.

At times, he owned as many as 26 antique cars. In recent years, the

Wrights sold many of them. Yet Mr. Wright continued restoring automobiles with car-club friends, calling themselves the "Tuesday Lunch Bunch." Grandchildren and great-grandchildren reveled in watching races between Mr. and Mrs. Wright in their "his-and-her" Jaguars, said Elaine Draper, his step-daughter. The couple often wore authentic outfits, matching the year of their car.

The son of a Presbyterian minister, Mr. Wright moved to San Diego in 1942 from Columbus, Ohio, where he was an educator. In San Diego, the Ohio State University graduate became an engineer for Consolidated Air, now General Dynamics. He retired in 1968. A shy man, Mr. Wright's "sparkle" had a mischievous turn. His grandchildren and, later, great-grandchildren would fight to sit beside him during meals, said Doucette. He would make them giggle and generally misbehave, prompting their parents' admonishment. "Grandpa made me do it," the kids would answer, but Mr. Wright would pretend innocence, recalls Draper, who lives in Hawaii. Besides his wife and step-daughter, Mr. Wright is survived by a son, William Wright of Santa Rosa; a stepson, Dwayne Swearengin of Sierra Vista, Arizona; a daughter, Jean Anne Grossman of Columbus, Ohio; 16 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

Mr. Wright will be buried at Glen Abbey in Bonita. His Miata will lead the funeral procession, said Draper. "It will take one last ride with him."

What can we say...but, "keep the top down!"

—FRANK SHINE & STEPHEN DELONGE

CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

Newport Beach

October 5—Sunday, 10 a.m.—4 p.m.
\$20 – includes parking and program
Pelican Hill Golf Club Practice Range
(714) 720-5381

San Diego

October 19—Sunday, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
\$15 – advance, \$20 – gate
Torrey Pines Golf Course





Member Profile

ED AND MICHELLE LANGMAID
AND MARILYN

We welcome the opportunity to introduce our family into the larger family of Miata owners. First there's Marilyn, our 2.5 year old. Marilyn is bright and fun-loving. Marilyn likes to go with us everywhere. Marilyn (Merlot) is our Miata. We adopted her on August 20. She takes Ed from Tierrasanta to Rancho Bernardo where he works at GDE Systems as the Manager of Health and Safety. We are looking for Software Engineers so if you know of anyone wanting to work at a great company, call Ed. (There's a reward.)

Michelle works at a large, stuffy law firm downtown. No, she is not a lawyer!! She works in an area that you really don't care to know about. Trust me. Michelle loves to cook and would like to ride in the left seat of Marilyn more often. Okay, so she has driven it once. But she'll get more chances. At least that is what Ed said when she paid the down payment.

Our hobbies include, but are not limited to, or listed in any particular order (Michelle's legal phraseology): Raising and selling Lady Gouldian finches for fun and profit, Tai Chi, photography · hiking, camping and 4-Wheeling, skiing (downhill and cross country), rock climbing, socializing with friends and having fun.

That's why we joined the Miata club. No, not for 4-wheeling, at least until a few modifications are made to Marilyn, but for socializing and having fun. We like to drive places topless. Ed used to have a Datsun Roadster and Michelle a TR6.

We learned quite a bit about Miatas before adopting Marilyn. The Internet was a good source for information. We learned what to look for in a used Miata, how to protect her, how to fold

the boot, how much to pay and what the SD Miata Club was doing.

Once informed of our adoption, one friend (a physician) added other comments:

1. The insensitive attitude of the IRS re: Marilyn's deduction potential.
2. She will be easy to take to audits.
3. Maybe a physician can find the proper growth hormone because she looks small.
4. Her purple color is probably a lactic intolerance, so stop giving her milk. Try something with more pep and explosive power.
5. Frequently baby sitters will be hard to find and she will have to go along.
6. There will be sibling rivalry because she has such a sturdy brother. (our Explorer)
7. Make sure to have her vision checked early so she won't run into things.— Well, we thought it was funny.

Anyway, we look forward to being a part of the Miata group and hope to see all of you real soon.

To be included in our on-going series of Member Profiles, write a short (200-300 word) introduction and mail (or E-mail) it with a photo (your face should be large enough to be recognized) to the Club P.O. Box or give it to a board member at an event. — Your photo will be returned.

New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

Hanni Andersen

Carlsbad
1996 Red

Brian Beezley

San Marcos
1996 Red R

Tom S. Blood

Alpine
1990 White B

Dick & PJ Carlson

Kansas City, MO
1992 Silver A

Jay & Mimi Donnelly

San Diego
1992 Black C

Skip Elmore

El Cajon
1993 Black

David & Helen Knoll

Jamul
1990 Red A

Ed & Michelle Langmaid

San Diego
1995 M (Merlot)

Andrew Laurence

Newport Beach
1991 Red B

Ellen & Brooks Nantker

Escondido
1994 Laguna Blue A

Elaine Rinner Singer

San Diego
1997 Black

Jean Terio & John Neumann

San Diego
1994 White B

Evan Craig Jameson

Birthdate: August 31, 1997
19" long, 7 lbs. 4 oz.

Congratulations to Anna and Craig!

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

Ms. Lou Borja

Brenda Kay

Elliot & Barb Shev

Mandy Simpson

There are now 165 memberships consisting of 248 members.



What Can I Say!?

Thanks to YOU, SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB's participation surrounding the Muscular Dystrophy Labor Day Telethon was a HUGE success! A record crowd (58 Miatas!!) attended the August Wheels 'n Meals. Due to the combined generosity of members and vendors alike, our raffle raised \$1166.00 for MDA! Then, on Labor Day, Monday September 1, 30 Miatas and their owners turned out to swing by the MDA "Fishbowl" downtown. Many of these owners then went inside MDA HQ downtown to staff the pledge lines for a couple of hours. Great fun was had by all! Raffle and Fishbowl combined, it is estimated that SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB members donated a grand total in excess of \$1400.00! Awesome!

My thanks to the phone volunteers and to everyone that helped make it all happen. A special thanks to members SUE and JACK HINKLE and their son JASON for arranging the club's participation (Sue, you were a great cheerleader out there on Broadway!). Another special thanks to vendors CRAZY RED ITALIAN, PERFORMANCE BUYERS CLUB, MM MARKETING, MOSS MOTORS, JUST DINGS, AUTO ARCHIVE COVERS, CUSH MAZDA, and RICK at BOLL WEEVIL as well as members RAINER and MARIANNE MUELLER, BOB and KATHY WELTY, CINDY PALOMA, KATHIE MCCLELLAND, PHIL DAOUST, TOM and STEF GOULD, RICHARD SCHERSCHEL, and MICHAEL CARILLO and ANDREA PULIDO for the generous donations of prizes for the raffle.

Logo Pin Update

The original batch of club logo hat/lapel pins were deemed unsatisfactory so they were returned to the pin company. The remade pins have arrived and they are a tremendous improvement over the first batch. Pins are now available in the three original Miata colors (Red, Blue and White). The pins are \$3.00 each.

Holiday Party '97

Members BOB and DEBBIE LLEWELLYN have volunteered to host this year's



Holiday Party. Bob and Debbie live in San Marcos (inland from Palomar Airport Road), so North County members get the shorter drive this year. Mark your calendars: Saturday, December 13th. My thanks to Bob and Debbie for generously allowing us into their home!

The New Miata Part Two

Here are a couple more "spy" photos of the new (1998 or 1999?) Miata. These photos were published in the September 1 issue of *Autoweek*. Upon close examination of the original color image it can be seen that these photos are an exact match with the Miata that member ALAN ELSTER described seeing on I-15 on the way to Barstow (see my September column for Alan's complete description). Black Miata, black top, black bra, blue Michigan manufacturer license plate, new body curves reminiscent of the RX-7, new taillight design, etc. *Autoweek* comments that the redesigned Miata was spied during hot-weather testing in California. This absolutely has to be the same car Alan saw. I am 100% confident that this is, indeed, the new Miata. Just a few more weeks until the official premiere at the Tokyo Auto Show. And, again... Alan's reaction to seeing the new Miata up close and personal: "...I've got to start saving my money and picking out a color!"

El Niño

Finally, as I write this, Hurricane Nora is crossing the Baja peninsula and bringing lots of rain to the entire southwestern region of the United States. This is the second hurricane in two

weeks to threaten San Diego. What's up with that?! This is the WEST coast! California...not Florida! Unfortunately, due to the effects of El Niño (much warmer than normal Southern Pacific waters) weather forecasters are calling for an extremely wet Southern California winter. I urge everyone to please be extremely careful out there on the wet roads. The Miata is an extremely fine handling car to be sure. However, wet weather brings with it a whole new ballgame. The Miata has four wheel disc brakes and after going through a few puddles braking performance can be affected. Further, some of the factory tire designs are notorious for poor wet-weather performance. Please drive cautiously and defensively at all times but especially when the roads are wet.

I have many errands to run today so, sadly, the ole top will be raised for the first time in many many months.

Until next month — keep from getting wet! <grin>

—MARK

