



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4

APRIL 1998

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



April 4—Saturday
Wheels 'n Meals—
North Pea Soup Andersen's



April 11—Saturday
Wildflower Run
in the Santa Monica
Mountains with Socalm



April 15—Wednesday
Miatas at Funntasia
Grand Prix—
formerly Malibu Grand Prix



April 23—Thursday
Monthly Meeting
at Boll Weevil



April 25—Saturday
Annual Membership
Meeting



May 9—Saturday
Old Rusty Truck
and Other Oddities
Fun Run








May 23—Saturday
Firenze Frenzy
Fun Run



May 31—Sunday
Miracle Mile of Miatas
Fun Run
to Benefit Childrens' Hospital

Key to Icons

-  Wheels 'n Meals (Social)
-  Fun Run
-  Internet
-  Tech
-  Autocross

From the Editor

Ask not what your club can do for you.

Seems so long ago now. March 31, 1996, 34 Miatas showed up for the inaugural meeting of the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. Now 220 Miatas are part of this ever-growing family. Our average turnout at most club events eclipses the turnout at that first meeting.

With the annual meeting this month, it is time to take stock and thank those that have led this phenomenal growth. Hard work fed by boundless enthusiasm has made it possible. The events and information provided to the membership are the end result. Behind the scenes, however, is the dedication and hours of toil by a fanatical few.

A core group of individuals performs the majority of the tasks involved in running the club. Most of this group was involved in the conception and founding of the club. They are enthusiasts in the true sense of the word.

It is time for a change.

I am not extolling revolution here, but merely the obvious. Two years of some people's lives have been wrapped up in bringing the club to this point. They live, eat, drink and sleep the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. No salaries and few (if any) rewards other than the enjoyment of creating a family of like-minded Miata enthusiasts. All this while trying to maintain careers, families, and lives. Hey, this is supposed to be fun!

A club is just a group of people with similar interests. Without new people getting involved, the few doing the work soon tire and quit. Some members of the club will never be involved beyond paying their annual dues and getting a newsletter. That is a fact of any club. So is the fact that the majority of members will attend events, but want no further involvement. This leaves a small contingent to keep everything running. Many of us have been involved in other clubs where this situation goes on for years. The result is a stagnant organization or a power-mad clique that loses sight of what it is all about. We must not let that happen to *our* club.

The core group of this club does not want it to happen either, that is why some will not be seeking reelection. They deserve the opportunity to just show up at a club event and not sweat the details.

I am asking every club member to consider taking a turn at guiding the club into the future. Become more involved, lead a run, organize an event, or run for election as a board member. At the very least, every member who desires a voice in the direction of the club should attend the annual meeting.

The following positions (with *some* of their duties listed) are elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year:

President votes on board, is the official spokesperson, presides over all meetings, delegates duties to appointed positions.

Vice-President votes on board, acts for president in absentia, is prepared to handle presidents' duties at all times, prepared to take on duties as delegated by president.

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From the Editor CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Treasurer votes on board, keeps records of and reconciles bank statements, makes financial statements to the board, advises the board on expenditures, submits yearly financial report to the general membership at annual meeting.

Secretary votes on board and records all meetings.

The following are the current appointed positions. Appointed positions are volunteers. The president appoints (with the approval of the other 3 elected officers) volunteers to fill positions, usually those who have some talent or expertise in the area involved. These positions are nonvoting board members:

Events Coordinator encourages members to participate and sponsor events, coordinates times and dates with all club-related events.

Membership maintains membership database.

Newsletter Editor writes a monthly column for newsletter, solicits and encourages others to contribute to newsletter, assists with newsletter production. **Newsletter Designer** produces the newsletter, approves layout/formats and is in charge of printing the newsletter.

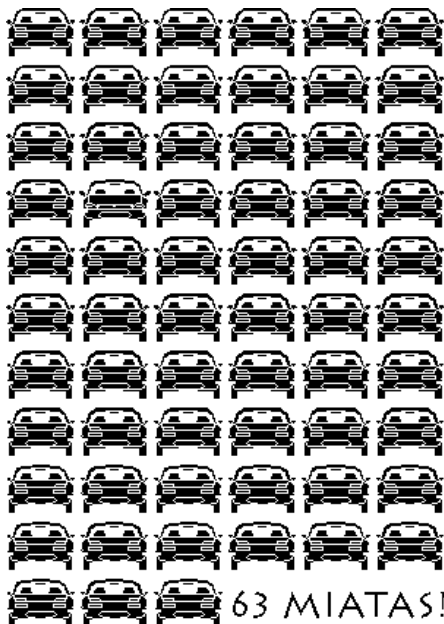
E-mail Postmaster maintains club E-mail listing and announcement listing.

Webmaster maintains club INTERNET web page.

Remember, Saturday, April 25. 13:00 (1 p.m.). The San Diego Automotive Museum, Balboa Park.

BE THERE!

— ANTHONY WILDE



SEE PAGE 10

SOCALM EVENTS

Wildflower Run in the Santa Monica Mountains

Date: Saturday, April 11 *note date change*

Time: 9:30 a.m.— leaving promptly at 10

Place: Whizin Center in Agoura Hills

Directions: US 101 North to Kanan Rd. in Agoura Hills. Turn left (South), pass over the freeway and turn left at a signal onto Agoura Road (East). Go straight after a stop sign ¼ mile later, turn into the first wide driveway on the left (¼ mile) toward Do-It Center.

SDMC Caravan: — McDonalds, Oceanside East side of I-5 at Oceanside Blvd. exit Leaving promptly at 7:00 a.m.

Mike Simmons, a dual member of SDMC and Socalm, has extended a personal invitation to SDMC members to join him as he shows off some spectacular scenery near his home. This run will showcase spring wildflowers on some of the best roads of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. He'll take a leisurely pace on much of the run to allow sight-seeing— flowers and great views of the mountains and ocean— stopping at prime locations for views and photo-ops. There will be twisty canyons for the racers (he'll regroup after them). The run directions will point out interesting sights and provide background about the area along the way— movie and television set locations, historical sites, homes of the rich and famous, etc. The run will pass picturesque lakes and a valley of thoroughbred horse ranches, visit an active Western movie set and stop for a barbeque lunch in the mountains— \$5.75, tri-tip or chicken sandwich and fixings (arrange ahead for vegetarian). For more information: Mike Simmons at: msimm@ucla.edu.

Sights of Socalm

Date: April 17-19

Registration: \$25 per car

Friday: No-host Mixer - 7 Seas Lounge

Saturday: Poker Rallye and No-host dinner in San Diego at Padre Pub

Sunday: Caravan to Orange County— dining *al fresco* in the Jackson Racing parking lot. JR Cold Air Induction and other Miata-stuff raffle. Followed by a Orange County Coastal Fun Run.

Contact: Delena Cozart (619) 624-9201

Socalm contacts:

President— K. Zack Broadbent, (714) 525-9065, racerzack@aol.com
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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, Anthony Wilde (NevadaBob@miata.net). 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

Wheels 'n Meals— North

Date: Saturday, April 4

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Pea Soup Andersen's Restaurant
I-5 at Palomar Airport Road, Carlsbad
They have a breakfast buffet— or you can order anything off their menu.

After breakfast, we can visit the Carlsbad Flower Fields —\$2.50. Then Lou Stark will lead us on a short Fun Run in the Harmony Grove/Elfin Forest area. Note: Run will include some dirt roads.

Please note that Pea Soup charges \$5 for parking as you enter— refundable when you leave. We have a confirmed reservation for 30 people. Please RSVP to Bob Llewelly no later than April 2nd.

Miatas at Funntasia Grand Prix, formerly Malibu Grand Prix

Date: Wednesday, April 15

Time: 6:30 p.m. (Please be prompt)

Place: Funntasia Grand Prix,
8606 Miramar Rd., San Diego
(619) 566-4121

Contact: Mark Booth, markb@adnc.com

Believe it or not, it's been almost a year since we last visited Funntasia (Malibu) Grand Prix! We will not have the track to ourselves (reserving the entire track is expensive), but I've chosen a slow weeknight so it shouldn't be too crowded. Cost usually works out to \$1.75 per lap. (Most members purchase between 10-15 laps.) Drivers must also purchase a Funntasia Grand Prix license for approx. \$3.00 (don't forget yours if you already have one).

Please be prompt. Meet in the parking lot so we can get a total figure on the number of laps to be purchased. We have to buy the laps in a block to get the best price per lap. Please bring cash so we can pool our money for the purchase. Thanks for your cooperation.

Monthly Meeting

Date: Thursday, April 23

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

This event is the single best way to meet your fellow club members, ask questions, share stories, etc. Don't miss the fun!

Annual Membership Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 25

Time: Picnic starts at 10:30 a.m.,
Meeting starts at 1:00 p.m.

Place: San Diego Automotive Museum
(Hall of Fame Room), Balboa Park
The membership meeting and elections will be held in the "Hall of Fame Room" at the San Diego Automotive Museum. Enter at a side door, left of the main door. The meeting will start promptly at 1:00 p.m. Please remember to bring your MEMBERSHIP CARD to receive a ballot. One ballot per membership.

We will have entertainment, a birthday cake (we are two years old), and soft drinks. Take part in a photo swap and look at the club photo album.

The meeting will be preceded by a Picnic in the Park— same location as last year. Picnic starts at 10:30 a.m. Arrive later if you like but be aware that parking might be tougher to find in the later hours. Bring your own picnic lunch and a blanket to sit on.

Directions to Picnic: Take Park Blvd. to Balboa Park. Turn west (into the Park) on Presidents Way. Turn left into the very first parking lot on the left. Go all the way to the back of the parking lot. The picnic spot is located between Park Blvd. and the southeast side of the Aerospace Museum. Or... park in the lot in front of the Automotive Museum and take the path/road between the Aerospace Museum and the Gymnasium down to the picnic site.

AUTOCROSS AT THE MURPH



The following autocross events will take place on the West side of the "Qualcomm Stadium at the Jack Murphy Sports Complex" parking lot.

Sunday, April 5 race day
Sunday, April 19 race day
Saturday, May 2 practice day
Sunday, May 3 race day
Sunday, June 21 race day

Autocross information:

San Diego SCCA Hotline: (619) 441-1333
Cal Club SCCA Hotline: (818) 988-7223
John Godden (619) 538-6165
Rainer Mueller (760) 439-0067
rainer@thegrid.net

UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

May 14–18, 1998

2nd "Gathering at Four Corners"
Vallecito Reservoir in Bayfield, Colorado

Spontaneous fun—each morning the group will meet and decide what to do that day—a trip to Four Corners, Mesa Verde, or Silverton, or ? Meet each evening to share the day's adventures. Clubs from all over the West—Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah are "Gathering at Four Corners!" Utah contact Wanda Bates: Wabhates@compuserve.com
SDMC members will caravan—departing the morning of May 13. SDMC contact: stef@miata.net

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
Registration: \$195 per couple, \$165 solo
Prices increase after April 15!

Friday Night Wine & Pasta Dinner, Awards Banquet, Monday Breakfast, Photo Rallye, Autocross, Funkhana, Fun Run and lots of vendors. Also special Saturday Night Dinner Extravaganza: "Evening at Blackhawk" Behring Auto Museum (the finest attire is encouraged)
Contact ken@cdec.com.
Web: mroadster.com/G3.html

July 16–19, 1998

Moss Motors 50th Anniversary Festival

Flag Is Up Farms, Santa Ynez Valley, CA
Free, if you arrive in a Miata or a British sports car! (800) 472-9445
Rallyes, Funkhana, Hayrides, Jackson Racing's DynoJet, Bar-B-Q, Karaoke night, Miata-shopping and prizes
SDMC will caravan up on July 16th. We have made reservations *en masse* at the Windmill Inn, join in the fun!

August 14–16, 1998

25th Annual Monterey Historic Races

Laguna Seca Raceway, Monterey, CA
See Miata.net "Events" for more info.

September 18–20, 1998

"Rock Around the Clock"
9th Annual Gold Rush

Sheraton Hotel, Rancho Cordova, CA
Hosted by: SAMOA
Driving events, speakers, dinners, fun!
mcmxv@pacbell.net



SCCA National Autocross Held in San Diego

March 20-22

Once every several years, the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) brings its big show to San Diego. Such was the case during the third weekend in March, when Qualcomm Stadium played host to the second round of the 1998 SCCA Solo II national tour.

One of only seven annual events in which racers from all over the United States attempt to accumulate points toward the national championship, the tour's week-

end in San Diego was yet another chance for the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB to get out there and show its spirit and support for our autocrossers

as they went head to head with the best in the country.

On a normal race weekend, Miatas appear primarily in two classes...B Stock and C Street Prepared. Our club has several members who race in each group. Although some of the fastest Miata drivers hail from Southern California, on "regular" weekends, as current or ex-national champions, they are relegated to a "PAX" class where there is a handicap factor meant to equalize them with other racers who have yet to achieve their stature. George Doganis, for example, who won the nationals in B Stock at Topeka last year and has been a world-class Miata autocrosser for a



Above: Brian Goodwin closes in on the finish line.



Left: Rainer Mueller leaves the "launch pad."

Below: Club members enjoy the sunny weather and close racing.

Bottom: The club banner marked the spot for members to congregate.



For once during this El Niño year, it was a gorgeous weekend. On Friday, drivers had a chance to do some preliminary mini-laps. Many took advantage of this opportunity, getting a feel for the course surface and their cars before the official competition began the next day. Bright and early Saturday morning, a

number of years, usually races PAX in San Diego and, therefore, poses a diminished competitive threat to local racers on a routine race weekend. When the

national tour hits town, however, George and others like him fall back into their normal race groups and our guys have to run with the big dogs or stay on the porch.

few of our members staked our claim to a portion of the spectator area by laying out cones of our own and erecting the club banner. By mid-morning a goodly contingent of SDMCers were there to cheer on our B Stock racers— JOHN GODDEN, BRIAN GOODWIN, and RAINER MUELLER. Also there was Kip from Kearny Mesa Mazda and an emerald green '99. By the time the racers in all groups had run the course the requisite three times, it was late afternoon and time to hang it up until the next day. On day two the course is run in reverse for yet another three times by each driver. At the end of the weekend, the best time from day one is added to the best time



PHOTOS: VOODOO BOB KRUEGER



for day two, and the best cumulative time wins. Interestingly, between race groups late Saturday afternoon, John Godden was seen walking the course in reverse, a move of foresight that would pay off later.



PHOTOS: VOODOO BOB KRUEGER

Left: John Godden awaits the green flag from Tom Smith.
Below: Post-race Inspection where racers are given the opportunity to spot technical violations.

Early Sunday morning we were back. By this time we had found we could set up the club banner without the help of Tom Gould, who was apparently sleeping in— no small feat, considering the ingenuity of the design. With the help of some cones and the "Rainer Way" sign, we again staked out a claim for what turned out to be even more of our members attending the final day of racing. Another great day in the sun, even better than the last, and then it was all over.

At the end, two Southern California racers were among the trophy winners in B Stock. After winner Kevin McCormick of San Francisco were George Doganis of Big Bear and Dan Cadenhead of Alpine. To give you an idea of just how competitive these national events are, the top three places in this race group were separated by a cumulative time of only 0.129 seconds. That's right, six runs each of approximately one minute duration, and in the end just over a tenth of a second was the difference between first and third place. Is that competitive enough for you? Of our club's racers, John Godden finished highest in eighth place (remember that reverse walk?).

All in all, a great weekend for everyone, racers and spectators alike...and not even a threat of rain. Hopefully, even more SDMC racers will be on the grid next time around, especially in C Street Prepared, and maybe even more of our members will turn out to help them once again run with the big dogs.

—RICHARD SCHERSCHEL



Miracle Mile of Miatas— Fun Run to Benefit Children's Hospital

What if we could do the two things we love to do (drive our cars and eat) and also feel good about doing it for a worthy cause? Plans are underway for the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB to be an important part of "Miracle Makers Weekend" to benefit Children's Hospital on Sunday, May 31.

Many of you may have heard of the "Miracle Mile of Quarters," more than a decade worth of fundraising efforts by Kiwanis. All year long, more than 60 Kiwanis Clubs county-wide raise funds which get converted to quarters and laid out on a mile of red carpet in front of Children's Hospital. By participating in this Fun Run— that we have affectionately titled "Miracle Mile of Miatas"— we will be helping Kiwanis go over one million dollars raised for Children's Hospital over the past 11 years. (100% of the donations remain here in San Diego!)

Members STEVE and LAURIE WAID, BOB and DEBBIE LLEWELLYN, and MARK and CATHY BOOTH have teamed up to coordinate the club's participation in this event. We'll meet in the morning to queue up near Children's Hospital, get organized, and then make one spectacular entrance with one?, two?, three? or more? miles of Miatas! KBEST 95 will be broadcasting live from 9–noon and will announce our arrival/presence. We'll indulge in one of Kiwanis' famous Pancake Breakfasts (cheap! \$3 or \$4) and then take off for a fun run through Eastern San Diego County. (You know...eat, drive...eat, drive!)

We'll be helping to raise money for Children's Hospital just by eating breakfast (100% of the Pancake Breakfast money goes to the Hospital) but, frankly, we have the potential to do so much more! Members will be able to sign up "sponsors" (self, friends, co-workers, etc.) for the fun run! If every car gets just one sponsor...well, you can see that it will really add up fast and make a difference for a truly great cause! Complete details and sponsor sign-up sheets will be included in the May issue of the newsletter.



Impromptu Desert Run

February 28, 1998

To celebrate RICHARD SCHERSCHEL'S brand-new Emerald Green '99 (less than 300 miles on it) and to break it in, nine Miatas left Escondido at 10 a.m. for Palm Desert. Richard even showed up! (He had missed the impromptu party in his honor the night before).

On the way up I-15 to Temecula, the Miata formation sometimes ran single file and sometimes ran four abreast.



We made a pit stop in Temecula, then headed east on 79. I've been on this highway in summer when everything is brown and dreary—it was beautifully green. The snow-capped summits of Mt. San Jacinto and San Geronio were just gorgeous (and as it turned out, we got to see them from all angles). We turned north toward Anza. As the line of Miatas crested the hill and dropped into Anza Valley, I wished I hadn't put my jacket and scarlet scarf away in the trunk. It was nippy at these altitudes.

After a long straight run through the valley, we hung a right toward Palm Desert and descended, sometimes behind slow vehicles. The vegetation got drier and drier. We finally stopped on the desert floor at a rest stop. I wondered where all the wildflowers were. STEF GOULD said, "Everywhere." She took me out and just made me look. The ones there were tiny but she was right, they were all over the place. They were white, just about the color of the sand, so I had missed them. Drivers with sharper eyes had spotted more colorful varieties on the way down.

RAINER said, "Let's go take the tram!" and off we headed through town toward a snowy summit. (Rainer had a specific



reason for wanting to take the tram up to where it was very cold—you'll have to ask him about in person.) I hadn't been out in the desert for years. There's an incredible number of people living out there. It was warm on the desert floor, but not unpleasant.

It was quite a ways on surface streets through suburbia to the tram turn-off, but the Miatas bobbed and weaved through the desert sport-utes and we were there in no time. When we arrived, the tram cables looked awesome draped up an incredibly steep mountain to a summit with snow all over the top. The lift price also turned out to be awesome for all the cheapskates in the group (including me), so we skipped the tram ride, took a break, and contacted MARK BOOTH by cell phone. Mark, who had just gotten off work, was heading all the way up to meet us! Before we left the tramway, I tagged a Z3 in the parking lot with an SDMC card. Naturally, his top was up.

Rainer led us north on I-10, past an incredible sight of thousands of wind generators. Then we headed south on a twisty mountain road for Idyllwild. There were some beautiful vistas along the way (you could see more than 100 miles, I think). And there was lots of snow

beside the road. The scarf was out and the jacket was on. Arriving in Idyllwild, we stopped for "lunch" about 4 p.m. Rainer's favorite French restaurant was closed, but the joint across the street was open and the food was great. Mark popped in after we arrived. What a guy to drive all that way! In fact, he was served his soup before a lot of us got the meals we had ordered long before. No one minded, though, particularly those of us who admired the waitress in purple.

There was lots of snow next to the road and lots of water on the way down. I took the rear because I still don't trust my driving on mountain curves and I



PHOTOS: BARB SHEY

knew I would be going pretty slowly. A long time after I had lost sight of the last Miata, I found a polite line of them patiently waiting beside the road for me down in the flats in Hemet.—Thanks, guys!

It was dark and we zoomed our way south on Winchester Highway. Although Richard in his '99 ahead of me did his best to dodge the many big potholes, I hit quite a few on this road that apparently took it in the shorts from El Niño.

We all zoomed onto I-15 at Temecula. I ran over a big piece of metal during a

lane change but the tires stayed inflated. I could hear PHIL DAOUST'S loud exhaust several cars ahead all the way back to Escondido, where I split off for home, arriving just after 7 p.m.

What a great, impromptu, top-down day! Aren't you sorry you missed it and watched "Face the Nation" instead?

—BRIAN BEEZLEY



An Interview With Bob Hall

An interview with Bob Hall, conducted by Dean Rinehart (drinehar@muhlenberg.edu) and first presented on the Miata.net mailing list.

Mr. Hall, considered by many to be the conceptual father of the Miata, was Manager of Product Planning and Development at Mazda Research of America (now Mazda North American Operations) in Irvine during the genesis and early production years of the car. He is currently Senior Editor of *Wheels* magazine in Australia and a SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB member.

Mr. Rinehart is a fool for a nice set of pop-ups who can be found hooting and hollering through the twisties near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Sometimes his wife lets him drive.

Q: What got you interested in Mazda as an automaker?

A: I always liked the cars. When I went to High School in Japan, my Japanese family had a Luce Rotary Coupe Super Deluxe, the only front-drive rotary Mazda ever built. It was pretty damn impressive. In the 70s, I had a lowered RX-3 wagon to go with my flares and sideburns. Mazda's Mr. Yamamoto was an awfully strong influence on me, too. Every time I talked with him it sort of "recharged" me.

Q: What helped Irvine's P-729 win out over the design from Tokyo?

A: Styling-wise or conceptually? Well, as regards the latter, I suspect the rear drive had a certain appeal to Mazda (remember, when the ball got rolling the first-generation RX-7 was still going strong). The convertible was a double-edged sword, as Mazda's sales people in Japan were really nervous about the lack of a fixed-head version. That uneasiness lasted till very near launch time with some folks, too. But the fact that Mazda hadn't built such a car at the time might have been an enticement of sorts. Appearance of the MR2 was another plus, too, as Toyota showed the "concept" version of the first MR2 (actually a very mildly disguised version of the production car) at the Tokyo show shortly after the three models were displayed to top management. That probably made 'em sleep better, even though the project hadn't been approved for production at that time.

Q: Why was Mazda so willing to do a ground-up design rather than using 323 parts as a base for the car?



Bob Hall

PHOTO: MX5 CLUB OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A: I'm not altogether convinced that was the idea at the start. The first proposals were designed around the parts bin, with an eye at selling the program. The earliest concepts tossed out used the rear axle and basic suspension geometry from the original GLC—the rear drive one—with RX-7 gearboxes and a 323 turbo single-cam (a Japanese domestic power unit that predated the twin cams) engine. As the project moved ahead (but still before it received production study approval) more and more of the bits from the parts bin fell off and were replaced by purpose-developed ones. Not all, mind you; the gearbox came from a 929, the differential had lineage to the 4wd 323 GTX turbo and the engine was based on the block from the 323 GTX.

Q: What were people's reactions to the car during its 1985 Santa Barbara test drive, and how close was this prototype to the '89 debut?

A: Santa Barbara was interesting, if only it reinforced what I had been expecting, namely that people would go tapioca over the car. Other than the exterior design theme (the interior was appallingly bad, done by IAD in the UK and looking like a reject from the 1954 General Motors Motorama at the Waldorf Astoria), the Santa Barbara car—semiofficially the V701 proof of concept vehicle—had damn little in common with the production car. First off, it was HUGE. Track was identical to the first-generation RX-7, no surprise since the package dimensions were, in part, set by the fact it used a first-generation RX-7 rear axle. With a 1.4 litre carbureted GLC engine, performance was nothing to get hot and bothered about, either.

Q: What was it like having your dream car come to life underneath you?

A: Huh? My dream car? I never worked on the Skoda 120L. No, it was a lot of people's dream car. And despite what some folks might tell you, in Japan as well as at MRA it had the same status. If the folks in Japan who developed the original and current cars weren't passionate about what they were doing, it would be apparent in the car. After all, the front end job—the ideas and the styling—is no more important than the nuts and bolts work of taking paper, clay and plastic and turning [them] into a real car that you can drive. It's certainly the showier and more glamorous part of the business, but it's also the fluffiest part. My input especially.

Q: Were there any features or concepts that Mazda dropped to meet price, weight, etc. that you would have liked to have seen put in the car?

A: You mean other than the MORONIC mechanical oil pressure lamp. That one really peeves me, and whoever came up with the idea of eliminating the real oil pressure gauge ought to be given a barbed-wire enema with a Tabasco chaser, then neutered with a couple of bricks. What irritates me most of all is that the drone who came up with that one didn't even have the courage to take the thing out altogether. I wouldn't have liked that, but it'd be a helluva lot more honest.

Okeh, now that tirade is over. Well, I was never a big fan of the pop-up headlamps. I would have liked to have seen them out from the start (particularly the damn big "air brakes," even if they did allow for fitting really excellent headlamps), a point that Hayashi-san—chief designer of the new car—reminded me about when I chatted with him a while back. I always thought that the 1.8 was a silly idea, and that keeping the 1.6 (the real 115 hp version) while adding a 2.0 litre made a lot more sense. Four piston brakes to suit would be nice, but with all this in, we'd probably be talking close to 20 kilodollars base. No, the one feature that I really thought they should have left on the car were the front and rear valance extensions. Thank God for MMA, however, since they offered the things as an accessory. May still do so, too. They got pulled from



the car to make shipping easier and to ensure that the front ramp angle would be reasonably friendly to deep drive-ways. No, that's the only thing I wish they'd left on the car.

Q: Could any other carmaker have produced the Miata successfully?

A: Well, I guess if it cost a few thousand more, sounded like a regular economy hatchback and wasn't too much fun to drive, sure. No problem. Why, even Hyundai could do that. But I guess it would hardly be a Miata then, right?

Q: Now that BMW, Porsche, and Mercedes (we won't talk about the Capri...) have put out fine contenders for the two-seater convertible market, where do you see the Miata in automotive history? Forerunner? Re-inventor?

A: In the giant scheme of things, I suspect the Miata sits in the same place as, say, a Benz Patentwagen, Ford Model T, VW Beetle, BMC Mini or Ford Mustang. Not as an 'icon', mind you, but rather as a car that was fortunate enough to come along at just the right time and be exactly what a reasonably large slice of the public wanted. Timing, and therefore luck, is an essential part of the automotive or any business, and the Miata was blessed by timing almost as good as the people who developed it. If you have to attribute some major descriptor to the Miata as regards what it did in/to the marketplace, I suspect you could call it a "wake-up call" to the auto industry. Less to build new sports cars (though that's obviously how some companies saw it) than how to develop new product. But that part's been lost on most car makers, as they continue to bumble their way from platform to platform. Even Mazda's slipping into that pit again. Cars have changed radically in the last fifty years, but the manner in which cars are developed hasn't kept up with the changes. A lot of people think that shortening development times and investing in some heavy-duty simultaneous engineering is the way of the future, but that's only part of the picture—the cost control side. When all makers have similar costs and quality (the way the industry is converging) cost control is not the all-important item it once was. To differentiate your product from a competitor's, you need a product that will create the basic appeal that the Miata has and all cars will need

in the next century. And that can't come from "brand management."

Hey, and why not talk about the Capri? Some folks may think of me as a traitor, but I like the Capri, particularly in the last version. I think the poor Capri's taken a lot of lumps for no reason. Miata owners shouldn't look down their collective noses at it since it's no more a sports car than a red 1991 Nissan Sentra 2-door sedan is. If anything, it's a Nissan Sentra/Toyota Corolla alternative that has the benefit of being a convertible. To me the Capri and the Miata were complementary, not competitive, vehicles. And don't forget that most Capri owners are potential Miata owners, particularly of used Miatas. Of course there are a few owners who think their Capri is a sports car. Such hapless individuals are obviously diseased. Almost as much as owners of four-cylinder Z3s.

Q: I hear you don't currently own a Miata. What year and color would you buy if you were to purchase one today? What do you think you would name it?

A: Well, regardless of whether it was a new one or a 116 hp 1.6, it'd be Mariner Blue. If I could get a new car in Mariner Blue, it'd be in the garage in however long it would take to build the thing and get it here from Hiroshima. I like the original car (a 1991 would probably be my first choice if I could find a tidy one), but Kijima-san's 1999 effort is awfully special. I think it'd be the '99. As for naming, that's the reserve of "WifeKaren" — she usually favors things like "Heathcliffe."

Q: What are your impressions of the Miata aftermarket — turbos, body kits, etc.?

A: My mother told me that I should never use that kind of language in public. It's no secret that I'm not a fan of forced induction for Otto-cycle engines, be it from a turbo or a positive-displacement supercharger. If I lived at more than 2500 m altitude, I suspect I'd have another opinion,

but with the sea-level existence I and most potential Miata owners live at, just say 'no' to blowers. First off, I think the car really starts to go off the boil with more than about 170 hp Michael Jordan of *Automobile Magazine* summed it up so well when he said:

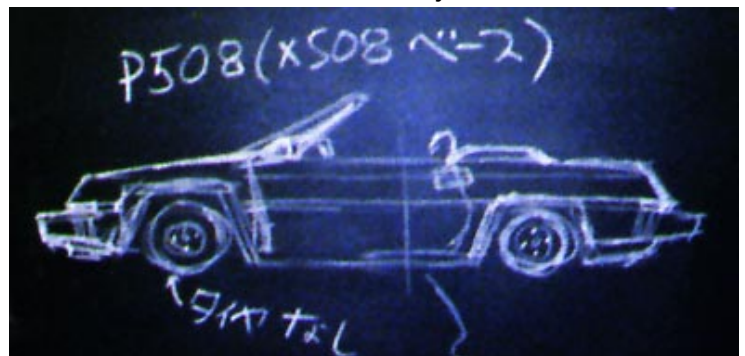
"If you can't go fast on 90 hp, 900 won't help you." There are some people who want the fastest Miata they can have, and are even willing to drop a bent eight under the hood. That's fine with me. But what they want isn't a Miata, but rather a Cobra with windup windows that just happens to look like a Miata.

Body kits? Well, I think that less is more. The previously mentioned valance/fascia extension and some 16-inch wheels are about as far as I think you need to go. Or maybe I should say as far as I'd need to go. And nobody (repeat, *nobody*) has done a nice rear deck spoiler for the original or new car. Not a *&?!# wing, but a nice, subtle lip spoiler.

Q: What sports car of the past do you believe the Miata most closely recreates? Or does it set its own standard?

A: I honestly don't think the Miata 'recreates' any previously built car. It was (and in latest form continues to be) a distillation of basic sports car virtues, updated into a package that works in the 1990s. Has anyone sitting in an MGB ever wondered if it wasn't just an updating of the philosophy behind, say, a 1926 Salmson Model D? I suspect not, even though that's arguably what it is. All cars have been influenced by those which have come before, since the automobile business doesn't exist in a vacuum for anyone. As for setting its own standard, I don't think so. Rather, the Miata fits the standards of nearly half a million hopefully happy owners — That's why it works!

Bob Hall's chalkboard drawing of a concept that eventually became the Miata.



T-Shirt/Sweatshirt Order Deadline— April 5

The club is about to reorder the original T-shirt— 4 color logo (red Miata). You **MUST** preorder (not prepay) for small, XXL short-sleeve and any size of long-sleeve shirt. These 4-color ink shirts will be printed on white or ash Hanes Beefy-Ts (100% cotton). Printed with small logo on front, large 8" logo on back: \$12 short sleeve, \$14 long (+ \$1 for XXL). *Pre-order by April 5, 1998*

Ruth Stark is taking orders for 90% cotton Fruit of the Loom SWEATSHIRTS (white or ash four-color 8" logo on the front). They will cost about \$20— *order sweatshirts by April 5, 1998*

The T-shirts and sweatshirts will be available for purchase at the Annual Meeting: Saturday, April 25.

"2nd Generation" Colored T-Shirts Prepay Deadline— April 25

Printed with a small logo on the front, large 8" logo on the back in one color (white, charcoal or tan*). Short sleeve shirts are \$10 each, long sleeve are \$12 (+ \$1 for XXL). Some of the available shirt colors are: peacock blue, royal blue, denim blue, stone-washed blue, red, ash and dark ash (heathers), merlot, forest green, sage green, navy, pebble (khaki-tan), natural, black and white.



The ordering/prepaying deadline for colored shirts printed in white, charcoal or tan ink is April 25th. Because of all the shirt colors that are available, these shirts *must be prepaid*. Actual fabric color samples will be shown again at the annual meeting.



**In next month's newsletter—
Miata
Performance
Driving School:
Steve Waid,
Bob and Brad
Brown's
adventures at
Thunderhill
Speedway.**

The New Battery

If you look deep into the trunk of the new '99 Miatas, you will find the same Absorption Glass Mat (AGM) battery that



is found in any other year Miata when it comes from Mazda. This battery, manufactured by Panasonic, has

only been available at Mazda dealers. Until now.— In the latest issue of *Miata Magazine* (98-1) is a full page ad by Mazda announcing a "new" replacement battery for all year Miatas. A review of the battery is also on page 30 of the same issue. The new battery is manufactured by Interstate Batteries, and is a sealed, conventional wet acid battery.

As soon as stocks are depleted of the original Panasonic battery, you will only be able to purchase the new battery from Mazda parts departments. The new battery should be around \$85 while the Panasonic fetches \$130. Both prices are retail and do not account for discounts given by participating dealers to SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB members.

Before junking your Panasonic battery, however, please review the article I wrote for the June '97 newsletter about it. This article can be accessed on the club web page or on Miata.net.

Cost as well as capacity, cranking power and longevity are all things to consider when buying a battery. The following specifications were provided by John Freas, jfreas@earthlink.net comparing the Panasonic and Interstate batteries:

Battery	Cranking Amps	Power Rating (amp/hrs)
Panasonic	320	30.00
Interstate	370	18.75

As you can see, the Interstate (new battery) has slightly more Cold Cranking Amps (CCA) than the Panasonic but the power rating is significantly less.

The longevity of the Panasonic AGM battery is quite amazing, some are more than seven years old, as of today. Dealers and owners are replacing AGM batteries early because they do not understand how to properly recharge them. It must not be done conventionally— it must be done slowly, 1 amp *or less* for 18 to 24 hours. We will have to wait and see about the longevity of the new battery, but being a flooded cell battery, it would be doing well to last three years.

—ANTHONY WILDE



A Bloomin' Good Day



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO

March 8, 1998

It must have been cabin fever San Diego-style that caused it. After several weeks of wet and dreary weather, followed by a week of gorgeous days, 63 Miatas convened at North County Fair for a day in the desert.

PHIL DAOUST had organized the run to coincide with the annual transformation of the desert, using nature's palette. The wildflowers were in full bloom and Miata enthusiasts were eager to savor the sights and smells almost as much as the drive to get there.

The record turnout was partially precipitated by member BRIAN BEEZLEY. A few days before the run, he announced on the club E-mail list that he would be running a contest. The person who correctly guessed the correct number of cars in attendance would win a \$25 gift

certificate from MM MARKETING—a little incentive to make things interesting.

Now, 63 Miatas is almost a quarter of a mile long (actually 0.15 miles nose to tail, but close enough). Keeping track of a train this long could be challenging. Several club members brought their CB radios along in order to help with the task. Phil out front, leading the parade all the way back to STEF and TOM GOULD, running sweep with other radio-equipped members interspersed in the line, helped shepherd the flock of Miatas towards Borrego Springs.

Leaving I-15 north, the route changed to highway 76 east. The line of Miatas stretched out to nearly a mile when other cars sandwiched themselves into the caravan. Phil apologized over the CB about the slow pace due to traffic, but it was relaxing as it allowed the solo

drivers to actually see some of the scenery for a change. A short pit stop at a Texaco station, with generous parking, allowed some of the OTM (other than Miata) traffic to bypass the group. We continued on, making a couple of jogs from highway 76 to highway 79 then to S2. Our path continued on Montezuma Valley Road, as the scenery changed from mountain meadows to sage and sandstone. As we crested a hill, suddenly the Anza Borrego desert panorama opened before us. Winding down to the valley below, the slow train of Miatas received many stares and cheers from people parked along the side of the road enjoying the view. People coming up from the desert also waved at the seemingly endless caravan.

As we reached the desert floor, it was soon apparent that most everyone else in Southern California had the same idea that day. The visitors' center, which was to be our first stop, had a mile-long line of SUVs and other mundane transporters waiting to get in. Phil again showed his leadership skills and made a hasty right turn towards the center of Borrego Springs. "We'll have lunch first," he announced over the CB.

The large circle park in "downtown" Borrego is usually where Miata club events can park with ease, but today all the spots were full. Phil guided us to a



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO

What will become a record field of Miatas begins to arrive at the North County Fair rendezvous.





PHOTO: BOB LLEVELLYN

large parking area just across the street, which quickly filled with Miatas and curious tourists.

After a brief repast in the warm sun, (a little cool in the shade) we adjourned to the parking area to get instructions for the next leg of our journey. Phil had scouted out some fields of wildflowers



PHOTO: CATHY BOOTH

just a mile away and hopefully away from the crowds. We merged into the Sunday traffic and proceeded toward the elusive blooms. As we drove along, the fields of sand and brush began to show more and more color, mostly violet, not quite dark red enough to be Merlot. The fragrance was overwhelming as we cruised past.

The road ended and no parking for 63 Miatas was to be found. Phil turned around for a return run down the same road, and the colorful line of cars quickly met itself going the other way. One unlucky Miata driver found the sand along the shoulder of the road to be too deep and became mired. As the call went out on the CB, several members stopped and pushed the wayward roadster back onto firm ground and the parade continued. Once more around the circle and off toward Julian and one of the finest Miata tracks, Wynola Road.

Wynola bypasses the madness of Julian traffic with twists and turns through some beautiful surroundings. The leisurely pace allowed everyone to enjoy the pastoral setting. Down the hill and past Dudley's (no way could we park THIS crowd there on a Sunday), we turned right on Magnolia before entering Ramona, again to avoid the traffic. Once on Magnolia, the Miatas showed their amphibious capabilities as we crossed a



PHOTO: DIANE LONG



PHOTO: BOB WELBY

Top: Even less than one-third of the pack makes an impressive lineup. Above left: Run leader Phil Daoust rallies the members for a picnic 'round the circle. Bottom: Sheila and O.D. Smith *au naturel*.

rain-swollen stream flowing across the road— comparisons of Phil to Moses were quickly made!

ART HAMILTON prompted a call for an ice cream stop as San Pasqual Valley Road led us near the starting point. One by one, the group of Miatas began to thin out as people headed for home. Nearly 20 Miatas remained when the parade finally ended at the appointed ice cream stop, across the freeway from North County Fair where we had started several hours earlier.

A record day, and beautiful one too! The colorful wildflowers were outclassed by the colorful parade of Miatas passing by. Sun, sand, and smiles all around.

— ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: DIANE LONG



New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

Ralph & Gracie Alder

Santa Ana
1990 Red A

Thomas Busch-Sorensen

San Diego
1994 Laguna Blue C

Shaun Deeming

Escondido
1994 Red A

Lisa Downing & Jason Freshwater

Escondido
1990 White B

Tom & Veronica Hanna

La Jolla
1992 Silver

William P. Kelnhoffer

San Diego
1990 Silver B

Jodi Lengenfelder

San Diego
1999 Silver Touring

Randolph M. Maheux

Escondido
1999 Black Leather

Keith C. Moore

San Diego
1995 White R

Robert Olsson

San Diego
1992 Silver

Larry Read & Elizabeth Norris

Palomar Mountain
1997 M (Marina Green)

Nicola Reynolds

Coronado
1994 Laguna Blue C

Randy & Susan Rhodes

Poway
1996 M (Starlight Blue)

Marie Shannon

San Diego
1993 Black C

David & Isabel Shapiro

Rancho Santa Fe
1997 STO (Twilight Blue)

Robert & Jennifer Sissung

Poway
1990 Red

Rosalind Smith

Carlsbad
1997 STO (Twilight Blue)



Member Profile

ERIN WRISLEY AND GREG LEVORCHICK

I wanted a Miata the first time I saw it. Two years ago I got what I wanted. In October of 1995 I purchased a '93 red and tan. It wasn't what I imagined. It was better. I have never been one to be attached to a car beyond a means of transportation, but *I love this little car!* After all, life is a journey not a destination.

My journey began 29 years ago. I was born and raised in Carlsbad. After attending the University of Southern California I returned home and became Miss Carlsbad 1991. For the past four years I have been a travel agent at A WORLD OF TRAVEL in Carlsbad and for two years a substitute Jazzercise instructor.

Greg and I met five and a half years ago and we will be married in September. While he loves my Miata he is a Cadillac man at heart. Greg recently put his passion to work at YOUNG PONTIAC CADILLAC in Escondido and he teaches

Spinning. We are also members of the Cadillac La Salle club. We don't have a garage so I just park my Miata in the trunk of his '68 Eldorado.

This past summer we took a road trip. We had a wedding to attend in Montana and decided to fly *Air Miata*. We headed north through Nevada, Utah (where we left behind two Yokohamas and picked up two new Kellys, ugh!) and Idaho to beautiful Big Fork, Montana. And then across Washington and Oregon to the coast, down to San Francisco to Yosemite (can't miss it), and then home. We had the top down the whole way even when it rained in Idaho. I have a feeling that we were a topic of conversation in Pocatello—"Crazy Californians!" We would highly recommend the trip.

Miata—the only way to fly!

Peggy Swearingen

San Diego
1990 White B

Koji & Minako Takeda

San Diego
1997 White Touring

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

Kristin Ebersol

Jeff & Jeanette Holladay

Hamilton Lowder

Terry Merrill

Dixie & Marty Rath

Steve & Laurie Waid

There are now 219 memberships consisting of 322 members.

- 73 Red
- 48 White
- 23 Black
- 18 Montego Blue
- 10 Mariner Blue
- 10 Silver
- 8 Laguna Blue
- 6 BRG
- 6 Merlot
- 6 Starlight Blue
- 3 Marina Green
- 2 Yellow
- 1 Emerald Green
- 2 Unreported



200 Plus!

I was hoping that we would hit a membership count of 200 Miatas before our annual meeting this month. I am pleased to report that we not only hit that goal, we blew right past it! At this writing, we have nearly 220 Miatas and well over 300 members! The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB has been the largest single-county chapter in all of MCA for some time. Now, we are quickly closing in on being the largest chapter in all of California and the second or third largest chapter in the United States! Absolutely incredible!

Of course, none of this would have been possible without *you*. All of you! Your enthusiasm to spread the word. Your contagious desire to have fun in our beloved roadsters. Your willingness to lend a hand to fellow members in times of need, both happy and sad. My thanks to each and every one of you and my congratulations to member THOMAS BUSCH-SORENSEN for being our 200th membership!

Moss Motors Festival

Those of you that attended "Miata at the Ranch" last year will remember what a GREAT time we all had. The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB was a "presence" at that event and some other chapter members were left asking (literally, out loud), "What have they got that we don't have." Although Moss isn't holding a Miata-only event this year, they are inviting all Miata and British car enthusiasts to attend their 6th Annual Moss Motors Festival in July. This is the 50th Anniversary of Moss Motors and, in celebration, the Festival is *free* (meals and hotel accommodations not included)! What could be better than that?

The venue, beautiful Flag is Up Farms, is located "just up the road" in the Santa Ynez Valley (near Solvang). The club will again be caravanning from San Diego up to the event on Thursday, July 16. Currently, we have over 30 members already planning to attend this event. Don't be left out of the fun! Hotel rooms are going fast. Make your event and hotel reservations today! If you need an event brochure/sign-up form, see me at any event.

Annual Membership Meeting

My, the last year has gone by too quickly. Hard to believe that it is once again time to gather, party, plan and elect. All members are strongly encouraged to attend our annual membership meeting on Saturday, April 25th. Just as last year, we will have a "Picnic in the Park" prior to the meeting. (See "Meeting Places" for directions to the picnic site.) We will also be celebrating the completion of our second year with a big birthday cake and sodas served at the meeting! This is an important meeting. Everyone please make plans to attend. Thanks!

Time to Retire

My friends... It has been an honor to serve as your club president for the last two years. I have had a blast! Certainly, the position has held its challenges from time to time but the fun has *far* outweighed everything else. This club has become such a huge part of my life that, frankly, it's hard to imagine *not* being the leader of such a great group of people. However, all good things must come to an end. I believe that, in order for the club to stay fresh, exciting and vital, "new blood" is needed at the top from time to time. New ideas, new approaches, new leadership. In other words, I believe in term limits.

With that in mind, I am both pleased and saddened to report that I will not be seeking a third term as President of the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB.

I don't know where to begin to say thanks to everyone that has made the past two years such a fun trip down the twisties! Certainly, my thanks to all of you...the entire membership...for sharing your club spirit and Miata enthusiasm! On that last Borrego Run, when we had 63 cars and the caravan stretched out over 4 or 5 miles, well, that put a BIG smile on my face! There are a lot of chapters that don't even *have* 63 cars. Pretty cool!

More specifically, my thanks to all of the hard-working volunteers that have helped to make my "job" so easy and to keep it running smoothly and professionally!

To board members and newsletter crew past and present: TOM and STEF GOULD, VBOB KRUEGER, TONY and MARY BEECHER, ROBERT "JTBOB" HOLLAND, ANTHONY "NEVADABOB" WILDE, CINDY PALOMA, RAINER MUELLER, RUTH STARK, and NATALIA RISSOLO... To the other regular contributors and/or newsletter folding volunteers: CATHY BOOTH, VICKY KRUEGER, JERI JONES and SEAN O'CONNOR, FRANK SHINE and STEPHEN DELONGE, AND ELLIOT and BARB SHEV... To the dozens of members that have hosted a fun run or other event: RUTH and LOU STARK, RAINER and MARIANNE MUELLER, JACK BRANDAIS, GRANT, MARI and BOO BOO GOODMAN, RICHARD SCHERSCHHEL, TONY and MARY BEECHER, LAURA ROMAN, NATALIA RISSOLO and JASON MOORHEAD, TOM and STEF GOULD, YVONNE and STEVE HART, DIANE LONG, FRANK SHINE and STEPHEN DELONGE, O.D. SMITH and SHEILA CANNON, JACK and SUE HINKLE, ELLIOT and BARB SHEV, ART HAMILTON, JOHN and GERRY CONN, KATHIE and LYNN MCCLELLAND, PHIL DAoust, BOB and DEBBIE LLEWELLYN, MICHAEL CARRILLO, ZACK BROADBENT, and JACK MONACO... To *all* of you, a heartfelt THANK YOU!

Finally... I can't put into words how much I appreciate the support and patience of my beautiful wife, Cathy! She has filled her role as "first lady" with grace and elegance. Not a meeting or event goes by where she's not spending the majority of her time talking with new members and making them feel welcome! She does not do this because she feels she has to. Rather, that is just the way she is. Her heart is big, warm and full of love! I am a very lucky man and I am eternally thankful that Cathy is my "navigator" down the road of life!

Cathy... Thank you for being my better half! I love you!

Until next month— Oops! Almost forgot! Next month, this column will belong to someone new. Well, keep that top down anyway!

— MARK

