



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS



VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1999

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



January 2—Saturday
Hangover Run



January 9-10
Autocross at the "Q"



January 16-18, 1999
**Whale Watching
Weekend with the
Sahauro Miata Club**



January 16—Saturday
**Twilight Tour and
Dinner with the
Sahauro Miata Club**



January 17—Sunday
Whale Watching



January 18—Monday
Sahauro Fun Run



January 23-24
Autocross at the "Q"



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Nethercutt Collection



February 27-28
**Madonna Inn
Overnight Getaway**

July 17—new date
**Miatas at the Getty,
One More Time**

From the Editor

Slip Slide'n Away

One of the most frequently asked questions on the club E-mail list lately has been "What kind of new tires should I buy?" While this can be a next-to-impossible question to answer, here is some information to hopefully make the choice easier.

From the beginning, the Miata has come from the factory with 14-inch wheels. Only a few of the M-Edition Miatas were fitted with 15-inch wheels ('95 Merlot, '96 Starlight, '97 Marina Green and the Twilight Blue STO). Beginning with the '99 model, 15-inch wheels are available as part of the Leather and Sports packages.

The consensus among most Miata owners has been that the '90-'97 OEM tires are, for the most part, junk. The problems stem from the fact that these tires are compromises in every department except one, cost. Mazda wanted cheap tires on the car to keep costs down. The tires were a compromise between handling and ride, noise and tread wear. The stock Bridgestone tires are considered by many to be downright dangerous when the road gets wet, or even if the humidity gets too high. I won't address the OEM tires for the '99 model, as I do not have any hard data at this time, but the Michelin Pilots, offered on selected packages, appear to be generally better regarded than were their predecessors.

Upgrading your Miata's tires is a relatively easy and fairly inexpensive thing to do. Dunlop makes the well-regarded D60 A2 tire in the stock replacement size of 185/60 R14. This tire is a good replacement for the OEM tires for those who want long tire wear as well as better handling. The Yokohama A509, a comparable tire to the D60, is available in this size as well. Either of these tires can be had for only \$50-\$60 each.

Moving into higher-performance tires, usually with a corresponding reduction in tire life, is still possible in the 14-inch size, but the range of product has always been limited. These tires are for those of us who want the better handling offered by a slightly wider contact patch and lower sidewall profile without the expense of buying larger wheels. Several years ago, both Dunlop and Yokohama made high-performance tires in the 195/55 R14 size. The overall diameter of this tire is very similar to the 185/60 R14 OEM unit. The Dunlop tire in this size has traditionally been the D40 M2, but it is getting very hard to find since it has been replaced by the SP 8000. Fortunately, SP 8000s are also available in this size. Unfortunately, the newer Dunlop SP 9000 is not available in this size. In years past, Yokohama made this size available in their AVS Intermediate line, but it appears that this size in the AVS-I has been discontinued. Unlike Dunlop, however, Yokohama makes its higher-performance AVS-I available in the stock 185/60 or the slightly wider (and taller) 195/60 for 14-inch wheels for \$75-\$85 apiece. The Dunlop D40s, if you can find them, run \$70-\$90 in the 195/55 R14, while the newer, quieter, and better wet weather SP 8000s are only a bit more at approximately \$75-\$95.

Moving up one wheel size, or replacing your current 15-inch tires if you already have

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plus-1 wheels, brings you considerably more choices in high-performance tires. The same players from Dunlop and Yokohama are available in this size as well, but they are joined by a relative newcomer in performance tires for the Miata, Toyo. Most 15-inch wheels for the Miata readily accept a 195/50 R15 size tire. The leading Dunlop offering in this size, again, has been the D40. Its replacement in recent years has been either the SP 8000 or the higher performance SP 9000. The Yokohama offering is again the AVS Intermediate. The comparable tire from Toyo is the Proxes T1, which has made its entrance into the Miata world of tires very competitively in recent years. The T1 is very favorably comparable to the other tires in this group. Prices for all these tires typically run from \$95 to \$105 each at discount outlets.

SDMC (and Socalm) member KEVIN LAKKIS is an engineer for Toyo Tire USA. In early '97 he provided several sets of T1 tires to both clubs for member testing and evaluation (SDMC News, Volume 2, Number 4). Testers drove with these tires on their Miatas for 30 days and provided written feedback to Kevin. The initial testing is now winding down as the last few testers are finishing off the well-used (abused?) tires before they are shipped

back to Toyo. Several who tested the tires went right out and purchased some T1s soon after putting their old tires back on their cars, myself included. The difference in the car without the Toyo T1s was very surprising. I was running Dunlop D40s (in the 14-inch size) on my car prior to and just after testing the T1s. After putting the D40s back on, the car felt less stable and sure-footed when pushed. I actually felt less confident when driving on twisty roads than I had when the T1 tires were installed.

Soon, much to my delight, a fellow club member happened to be selling the stock 15-inch wheels from his '96 Starlight M. I snapped up this windfall quickly so that I could purchase some T1s for my Miata. The car is now much more fun to drive, if that's possible, and the wheels look great as well.

The Toyo Proxes T1s have been available only in 15-inch sizes and larger thus far. However, Kevin has made a presentation to his employer about the need for a 14-inch version and rumors persist that Toyo will introduce a high-performance tire in the 185/60 or 195/55 size for Miata enthusiasts soon. Only time will tell.

Take care and HAVE FUN!
—ANTHONY WILDE

SOCALM EVENTS

General Meeting & Election

Date: Saturday, January 23, 1999

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Mazda Research & Design Center, 1421 Reynolds Ave., Irvine

This is SOCALM's main, annual membership meeting. Topics will be:

1. The Bylaws Amendment
2. Club officer elections
3. Planning of the 1999 club calendar

After the meeting, which should last about 2 to 2.5 hours, we'll all head over to the Speedway Cafe for lunch.

Directions: Exit the 55 Freeway in southern Orange County (south of the I-5) at MacArthur. Turn east onto MacArthur as you exit the freeway (which is a left if you were coming from the north). After about half a mile, turn Left onto Red Hill Ave. Turn Left onto Reynolds Ave.

Socalm contacts:

President— K. Zack Broadbent, (714) 525-9065, racerzack@aol.com
Club E-mail list: socalm@avatar.com

AUTOCROSS AT THE "Q"



The following autocross events are *tentatively scheduled* to take place in the parking lot of the Qualcomm Stadium at the Jack Murphy Sports Complex.

- Saturday, January 9. practice day
- Sunday, January 10 race day
- Saturday, January 23 practice day
- Sunday, January 24 race day
- Sunday, February 14 race day
- Friday, March 19–21 National Tour

To confirm autocross information call:

- San Diego SCCA Hotlines (619) 441-1333
(800) 360-4454
- Web page www.sdr-solo2.com
- Rainer Mueller (760) 439-0067
- John Godden (619) 538-6165

Come participate or watch our club members race at the autocross. To participate you need to register for a Solo II card and number (\$15) and have a DOT approved helmet. Loaner helmets are available at the autocross.

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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, Anthony Wilde. 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. Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

Internet: The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB has established a dedicated World Wide Web Home Page at <http://www.sandiegomiataclub.org>. 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

Hangover Run

Date: Saturday, January 2

Time: 10 a.m. departure

Place: Ortega Business Plaza, San Juan Capistrano

Run Leader: K. Zack Broadbent, (714) 449-9280, racerzack@aol.com

This joint run between SOCALM and SDMC is a repeat of the 1998 run which so successfully held off the rain until the very last minute, and this time we'll beat the rain for sure. The run will take Ortega Highway to Lake Elsinore, then we'll take some back roads that wind along the border between Riverside and San Diego Counties, looping around to end in Temecula. Some of the scenery is just out of this world. At the end of the run, we will stop at one of the Temecula wineries and then head over to Oscar's for lunch. The run will end at I-15 so it'll be easy for you to get home, regardless of where home might be.

Drivers are asked to remember the laws about drinking and driving if you decide to sample wine.

Directions: From I-5 exit on Ortega Highway (74), and go East. Approximately half a mile after you exit, turn Right on Rancho Viejo and then turn immediately Left into the Ortega Business Plaza. We will meet at the far end of the parking lot.

Whale Watch Weekend Twilight Tour and Dinner

Date: Saturday, January 16

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: Seaforth Sportfishing parking lot, Mission Bay

Run Leader: Steve Cushman

This event is the initial get-together with members of the Sahauro Miata Club who will be here from Phoenix over the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. We will meet near their hotel for a twilight tour of the harbor ending with dinner in Coronado.

Directions: I-5 to SeaWorld Drive exit. West on SeaWorld Dr, stay right onto West Mission Bay Dr., go through traffic loop. Left at first stoplight onto access road, immediate Left onto Quivira Road.

From I-8: I-8 West to West Mission Bay Drive exit. right at end of off ramp. Proceed over bridge, go past SeaWorld Dr., stay right onto West Mission Bay Dr., go through traffic loop. Left at first stoplight onto access road, immediate Left onto Quivira Road.

Whale Watching Cruise

Date: Sunday, January 17

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Place: Seaforth Sportfishing parking lot, 1717 Quivira Road, San Diego (Mission Bay) (619) 224-3383
See directions below, left.

Coordinator: Stef Gould (619) 297-4272, stef@miata.net

Meet at 11 a.m. in the parking lot as the cruise will leave promptly at 11:30 a.m.

Special group rate for the cruise is \$12 for adults; \$8 for juniors (15 and under) and seniors (64 years and older). Paid reservations* for the cruise must be made by January 8. Please indicate how many tickets (adult, junior, and senior), make your checks payable to the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB, and send them to:

SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB
P.O. Box 2286
Spring Valley, CA 91979

*Sorry, there can be no refunds on these tickets after January 12, 1999.

Sahauro Fun Run

Date: Monday, January 18

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Place: Seaforth Sportfishing parking lot, Mission Bay
See directions below, left.

A Fun Run to show off the East County to our new friends from Arizona. We'll meet near their hotel in Marina Village area of Mission Bay and do our traditional "drive, eat, drive" along twisty, scenic East County roads. Parting company with the Sahauro Club at I-8 near the Viejas Casino.

Monthly Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 28

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!

UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

February 27–28, 1999

Madonna Inn Overnight Getaway

SDMC and VROOM— weekend of fun!
See information on page 4.

March 5–6, 1999

Overnight at Harrah's, Laughlin, Nevada

Contact: Bari Hyde, (714) 827-2940 or
bhyde@earthlink.net
See article on page 4.

Saturday March 20, 1999

SJVMC '99 St. Patrick's Day Poker Run

Fresno – Clovis, California

Cost: \$45 per car includes— One t-shirt, participation in poker run, lunch for 2, and parking lot events. Optional dinner.

Contact: Michael Toepfer,
(209) 440-9866
RonHex27@worldnet.att.net

March 26–28, 1999

'99 Thunderhill

Miata Performance Driving School

Thunderhill Park in Willows, California—one hour north of Sacramento.

Two and a half days of training which will enable you to become a safer driver and help you get every ounce of performance from your Miata. \$325 registration includes Friday dinner, manual, T-shirt, patch, autocross and prizes.

To register or for more information:
www.teammiata.com/thunderhill/school.htm or (510) 370-8262

May 6–9, 1999

Miata World '99

Miata 10th Anniversary Celebration,
Lone Star Miata Club (Dallas/Ft. Worth)

Sold Out! But you can call or E-mail via the Website to be put on the wait list.
\$325 couple, \$255 solo
Web site: www.Miata99.com
Toll free info: (877) MIATA 99

May 20–23, 1999

3rd Annual Gathering at Four Corners Vallecito Reservoir— Bayfield, Colorado

Once again clubs from all over the west will descend on the Four Corners area for a weekend of spontaneous fun!

Contact: Wanda, Utah Miata Club
Wahbates@compuserve.com

October 7-10, 1999

Surf'N'Safari

SDMC way-cool regional Miata event.



Upcoming Events:

Madonna Inn Weekend

Date: February 27– 28th, 1999

Coordinators: Steve and Laurie Waid,
(619) 672-0782, swaid2@san.rr.com

This weekend will include a lot of driving— over 700 miles. We will leave early Saturday morning and caravan for about 6 hours to the Madonna Inn in San Luis Obispo. Then VROOM, Miata club of the Vandenberg area, will host us on a late afternoon run on some of the best roads of Central California. Sunday VROOM will again lead us on an after-breakfast run that will start us south on our way home.

25 rooms are reserved for Saturday night under SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB at \$87 at the Madonna Inn. You may, of course, upgrade for additional cost. You will be required to place a \$75 refundable deposit at the time of your reservation. I recommend that you reserve quickly in order to choose the room you want. Remember, no two rooms are alike. Call (800) 543-9666 and ask for reservations.

Saturday night will have a complete dinner for \$25 per person and a no-host bar. Complete means— entree, salad, beverage, dessert, tax and tip. Steve will send to all members who plan to attend an entree selection for the Saturday night dinner and will ask that a check, made out to the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB, be given to him prior to January 15th.

Overnight at Harrah's— Laughlin, Nevada

Date: March 5–6, 1999

Place: Harrah's, Laughlin, Nevada

Coordinator: Bari Hyde,
(714) 827-2940 or
bhyde@earthlink.net

Get all your nickles, quarters and dollars together. This is a joint venture for SOCALM and SDMC at Harrah's Laughlin. I have blocked 10 rooms, all non-smoking, at \$25 a night if you commit on or before February 5th — after that it's \$45 a night.

Commit means: call Harrah's in Laughlin, (800) 427-7247 and ask for the "Miata" booking and put your name and credit card number on one of the (five) king or (five) double rooms. (If you need smoking please request same, when giving name and credit card number)

Just so I can keep tabs on how bookings are progressing— hopefully we will need more rooms— please contact me at the above E-mail address or phone number.

Looking forward to seeing you at the river, with your cute little car!

— BARI HYDE

Nethercutt Collection Joint Run SDMC/SOCALM/VROOM

Date: Saturday, February 20, 1999

Time: 9:30 a.m.— we must check in for the 10 o'clock tour no later than 9:45

Place: J.B. Nethercutt Collection,
Sylmar, CA (Northeast of Los Angeles)

Coordinators: John and Gerry Conn,
(714) 441-2552 or
connjb@earthlink.net

A free, two-hour guided tour through J.B. Nethercutt's (nephew of Merle Norman, cosmetics company fame) personal collection showcased in elegant surroundings. This is a must if you like antique/classic cars (Bugatti, Delahaye, Ferrari, Packard, Rolls Royce to name a few), and large mechanical musical instruments.

RSVP Required: Contact the Conns at above number/address, leave your name, phone, and number of people attending. We are limited to 50 people so you must RSVP or you cannot join the tour. The Conns will maintain a waiting list and reconfirm the week prior to the tour and fill in any cancellations. There are some restrictions— no jeans, no shorts, no smoking, no flash photos, no video taping and no children under 12.

There will be lunch and a run after the tour— we guarantee it will be on great roads! Watch for more details in the February newsletter.



Installing Remote Trunk Release and Door Locks

I knew soon after I bought my new red '99 I was upset with the lack of luxury features that I had enjoyed in the Lexus I just traded away. Although I purchased the leather package with "automatic door locks" it became painfully obvious that the passenger side door key lock would not lock and unlock the driver's door. Trying to take things off the passenger's seat and locking up the door from that side, I would have to go



around the car to the driver's side to lock up. Now this might not be important in your basic open roadster, but I have to use the car for work as well as play, and I often use the passenger's seat to store my briefcase and other essentials, parking the vehicle in some unsavory places where top down is an invitation to disaster.

I was also frustrated with the trunk lock, which I often would like to open after the car was locked up. The key lock sits one half inch above the rear bumper. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't avoid scratching the bumper with my pile of keys and my new Miata key fob. I didn't want an alarm on the car because I'm not sure it is of much value. Don't we all notice the crowds of people gathering around a car in the parking lot whose alarm just went off? (NOT) Usually these are ignored. And the idea of another item on my belt along with a pager and phone was objectionable. There had to be a better way.

I found the solution in an item sold by Duetto Motors — a remote keyless entry system for the door and trunk that didn't require an alarm purchase. The product is made by Auto Loc (a company I found on the Internet) for \$120 (the purchase price was the same from Duetto as from Auto Loc directly). Armed with the Power Trunk Kit (PT 1000), the Keyless Entry Unit (KY 3750), and a door Actuator (GT 2000), I set about to install the unit.

With no knowledge of what I was doing, I received a boost from ELLIOT SHEV, who spent an afternoon and evening helping me with the trunk release. The release includes a solenoid, cable, a manual button and a relay. The instructions from Auto Loc are generic, so I

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18 + 65 Senior Enthusiast



My 1997 red Miata is my 18th sportscar. 15 of the 18 have been red ragtops, the last one a 1969 Alfa Duetto Spyder. That was eleven years ago and I thought my joy in driving a responsive car was over. How wrong can a person be?

My first sportscar was a 1954 100-4 Austin Healey 3-speed. My wife and I drove it to Yosemite on our honeymoon in June, 1959. The cockpit heat was so severe we had to stop at streams and rivers to wet down towels to put on the transmission tunnel. That was the start. For the next 27 years a long line of sportscars came and went, including two more Austin Healeys, one MGA, one Triumph TR6, two Fiat 124s, one Sunbeam Alpine, two 356A bathtub Porsche coupes, and seven Alfa Romeos. You can understand why I consider myself an enthusiast! (Some, including my wife, would say fanatic!) In 1986 I sold my last Alfa to a Japanese gentlemen who shipped it home to Japan.

During the first few years of our marriage, starting in 1959, my wife and I belonged to a sportscar club in Oakland, California. We would meet every Friday night for a fun type rally ending at a remote location where we all enjoyed food and spirits. Almost every Sunday would find me at either a local fairground or supermarket parking lot, happily auto-crossing the day away. In those days they gave you a participation dash plaque, I ran out of room on my dash to put them.

That explains the 18 part of the title equation. In April 1997 I purchased my first Miata. I had watched the furor that came about in late 1989 and early 1990 when the first Miatas went for thousands over sticker. I had always been English/

German/Italian in my choice of sports-cars and couldn't begin to imagine the Japanese auto industry producing a real, authentic sports-car. How very wrong I was!

In March of 1997 I spent the weekend at an old friend and client's house some dis-

tance from Riverside where I have had my own business for almost 40 years. When I drove up to his condo I was startled to see a 1996 red Miata in his driveway. He had bought it a short time before and had already installed Koni shocks, racing springs and sway-bars. It looked stock but had a nice aggressive stance. That evening I drove his Miata over a stretch of mountain road and found myself in love all over again.

Within a month I had purchased my new 1997. The reason some people call me a "fanatical" enthusiast is my penchant for wanting my cars individualized to a point that there is only a slight chance that there is another just like it.

The Miata is perfect for me. There is so much in the way of aftermarket enhancements and performance accessories that I have been like a kid in a candy store.

I am fortunate that JACKSON RACING is so close to my home. After talking to Hal, my fellow Miata owner, about what was available, we made an appointment at Oscar's great shop and I ended up with Cold Air Induction and a cat-back exhaust. There was a noticeable improvement in performance but I had already started formulating plans to install a Sebring Supercharger.

With a September, 1997 trip to Coeur D'Alene, Idaho on the calendar I set about to prepare the car for the 4000+ mile, 15 day jaunt.

I installed 16" chrome wheels with 215/40 low profile tires, 2" Intrax racing springs, Tokico Illumina adjustable shocks and Jackson hollow sway bars. Other than a mildly stiff ride the car handles better than any sportscar I have owned—including the Alfas, which were great.

I called Oscar Jackson and asked him if he felt I should install the Sebring

Supercharger prior to leaving on my trip. He indicated that my driving enjoyment would be greatly increased, especially for that distance. I took his advice and had it installed, with a J & S Knock Sensor, by Mark, a Master Technician at Oscar's shop. Later my dealer told me it was the most professional installation he had ever seen. I took the opportunity to have the supercharger cover polished and the front crossover pipe chrome plated. I also installed a polished cam cover from Jackson Racing. The final touch on the engine was a set of chrome engine caps and the polished Sebring strut bar from Dealer Alternative. I hate to admit it, but that was the start of a long line of polished and chromed items under the hood—it's grown to be its own little passion.

During that time period a chrome sport bar and hard boot cover were obtained from Racing Beat as well as headrest and door speakers from Clearwater.

As you can imagine, the trip was a pure joy. The biggest problem was keeping the Miata under 80 mph. I got one ticket in Washington State, where they have unmarked cars and radar. The reaction from people to this beautiful red roadster with the chrome roll bars and Atlantic Design bags strapped behind them was phenomenal. The top was down all but one day, when it rained in Bend, Oregon. Actually, most people did not know what kind of car it was—I love it!

In November of 1997 my Miata was used by a wheel manufacturing client of mine in his booth at the Las Vegas SEMA show. I had a great time and met some really nice people. Two of my favorites were Andy and Janet Cork, the owners of BRAINSTORM PRODUCTS. We became instant friends which is easy when you share the same passions.

In March of this year I turned 65 years of age. That is the second part of the $18 + 65 = Senior Enthusiast$ equation. A short time ago I became a member of SDMC and am thoroughly enjoying the experience. The coming years, and my Miata, can only bring me more enjoyment and continued enthusiasm.

I do miss one thing—I do not get waves from other Miata owners because, I can only surmise that, they do not recognize the roadster as a Miata—oh well, you can't have everything!

— JACK GOSNEY





PHOTOS: TREVOR ROGERS

Vista Holiday Parade

December 6, 1998

On a Saturday in early December members of the SDMC participated in the Vista Holiday Parade. The morning crew at radio station SETS 102 had asked for an open vehicle to ride in during the parade, and we gave them three instead—one for each person. They requested a black, red, and white car (to match the colors of their logo) and members MIKE THOMAS, TREVOR and MELISSA ROGERS, and JON MARTINEZ and JUDY POWELL provided their Miatas to fill the bill.

The parade started around 11 a.m. just as the sun broke out and warmed us up for the chauffeuring task. We were sporting SETS 102 banners on our trunks and DJ's on our folded-down top areas, except Summer who rode on Jon and Judy's roll bar, OUCH! We were 56th in a lineup of 72 entries so we actually got rolling a little late. The SETS folks carried signs of their station logo, which made waving and hanging on a dicey proposition at best.

The parade route through downtown Vista was lined with holiday decorations and parade watchers. The three Miatas tried several formations including weav-

ing back and forth single-file and driving straight ahead three-across while maintaining a blistering 1 to 2 mile an hour pace and honking our air horns, much to the glee of our riders. We smiled and waved to the happy crowd while blasting SETS 102 on our car radios and trying not to overtake the young baton-twirling group marching in front of us. At one point the street widened a little and, following Jon's lead, we all did a tight circle, much to the delight of the crowd.

We ended up at the Curbside Cafe for lunch afterward, where the radio gang gave thanks and comedy night passes for our efforts. There was talk about a Saint Paddy's Day parade next spring where the whole club could get in the act. The DJ's were very appreciative and interested in our cars—who knows?—maybe future members will emerge. The club was mentioned several times on the air including thanks the following Monday.

All in all, a good time was had by all. Thanks to Trevor, Melissa, Jon and Judy for volunteering their time and Miatas to help this ol' cowboy get in the holiday spirit.

—MIKE THOMAS



Holiday Party

December 12, 1998



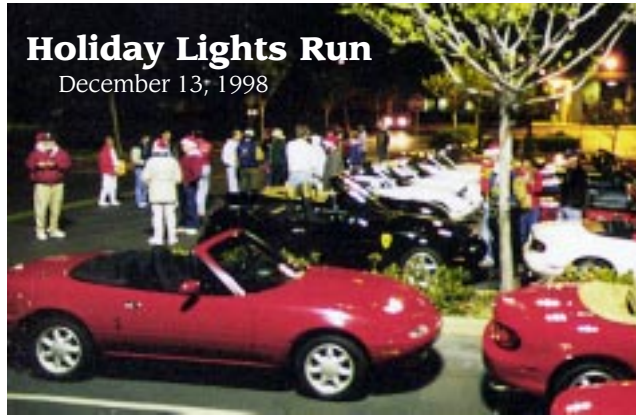
PHOTOS: ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: ED LANGMAD

Holiday Lights Run

December 13, 1998



PHOTOS: ED LANGMAD

The 3rd annual SDMC Holiday Party was a huge success, judging by the smiles on the faces of the over 100 members in attendance. Friends, food and fun! What better way to enjoy a Miata Holiday.



Mark and Cathy Booth led twenty-one Miatas, and one OTM, on their 3rd annual Christmas Lights Tour of neighborhoods in Spring Valley and El Cajon. The decorated Miatas and their occupants were as much an attraction as the decorated homes.





**McKamey
Autocross
Phase I
School**

PHOTOS: ELLIOT SHEV

Elliot Shev putting the Project Car through segment two

December 5-6, 1998

Twenty four fun-seeking drivers attended Phase I of the McKamey Autocross School jointly sponsored by the Southern California Autocross Team and SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. Like most events, our club was well represented. Unlike San Diego, the weather was wet and very cold both days. The school was a single-day event that challenged individuals to better themselves. Two classes were held at the Naval Training Center, Preble Field— one each day.

Autocross is a unique form auto racing. It is you against the clock. A multi-car event, run one car at a time, much like down hill ski racing, where the individual challenges the course for time and at the end of the day, the best time wins. Unlike golf, another self-challenging sport, autocross is always fun. The interesting thing though, is that, like golf, the harder you drive, the worse your results.

This sport is one of finesse. Driving in control and at the correct speed for the next situation. Easy to say, not so easy to do. That is exactly why we all attended this school. From the novice to the experienced autocrosser, all improved by the end of the day.

First, the course layout. The course consisted of five timed segments each with its own challenge. Having each segment timed individually allowed each driver to have a measurement of how they performed each of the five challenges through the day. The course started out with a slalom of four pylons. The next segment was a constant radius right circle followed by segment three, a 90°-left turn going straight setting up for segment four, a 90°-right sweeper into, what is called a "garage" followed by a sweeping right back to the circle for segment five, this time going to the right. The "garage" can be described best this way.



Signing up and drivers meeting



Cold, wet and smiling — let's get started!



Lined up for the inspection

Still smiling at the end of the day



PHOTO: TOM GOULD

If you imagine a two-car garage with two single doors with a pillar between the two single doors and the doors are open. You must drive in one side of the garage and out the other with out hitting the pillar or the walls at "speed!"

The day was organized into nine periods. They were, Tech Session, Drivers Meeting, Course Walk, Base Runs, Heats, Lunch, Heats, Runs, Meeting and Review.

The tech session consisted of each car being inspected for safety, just like they do at the autocross, including the driver's helmets. During the drivers meeting, the days events were reviewed so each run group (we were divided in six groups of two drivers each) knew when to run and when to work.

Next we walked the course to become familiar with the course and offered a bit of advice as to where we should be focused as we drove through pylons. The advice was good, but after the day was over, we really understood what the advice meant.

Next we all made base runs. These were driven solo to establish a base line of our times through the five segments. We all drove three or four laps.

Now for the heats. These laps were

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Voodoo Bob Krueger exiting segment two, the right 360



Stef Gould leaving the slalom on her way to segment two



Barb Shev negotiating segment five, the left 360

First Day of School

In August when I signed up for the one-day course by the McKamey driving school I had no idea what autocross was nor did I have any interest. My sole purpose for attending this event was to learn enough to keep from looking like a dork on the club runs.

On the morning of the class I awoke to the first day of a two week bout with the flu. Needless to say I was not too thrilled with the idea of spending the day standing around and driving on a very cold windswept parking lot— however, I had paid over two hundred dollars and lunch was included. So complete with a borrowed helmet and a deep fear of making a fool out of myself I found myself standing there looking at a bunch of orange traffic cones spread around a parking lot that made absolutely no sense at all. After walking the course three times I could see there was some logic to the placement of these cones. I also realized there was no way I could find my way around this course in my Miata: thank god I was not the first to drive. When the time came for my first runs all I wanted to do was get around the course without getting lost and get it over with.

The rest of the morning laps found my self confidence rising; each successive lap caused the adrenaline level to rise. It was sheer joy to realize how the Miata loved to dive around the cones in the slalom, and tear around the right and left turns without me completely losing control of the vehicle. From that point the day only got better. Unfortunately I had to leave before our final timed runs in the evening. So I will never know how much I improved.

I still don't have any desire to autocross. But since that day, when coming to a curve in the road or just an ordinary corner, I find myself turning my head to look for the next cone. And as I round the turn squeezing the accelerator and feathering the wheel. I can whole heartedly recommend this class to any one that wants improve their driving, or just have fun.

— PAUL MCKEIGHAN



driven with an instructor as a passenger and as a driver. This gave the student the chance to be instructed as a driver up close and personal and to observe a pro drive their own car to feel how it can perform and how to approach the course the correct way. This was a very enlightening event for all. Same car, better times. Guess it's not the car, must be the driver!

Now we all had lunch and a chance to review the time sheets for the morning with some good discussion with the instructors.

After lunch we all had more personal instruction driving with a different instructor who showed us the McKamey method of driving autocross. This is a balance of looking where you are going *next*, and adjusting your speed to *setting up* to achieve it, under control and at maximum speed. Again, sounds easy, but requires a lot of finesse to accomplish.

After the instruction, we all had three more timed runs. This was to establish our times to measure how we improved over the day. This would imply what we learned and how we applied it. Next, we did what we in the club do best, we went to eat! At dinner we received our time sheets for the day. Wow, what an improvement! Some of us improved a lot, and those who were already pretty good improved, but the percentage was smaller. All improved.

Personally, I think the school was well worth the cost. If you are thinking this is just for Autocross enthusiasts, you're wrong. This school is good for all drivers, especially young ones and new ones. It teaches us how to use driving skills that we all have, but don't necessarily always apply when we should. It helps one understand how to judge an upcoming event while behind the wheel and prepare the car to drive through it in control instead of the event taking control and the car being out of control.

I would like to add a special thank you to Barbara LeRoy-Boehme who did all the work to bring this great school to San Diego. She is an avid autocross participant and can be seen any weekend at an autocross event here or a town not to far away. The McKamey school has their own web site. Check it out at <http://autocross.com/mckameyschool/index.htm>.

—ELLIOT SHEV

downloaded an article from Miata.net by Stephen Kamp, who provided some valuable pictures of the installation in his silver '99. Besides the remote sending unit, I installed a manual button to release the trunk under the right hand side of the driver's dash in front of the plastic shield where it can be felt, but not seen. The cable release in the center console is disconnected, which provides a margin of safety from anyone trying to open the trunk in the usual manner. The remote sending unit is hidden under the carpet that is behind the driver's seat, not readily noticeable. However, we ran out of time before we figured out how to connect the door locks.

I then spent time trying to track down some help with the doors. In its attempt to save a few pennies, Mazda did not install a door lock actuator in the driver's door, the reason the passenger lock does not lock the driver's side. The actuator I purchased found a home in the door panel of the driver's side. The hardest job was getting wires from the door to the inside of the cabin so that I could connect to the remote sending unit. The accordion boot that carried the speaker, remote mirror, and power window wires ends in a plug at the car body side. After a few contortions under the dashboard, I finally figured out how to get the plug apart, drilled another hole in the plastic plug, and fed the two wires through, all covered by the rubber boot. The wires attached to the remote unit, and with a little help from Gerry at Duetto Motors, I finally got the wiring right. Believe me, it was no easy task for this novice!

But it works! I am excited with my new toy, but there is even *more* I can do. The kit allows the option of an ignition kill switch or attachment to the parking lights which will flash when the remote is used. I haven't decided whether to use either of those yet. I realize that I could have had the whole thing installed by a shop, but that does not give me the satisfaction of doing the job myself, which also allowed me to put the power unit and button where I wanted them.

I offer my services to anyone else who would like to try the installation. My motto when it comes to working on my cars (be it the MG TD or the Miata) is "see one, do one, teach one." — Oh, I forgot to "see one" first!!

— MIKE SHACK

New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

Gary & Nelda Drage

San Diego
1994 Montego Blue

Koren Emerson

San Diego
1999 Emerald Green Leather

Rick Green

Alpine
1996 Black Leather

Rick Moore & David Blasband

San Diego
1992 Silver B

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

Andrew & Kristin Busschau

Chuck & Jean Cole

Marcia J. Lacey

Dave & Lois Martin

Tim Ngo

Michael & Susan Pasterkiewicz

Alan & Aleica Silver

Dale & Ginger Smith

Jim B. Thyden & Tiger Hutton

Francis Tonello

Joyce Wells

There are now 284 memberships consisting of 428 members.

Memberships by Miata Color:

- 94 Red
- 62 White
- 36 Black
- 16 Silver
- 15 Montego Blue
- 12 Mariner Blue
- 11 Laguna Blue
- 8 BRG
- 7 Merlot
- 6 Twilight Blue
- 6 Emerald Green
- 5 Starlight Blue
- 5 Marina Green
- 2 Yellow
- 1 Cranberry Red
- 1 Hunter Green
- 3 Unreported



Rainer's Ramblings

I arrived in California over 27 years ago when I attended Navy boot camp in San Diego. Having spent all of my previous life in states and countries which appear to border the Arctic Circle, I was amazed to see people in short-sleeve shirts and shorts riding around in convertibles in what would have been the middle of winter in my previous haunts.

Fortunately my Navy career was kind to me. After boot camp I attended a short school in Tennessee, then I spent a year in the Bay area at Moffett Field in a huge hangar selling coffee and donuts to students of the anti-submarine warfare school. This was after I was promoted from janitor and before I became the school's official driver. At one time I thought I may have wanted to be a doctor, and even started pre-med at the University of South Dakota, until I determined that I was allergic to sick people.

But this medical thing hung over me. My dad was a doctor. Consequently while selling coffee and donuts, I decided the Navy had to have something better to offer me in the way of a career. I decided that becoming a medic, or as it is known in the Navy, a hospital corpsman, would probably assuage my medical aspirations. Almost everyone told me I was crazy since this was during the Vietnam war and supposedly the life expectancy of a corpsman was 15 minutes or less in the bush. But I was young, felt I was invincible, and probably a little crazy/stupid as well. So after my year at Moffett Field, I was sent back to San Diego to attend hospital corpsman school.

While attending hospital corpsman school, Marianne and I were married. This changed my attitude about invincibility. Shortly before graduating from school, the Navy lets you fill out a "dream sheet." This is where you list where you want to be stationed next. And since I had married a southern belle, I figured it would only be right if I asked for duty stations somewhere in the South. I picked Key West, Jacksonville, and Corpus Christi. The Navy sent me to Camp Pendleton.

Supposedly being sent to Camp Pendleton was the last step before getting sent to Vietnam. Now the invincibil-

ity thing was replaced by a mortality thing. But the Navy works in mysterious ways. I spent the next two and a half years at Camp Pendleton; most of the time I worked on the intensive care ward (here's were my allergies to sick people were seriously challenged), and was honorably discharged from the Navy in August 1975. After four years in the Navy I was never once aboard a Navy ship, not even for a guided or nonguided tour.

What's the point of this tale? Well, it's thanks to the Navy that I discovered San Diego, its wonderful climate and scenery. You see, I'm writing this from a motel room just across the Hudson River from New York City. It's dreary and cold, I haven't seen a Miata in days, and I wish I was back in San Diego. Yes, I'm homesick for San Diego and my Miata.

The night before I left for this trip, I attended our annual Holiday Party. First off, I have to give kudos to GERI and SAL CAUSARANO who put this entire thing together. It was a wonderful affair! The parking lot was huge (and private) so no worry about door dings, the food was great, the entertainment was unique, and the view from The View Café was outstanding. I was glad to see so many of my Miata friends—and all dressed up too!

Thanks also have to go to ED and MICHELLE LANGMAID, who turned us on to The View Café. Ed works in the complex and got us in touch with the right contacts. Sal also ran the sound and video, bringing part of his extensive professional home system to put on the show.

ANTHONY "NEVADABOB" WILDE offered up a reprise of his acclaimed SDMC year in review show, with a multimedia spectacular which brought a standing ovation. Anthony added to (and automated) this presentation since the last time most of us had seen it at the annual meeting. Anthony also searched the web for synthesized accompaniment for TOM GOULD'S "Miata Carol sing-a-long."

Miata Magazine publisher Barbara Beach attended with her husband and mother and brought along a video of the *Miata Madness* event, held this past year in the Poconos. She also brought along a proof-copy of the tenth anniversary of the Miata book *InTENse*, which was a definite

hit. Many attendees whipped out their credit cards to reserve a copy. Our club is featured in six of the over 450 pages.

MARK BOOTH did another outstanding job making sure the gift exchange went smoothly. And there were great Miata gifts, including a highly coveted copy of the first edition of the *Miata Magazine*. VICKY KRUEGER entertained everyone with her lighted reindeer antlers and shoes with bells and flashing lights. Many members wore Santa hats, but only BOB and DEBBIE LLEWELLYN had Santa hats with flashing lights!

The karaoke session was dominated by SUE HINKLE and KATHERINE NELSON. Katherine totally blew everyone away with her phenomenal voice.

If you missed this event, you missed a great party. I can't imagine how we are ever going to top this one. Thanks again to all the folks that made it possible.

Okay... until next time... keep smilin' and keep that top down!

—RAINER MUELLER, *El Presidente*



Thanks to Geri and Sal for putting the Holiday Party together. And to Vicky for adding sparkle!

