



# SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS




VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2


FEBRUARY 1999

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

## UPCOMING EVENTS


February 7  
 **Champagne Brunch—  
Camp Pendleton Tour**

February 14  
 **Autocross at the “Q”**


February 20—Saturday  
 **Nethercutt Collection  
SOCALM/VROOM/SDMC**


February 25—Thursday  
 **Monthly Meeting**

February 27–28  
 **Madonna Inn  
Overnight Getaway  
SDMC/VROOM/SOCALM**

March 5–7  
 **Laughlin Overnight  
Getaway  
SOCALM/SDMC**

March 13—Saturday  
 **Blue Angels Air Show,  
El Centro**

March 19–21  
 **SCCA National  
Autocross Tour**


April 17—Saturday  
 **Annual Meeting  
Anniversary Party and  
Election of Officers**

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

## From the Editor

### Drivers Wanted, No Experience Necessary

**T**he reasons each of us have for buying a Miata are as numerous as there are members in the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. Some of us just liked the idea of an open sports car, while others thought it would be a good commuter car. Drivers who previously owned MGs or Triumphs wanted another car like that, without the associated idiosyncrasies. People have been known to have purchased a Miata because, dare I say, it was “cute.” Then there are the hard core racers who knew this was a car for competition, in one form or another.

 In a similar vein, members have joined the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB, or other organizations related to our favorite roadster, for a myriad of reasons. The association of anything related to the Miata is sufficient for many, while some enjoy the company of like minded friends. Of course, all of us just love taking the Miata out for a run, since that is what it does best. Some love to carve the canyon roads of the North and East County, while others would rather take a sedate cruise along the waterfront and watch the sun set. Then, we have the group that wants to take their roadster out and race.

It turns out, as with many things in life, that each of us fits a little in all of these categories. We enjoy our Miata in a different way, each and every time we drive it. With the growth of members expressing interest in taking their Miata to the autocross and compete, it shows that we are more than a drive, eat, drive social club.

That hard-core group that I mentioned before were the ones that you would see down at Jack Murphy Stadium, before it was Qualcomm Stadium, establishing the Miata as a force to be reckoned with on the autocross track. When I say “ones” that is literally



PHOTO: BOB KRUEGER

what I mean. Sometimes a sole Miata would be matched up against the likes of Hondas, Toyotas or vintage British tin.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**SDMC members turn out at the “Q” to race and show support for racing club members.**



One half of Hinkle Racing, Jack

PHOTO: ED LANGWAD



With the growth of the club has come a growth in participation in the auto-cross. Where once there were one or two cars, there are five, six, sometimes a dozen Miatas participating in a weekend of local autocrossing. Members have found that this is the way to learn how to really handle their cars. Some just want to satisfy their urge to really "go for it" and see what they and their car can do and the safest place to do it is on the track, not on the street.

One really interesting phenomenon is the number of husbands and wives who are now jointly participating in auto-cross. The husband usually gets into it and loves to compete. The wife, for whatever reason, then joins in. Sometimes the women will only run for the satisfaction of it, the thrill of driving the Miata like they never have before. Then, the desire to compete gets to them and there is no looking back! Ask the GODDENS, SHEVS, HINKLES or the BREES, among others, about this newfound type of togetherness.

Those of us who are not bold enough, yet, to get out on the track, have the thrill of watching friends have so much fun. Just by showing up and supporting them, cheering them as they approach the line and take their turn on the track, we get to participate. The cheering section for the Miatas has been so vocal that the track announcer has noticed it and commented on the exuberance shown. The very best part, it is all *free* to the spectators.

Whether or not you have ever thought about trying autocross, take a trip to the "Q" sometime and see the fun that is being had by participants and spectators alike. At the end of the day, you can usually get a ride with someone as a passenger. These are called fun runs, and believe me, they are!

If you do think you might like to try this out, there is more information in this newsletter on when, where, and how to get involved.

Take care, and HAVE FUN!  
— ANTHONY WILDE

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President**

RAINER MUELLER  
(760) 439-0067  
msd1@home.com

**Vice President**

VOODOO BOB KRUEGER  
(619) 486-4711  
voodoo@miata.net

**Secretary**

BARB SHEV  
(619) 679-0777  
mooncalf@aol.com

**Treasurer**

LAURIE WAID  
(619) 673-4141  
swaid2@san.rr.com

**Membership**

MARK BOOTH  
(619) 670-3789  
markbooth@home.com

**Autocross**

RAINER MUELLER  
(760) 439-0067  
msd1@home.com

**Club E-mail Postmaster**

CINDY PALOMA  
(619) 534-0969  
sd-miata-request@cs.ucsd.edu

**Webmaster**

ROBERT "JTBOB" HOLLAND  
(619) 549-4011  
robert@caliban.ucsd.edu

**Newsletter**

Editor  
ANTHONY "NEVADABOB" WILDE  
(619) 693-8095  
NevadaBob@miata.net  
Design and Layout  
TOM & STEPHANIE GOULD  
(619) 298-8605  
stef@miata.net

**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 15<sup>th</sup> 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

**SOCALM EVENTS**

**Queen Mary Run**

**Date:** February 6 — Saturday

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. departure  
(8:30 AM for breakfast)

**Place:** Ports O'Call Village, San Pedro

**Contact:** Brian Bousman, (714) 899-8304

This two-hour fun run around the Palos Verdes area starts with breakfast at the Belgian Waffle House. There will be a mid-run stop at the world-famous Wayfarers Chapel. At the end of the run we can sightsee at the Queen Mary and a Russian cold-war era submarine or visit one of many fine eating and drinking establishments in downtown Long Beach. See the official site at <http://www.queenmary.com> for more details.

*Directions:* Take the 110 South to the Harbor Exit. Turn into Ports O'Call Village and park at far end outside the Belgian Waffle House. If you miss the Harbor offramp, continue to Gaffey Street and turn left on 5th street. This street continues straight into Ports O'Call. Thomas Brothers map page 824, grid D6.

**Socalm contacts:**

President— K. Zack Broadbent,  
(714) 525-9065, [racerzack@aol.com](mailto:racerzack@aol.com)  
Club E-mail list: [socalm@avatar.com](mailto:socalm@avatar.com)  
Website: [www.socalm.org](http://www.socalm.org)

**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.

- Sunday, February 14 . . . . . race day
- Friday, March 19 . . . . . National Tour
- Saturday, March 20 . . . . . "
- Sunday, March 21 . . . . . "
- Saturday, April 10 . . . . . practice day
- Sunday, April 11 . . . . . race day
- Sunday, May 2 . . . . . race day
- Saturday, May 29 . . . . . practice day
- Sunday, May 30 . . . . . race day

**To confirm autocross information call:**

- San Diego SCCA Hotlines (619) 441-1333  
(800) 360-4454
- Web page [www.sdr-solo2.com](http://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 (timed event). 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.



## Meeting Places

### Champagne Brunch and a Whole Lot More— Camp Pendleton Tour

**Date:** Sunday, February 7

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Place:** The Windmill (formerly Pea Soup Andersen's) I-5 at Palomar Airport Rd.

**Coordinators:** Jerry Cisinsky, (619) 592-0189 or JerryC09@webtv.net  
Izzy Maggay, (760) 967-9038 and  
Art Hamilton, (619) 262-1565

From the meeting place we'll drive directly to Camp Pendleton where we will be met at the main gate and escorted to LVT (Landing Craft) Museum for a most interesting tour and commentary.

This will include an excellent photo op! We will then proceed to a Champagne Brunch at the Officers' Club. The base is promoting this event as an opportunity for personnel to view our cars in the lot!

Following an escorted tour of the base, we will leave by the North Gate on I-5.

*Note:* The food services personnel would like us to pre-pay the \$16.50 per person (which includes tax and tip) for the excellent all-you-can-eat champagne brunch. **Please** 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

**The deadline for payment is Feb 4<sup>th</sup>.**

### Nethercutt Collection Joint Run SOCALM/SDMC/VROOM

**Date:** Saturday, February 20

**Time:** 9:30 a.m.

**Place:** J.B. Nethercutt Collection,  
15200 Bledsoe Street, Sylmar, CA

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

A free, 2 hour, guided tour through J.B. Nethercutt's personal collection staged in a very elegant setting of polished marble and crystal chandeliers. Antique/classic cars—Bugatti, Delahaye, Ferrari, Packard, Rolls Royce form the bulk of the collection. Also included are large mechanical musical instruments.

Limited to 50 people, you *must* RSVP or you *cannot* join the tour. The Conns will maintain an overflow list; reconfirm the week prior to the tour and fill in any cancellations. There will be a fun run after the tour (and lunch)— we guarantee it will be on great twisty roads.

*There are some restrictions— no jeans, no shorts, no smoking, no flash photos, no video taping and no children under 12.*

**RSVP Required:** Contact the Conns: leave your name, phone, and number of people attending.

*Directions:* I-405 to I-5 North, take Roxford (should be fairly quick exit), turn right on San Fernando Road, left on Bledsoe Street.

### Monthly Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, February 25

**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!

### Madonna Inn Getaway SDMC/VROOM/SOCALM

**Date:** February 27–28

**Time:** 7:00 a.m.

**Place:** McDonalds in Oceanside  
Oceanside Blvd., just east of I-5

**Coordinators:** Laurie and Steve Waid,  
(619) 673-4141 or swaid2@san.rr.com  
The SDMC "Weather Babe" has guaranteed perfect weather for the weekend getaway to the Madonna Inn in San Luis Obispo. Over 600 miles of driving in our beloved roadsters, a spectacular destination: the Madonna Inn, (Check out their website at [www.madonnainn.com](http://www.madonnainn.com)), and an introduction to some remarkable central coast roads by our hosts from VROOM, the Central Coast chapter of MCA. For those of you that have not been paying attention over the last four months, or have been procrastinating big time, here are the details of this event:

Early in the morning we will head north, meet a few of our SOCALM brethren just north of Los Angeles. Stopping only as necessary as we motor toward our destination. We plan have lunch around 1 p.m. at the Madonna Inn.

We will be hosted to a late-afternoon fun run by VROOM through some of the most beautiful parts of California. After the run, back to the Madonna Inn for rest and a clean up. Everyone will have a chance to see each other's rooms and take the obligatory pictures. (No two rooms are alike at the Madonna Inn). At

## UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

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, CA—  
one hour north of Sacramento

Two and a half days of training which will enable you to become a safer driver and help you to 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](http://www.teammiata.com/thunderhill/school.htm) or (510) 370-8262

May 6–9, 1999

**Miata World '99**

Miata 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.Miata99.com)  
Toll free info: (877) MIATA 99

May 20–23, 1999

**3<sup>rd</sup> 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

August 27–29, 1999

**Monterey Historic Races**

*The historic auto event of the year!* This year the featured marque is Auto Union. Audi has promised to bring as many of the pre-war rear-engined grand prix cars as they can round up to Monterey. In honor of the 25th anniversary of the Historics there will be a display of past Monterey Cup-winning cars.

October 7–10, 1999

**Surf'N'Safari**

SDMC's *way-cool* regional Miata event.



7:30 p.m. we will meet in the Garden Room (a reserved meeting room) for our banquet dinner (\$25 per person, everything included). After an enjoyable evening of embellishing and exaggeration in one of the most fabulous settings, we will retire for the evening.

The next morning be led on another run by our friends from VROOM as we start the trek home. After lunch we will say good-bye to the "VROOMers" and continue our trip home. Exhausted, but happy, we should be back in San Diego County by sundown.

To join in the fun, here is what you must do— time is short.

1. Reserve your room at the Madonna Inn. Rooms are being held under the group name of the San Diego Miata Club. Rooms are \$87, but you can upgrade. Reservations (800) 543-9666.
2. Call Laurie or Steve Waid at (619) 673-4141 or E-Mail swaid2@san.rr.com with your confirmation so that you can receive the necessary information to pick your entree for the Saturday night banquet. You will be asked to mail us a check for the banquet in advance.
3. Show up at McDonalds before 7 a.m. on Saturday, February 27th.
4. Bring your camera with lots of film.

The longer you wait the fewer rooms to choose from. The rooms will not be held past February 15<sup>th</sup>. Please call or E-Mail Steve or Laurie Waid with any questions that you may have that might be preventing you from making the decision to come along with us.

### 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

This is a joint venture for SOCALM and SDMC at Harrah's Laughlin. Bari has blocked 10 rooms, all non-smoking, at \$25 a night if you commit on or before February 5<sup>th</sup> — after that it's \$55 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)

Please contact Bari after making your reservation, so that she has an up-to-date list of participants.



PHOTO: JERRY CISINSKY

### Impromptu Run

December 27, 1998

Following a life decision made in about ten seconds by DIANE LONG— shall I take down the Christmas tree or go for a run?— (tough choice), four intrepid Miatas departed North County Fair with yours truly at the point. Our first destination, via San Pasqual Road, was the Sizzler parking lot in Ramona to rendezvous with PHIL



DAOUST. Our ultimate destination, beautiful Lake Cuyamaca via Old Julian Highway. With the exception of a few OTMs, the road was generally clear and fast, and as Phil so aptly put it, we parted the waters. Following a brief pit stop we arrived at our destination, parked in the lot and allowed our cars to pose with the beauty of the lake as a backdrop.

It was our intention to eat and con-

tinue on. But wait, an obstacle in our path: the Park Ranger. Guess what? If you want to park along the roadway or in a lot in the Cleveland National Forest you must pay a \$5 "day use fee." Phil came up with a suggestion that was accepted in a heartbeat. "Let's blow this joint and go to the outlet center at Viejas, park free, eat, and SHOP!"

Following a brief and unceremonious change of command, Phil, with Quadzilla blasting, took the lead and was out of there while I was still taking photos.

Within moments we arrived at Viejas. Following late lunch and a bit of shopping, we went our separate ways with the knowledge that a fun time was had by all.

To Diane Long, ART HAMILTON, PHIL DAOUST and JOHN LAWLER, my thanks for coming out on such short notice and making this yet another "Miata Day" to remember.

—JERRY CISINSKY aka Rocketman!

### Quick Escape

Usually on a Sunday, Laurie and I will look for somewhere to go for breakfast. We like to drive a bit because some of our favorite memories are of getting up early, hitting the road, and stopping somewhere for breakfast when we are on vacation. One of our favorites is to drive to Lake Cuyamaca and eat breakfast at the little general store and restaurant that overlooks the lake. The food is reasonable and service is friendly. From where we live it's a little over an hour to get there via Highland Valley Road, through Ramona and Julian. The best part is that we have the option of returning on Engineers Road. All in all it's an investment of about 3 hours. We get to drive...eat... drive, and still get home for a nap. In the winter you might even see some snow.



—STEVE WAID

*Do you have a QUICK ESCAPE you like to take in your Miata? When it's just you (with or without someone special) where do you like to go for an evening, a day or a weekend, just to escape? Let us all know about it, send it in.—Editor*



## Hangover Run 2



PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID

January 2, 1999

**T**here can only be one word for a day like this: potholes! (and you thought I was going to say “wow!”) As 1999 began, and most of America was under the curtain of sub-zero temperatures, snow, and freezing rain, 81 Miatas from SOCALM and SDMC (plus 3 Toyota MR2s) came together under sunny skies for the second Enthusiast Hangover Run. Life in Southern California is rough, isn't it?



Our original group of 78+3 cars filled the Ortega Business Plaza in San Juan Capistrano as the run began. With this many cars, staying in one solid line was nearly impossible. I was extremely happy to have a CB radio to help coordinate what was going on behind me. Many thanks to STEVE and LAURIE WAID, who volunteered to be the sweep car, and to KRIS SANDERS, who helped me with the pre-run.

As we started on Ortega Highway, the group was broken by a large truck that would not pull over. At the end of Ortega Highway, I tried an impromptu stop so that everyone could catch up. Some people decided to use the impromptu stop as a bathroom break, which caused a 20-minute lag between the head and tail of the group. However, this lag allowed two more Miatas to join the group (for the total of 80+3). Once the tail caught the head, we stayed together pretty well for the rest of the first half (in

spite of some Miata-sized potholes).

We paused in Fallbrook after an approximately one and a quarter-hour run. After a brief driver's meeting, we were off again. The second half of the run was about an hour long and was supposed to include wine tasting at Callaway Winery. At our second regrouping stop, on holey Pauba Road, JOHN TEMPLETON & CHRIS ROMANO drove up a nearby hill to see where the tail was— we were spread over three miles!

Our group was way too large for Callaway to handle, so I planned on doing a simple drive-through of the winery parking lot so that we could get a photo. Even then, we didn't fit. The last car turned into Callaway's driveway as I was getting into my own to get us OUT of Callaway's driveway! We were an intimi-

dating, dominating group. Hell's Angels watch out!

We ended— very hungry— at Oscar's in Temecula. Thankfully, earlier in the day, MARK BOOTH had the presence of mind to call Oscar's and let them know that a zillion people were coming— we had 128 people! The run was a total of 107.7 miles long. We passed through the cities of San Juan Capistrano, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, Tenaja, De Luz Heights, Fallbrook, Rainbow, and Temecula. Every Miata car color was there. Cool statistics, huh?

I think JON MARTINEZ summed it up best on the Internet: “A new SoCal Fun Run record 79 [sic] Miatas (including 3 of the very special yellow ones), some MR2s for extra spice, lots of new members, kid copilots (future members), sunshine, photo opportunities galore, beautiful scenery, plenty of potholes, the usual great food at Oscar's, and, of course, our many Miata friends.”

I'm looking forward to more great runs in 1999 and Hangover Run 3 in January, 2000!

— K. ZACK BROADBENT



## A Whale of a Good Time!



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO

January 16–18, 1999

**A**pologies must be made for using such an obvious title for this article, but that is the most accurate description that can be put on this weekend of events. Members from the SAHUARO MIATA CLUB of Phoenix, Arizona spent the Martin Luther King weekend in our city and we tried to show them a good time.

Six Miatas made the trek across the desert specifically to see the grey whales as they pass by our coast on their south-



erly migration from Alaska to the sheltered bays of Baja California. SDMC member STEVE CUSHMAN got things rolling on Satur-

day evening with an introductory twilight tour of San Diego. 24 Miatas met the Sahuaro members across the road from their hotel on Mission Bay. After the obligatory perusal of the cars, Steve outlined the plan for the evening. We filled the empty passenger seats with

Sahuaro president Cliff Couch and his family who had made the trek in their OTM. The leisurely tour took us across Point Loma, alongside the bay and up the hill on Laurel Street and into Balboa Park. As we entered the park from this direction our guests could see the inspiration for the SDMC club logo, the California Tower of the Museum of Man across the Cabrillo bridge. We proceeded through the park and then out and across the bridge to Coronado. By having all of the seats filled in each Miata, we were able to take the carpool lane and avoid the bridge toll. A tour of Coronado ended at the Ferry Landing where we enjoyed a late dinner and a crystal-clear view of the San Diego skyline—the city lights reflected in the bay—from the heated patio of the Bay Beach Café.

Sunday morning dawned with the usual early morning low clouds, but it soon cleared into a beautiful Miata day. STEF GOULD had worked for several

months with Sahuaro newsletter editor Frank Mattox to arrange the day's event. We met with our guests at the Seaforth Sportfishing docks to board our boat *Legend*. As we departed Mission Bay we got a quick peek of the roller coaster at Belmont Park. The ride out of Mission Bay soon rivaled the coaster as we rode the swells coming directly into the channel. While trying to protect my camera from the sea spray coming over the bow, I noticed a few SDMC members, as well as visitors from Arizona, heartily enjoying the drenching they were getting. Most passengers remained at the rear of the boat where it was much drier.

Once out of the channel, the water was quite calm. We motored away from shore for a mile or so before the captain announced that a pod of whales was directly ahead. Everyone began to search the horizon for whales. Soon we spotted the telltale spouts of water as the whales surfaced and exhaled. As the boat moved closer, everyone was very quiet as each whale would surface, breathe, and dive. After three or four repetitions of this, the whales would raise their tail flukes as a signal they were “going deep.” Cameras clicked away at each sighting. Soon the captain announced that he had spotted some whales in the distance “breaching” or jumping out of the water. He headed the boat in that direction and we were treated to the spectacular sight as we approached. When we did arrive in the area, the whales, apparently three males and a female, stopped this behavior. The

pod proceeded to swim slowly to the south, accompanied by several white-sided dolphin. It was all over too soon as the captain turned the boat and headed back to the dock.

The next day was a holiday, so 24 SDMC Miatas, along with five from the Sahuaro club, met for a tour of some east county roads. PHIL DAOUST and Quadzilla led the group from the morning gloom of Mission Bay out to the clear blue skies of Telegraph Canyon Road. After an



PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID, DIGITAL MAGIC; TOM GOULD





PHOTO: ELLIOT SHEV



PHOTO: ELLIOT SHEV



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID

A night on the town followed by a day on the ocean. Entertainment included a synchronized swimming exhibition.

hour or two of exhilarating twists and turns, the colorful parade landed for lunch at the Viejas Outlet Center. The Sahuaro group expressed their thanks for a wonderful weekend. Some members of Sahuaro had such a good time that they were talking about meeting us next month at Harrah's for the "Laughlin Overnight Get-away." New friends parted company as the Sahuaro group headed for home.

A group of SDMC members were not ready to end it just yet. They proceeded to carve up Engineers Road

on the way to Dudley's, which unfortunately was closed for the holiday. A small negative in a picture-perfect weekend for friends, new and old, to enjoy their Miatas from the sea to the desert. —ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: ELLIOT SHEV



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID



## Autocross Classes Explained

The current classes that the Miata races in are B Stock (BS), C Street Prepared (CSP), S Modified (SM), and E Production (EP). The last class won't be described, as that class allows so many changes, that listing them here would become quite long.



Below, I will only list the parts that can be changed. If it isn't listed, then it can't be changed. The table below is just a small subset of the rules for these classes. Please refer to the *SCCA Technical Rule Book* for the latest classifications and specifications.

—ROBERT "JT" HOLLAND

### BS (B Stock)

The easiest class to start in as the name implies. The possible changes are very few. This class is often called the Miata class (as it was in its previous C Stock class) as it dominates this class at SCCA autocross events.

#### Wheels/Tires

You can change the wheels, only as long as they use the same bolt pattern and have the same diameter and width as the stock wheels. The tires can be any tire that is DOT legal, so getting race tires is a good way to get better times.

#### Intake/Exhaust

You can only change the air filter and the exhaust (up to the catalytic converter). Also, many race events have sound limitations, so a straight pipe may not be legal for an exhaust.

#### Suspension/Brakes

You can only change the front anti-roll bar (sometimes called the sway bar) and its bushings. You can replace the shocks with adjustable dampers, but stock ride height must be maintained. The brake pads can be changed, as well as the brake rotors as long as they are stock size.

#### Engine/Driveline

The clutch and flywheel must remain stock size and weight. The differential must remain stock for the car as shipped.

#### Body/Miscellaneous

The body cannot be modified or body kits added unless they are a Mazda part and an option for that year Miata. Cosmetic parts can be replaced in the interior as long as they don't change the car's performance or handling. The shifter can't be changed, but the shift knob can be replaced. A roll bar can be added.

### CSP (C Street Prepared)

This class is an extension of B Stock and allows quite a few more changes. These changes can be very expensive if you wish to be competitive.

#### Wheels/Tires

Any size wheel or tire can be used.

#### Intake/Exhaust

Intake can be changed as well as the electrical induction system. Intake manifold can also be changed as well as the fuel injection system and fuel pressure regulators. Exhaust system can be changed as desired, as long as sound limitations are maintained.

#### Suspension/Brakes

All suspension and brake parts can be changed, but suspension mounting points can not be altered.

#### Engine/Driveline

Computer control of engine can be changed. All internal engine parts and passageways must remain within stock specifications. Engine and suspension bracing can be used. Clutch and flywheel can be changed. Differential can be changed. Also, if you have a 1.6L engine (pre-'94 Miata), you can put in a 1.8L engine in its place. Oil coolers and filter relocation kits are allowed.

#### Body/Miscellaneous

The quarter-panels can be altered to allow wider wheels and tires. Body kits can be used as long as they are a Mazda part. All interior parts can be changed (such as seats and steering wheel). A short shifter can also be used.

### SM (S Modified)

This class is the catchall for engine modification to mass production cars.

#### Wheels/Tires

Same as CSP.

#### Intake/Exhaust

Same as CSP.

#### Suspension/Brakes

Same as CSP.

#### Engine/Driveline

Same as CSP. Allows forced induction such as turbo and superchargers. Camshafts can be changed, but displacement can not be changed.

#### Body/Miscellaneous

Same as CSP.

## Understeer and Oversteer

Most of us have heard these terms at least once. Many of us, especially race fans, who know

them as "push" and "loose," hear them all the time. Some of us, like myself on Wynola Road, have had first-hand experience with them. So, what precisely do they mean, and how do they affect those of us who like to take our cars out to the back roads or down to the "Q" and stretch their and our limits a bit?



The ideal, or "neutral," car has relatively equal amounts of grip at either end. Such a car, when driven hard into a turn, will stay balanced and break into an easily controlled four-wheel drift when its limit of adhesion is reached, with neither the front nor the rear losing its contact with the road surface excessively. In a situation such as this, the tires at both ends of the car have equal slip angles. That is, the difference between the path of the car through the corner and the direction the tire is pointing is the same in the front as it is in the rear.

Slip angles are the necessary reaction of a car to the forces applied to it by the act of cornering. There will always be slip angles when a car is cornering, although they may not be large, as they aren't when the car is being driven in "cruise" mode. As the speed of the car increases through a corner, however, the slip angles increase, and they don't always do so equally. If the slip angle in the rear of the car becomes larger than the one in the front, that's oversteer. Want a good graphic example of large slip angles in the rear? Think of sprint cars, midgets, or those World of Outlaws cars (the ones with the *really* big wings on top) driving on a dirt track. The way those rear ends hang out there until the back of the car is almost ahead of the front is a good example of extreme oversteer. See why the racers call that being "loose?"

Understeer is just the opposite. With understeer, slip angles at the front of the car larger than those in the back create a situation where the car tends to "push" its way through the turn. Perhaps the thoughts of an old-time racer (Anyone know who? I tend to think maybe







PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID

Doug and Sean Kvandal search for their tires' limit of adhesion.

Sam Posey) explain these concepts most simply and elegantly...when the front of the car hits the tree, that's understeer; when the side of the car hits the tree, that's oversteer. The nice thing about a neutral car is that it's easier to control and have fun with at speed, and it doesn't hit the tree at all.

OK, so most of us aren't professional race drivers and none of us wants to hit that tree, but many of us do make modifications to the suspensions of our cars, and some of those modifications disrupt the original excellent balance that Mazda designed into the Miata. Also, many members of this club race at the auto-cross, where dialing out oversteer and understeer becomes a crucial element in producing better times. What can we do if we find our cars aren't neutral anymore?

The choices for those with stock suspensions are pretty much limited to changing tire pressures, camber settings, tire/wheel sizes, or adding some weight in the trunk. There are more choices for those who have modified, or want to modify, their suspensions with adjustable-mount swaybars (more correctly called anti-roll bars), adjustable shock absorbers, and lower/stiffer springs, but they are still manageable for the layman compared to professional race cars, where variables like front and rear wing angles/sizes, ride height, wicker bill choice, and tire stagger are added to the equation. Race teams often have to literally start from scratch to properly set up a car as it moves from track to track during the season; there are a simply overwhelming number of possible combinations that might be used to get a race car to "stick" on a given day at a

particular venue.

When I first got interested in this subject, I found that remembering what changing a setting in a given direction produced in terms of balance was extremely difficult. I found that I needed to have a "system" that made sense to me that could be used to remind me whether stiffening something on one

end or the other produced understeer or oversteer. The system I finally chose, and it works for me most, if not all, of the time, is compliance. Basically, if you stiffen something, you reduce its compliance. When compliance is reduced, grip is reduced with it. Now, JT tells me that's all wrong—that energy transfer is the technically correct concept to use. Well, that may be, but to me something that is less compliant transfers energy because it can't absorb it, so we're basically talking about the same thing anyway. Whatever works for you, if you are in a position to want or need to know what adjustments need to be made to change the balance of your car, or to re-balance it after modifying your suspension, I strongly suggest that you adopt *some* system that keeps you from mistakenly dialing in the exact opposite effect from what you intended. For example...

You just bought a brand new set of larger swaybars and you're about to install them on your Miata. Each bar has two or three holes into which you can

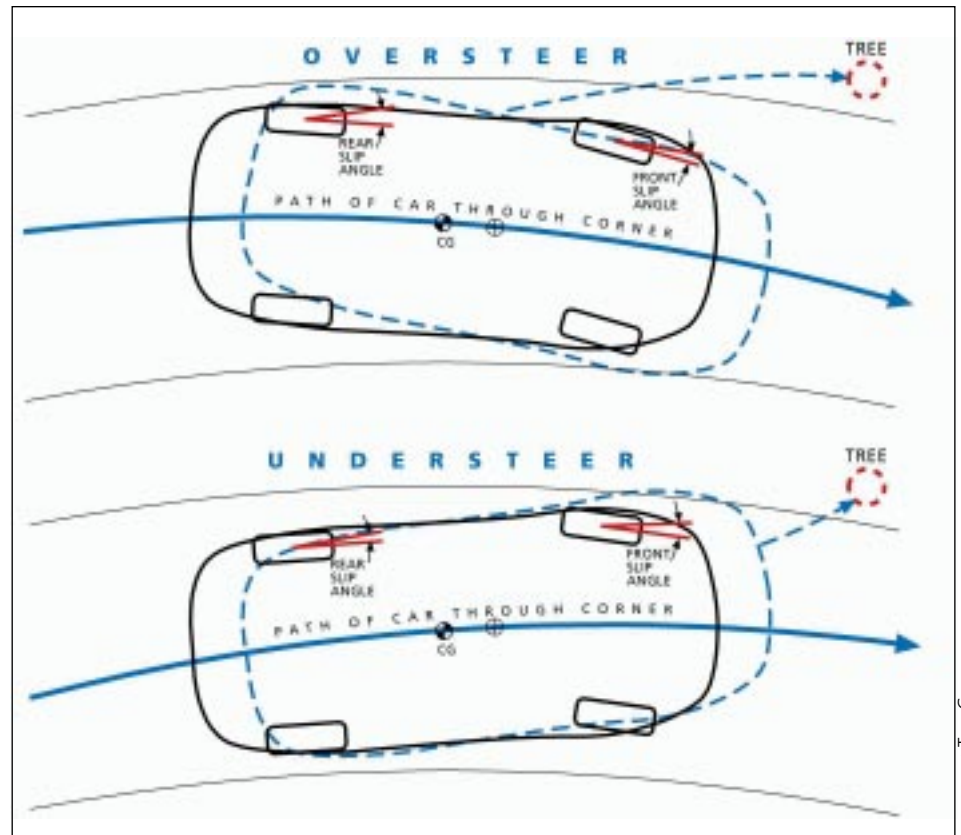


ILLUSTRATION: TOM GOULD

This drawing shows a car rounding a right-hand curve. In the top example the slip angles of the rear tires are greater than the front—an oversteering condition. Without driver correction, oversteer causes a constantly decreasing-radius turn. The bottom example shows an understeer condition, where the slip angle is greater in the front than in the rear, which causes, without driver correction, a constantly increasing-radius turn.





PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID

**Robert "JT" Holland discusses the course with fellow member Art Hamilton. Racing members of SDMC are always available to provide help for members wishing to get into autocross.**

mount the end links; which ones should you use? We know that increasing the stiffness of the swaybar will decrease the grip at that end of the car. If you make the rear bar relatively stiffer than the one in the front, you will make the rear less compliant (or cause it to transfer more grip energy to the front), and that will introduce oversteer. If you decrease the rear bar stiffness, making it more compliant (more able to absorb grip energy), you will dial that oversteer out. In the front, it is simply reversed —more stiffness of the bar equals increased understeer.

OK, that's pretty straightforward, but how do you make the bar more or less stiff? Well, size *does* matter, and you could have simply bought a bigger bar at one end or the other to increase the roll stiffness at that end. But you bought both bars and they're both larger than the stock ones, but they have those multiple holes to which you can attach the end links, and that's where you vary their stiffness. As you move from the outer to inner holes, you effectively make the bar shorter and shorter, increasing its stiffness as you go. Personal experience tells me that you should always start with the outermost holes. Why? Because, since both bars are larger than stock, you have already increased the stiffness at both ends simply by buying the bars. It's very likely that additional stiffness at either end, if you need it to balance the car, is better obtained by changing variables where the results of "one click" are more subtle than they are at the swaybars. The holes in the bars are fairly widely spaced, and a move of a single hole can produce changes in handling that are relatively coarse and can be surprising and perhaps even dangerous. During one of



**Top, Elliot Shev prepares to start his run while Brian Goodwin, below, finishes his.**



### SUSPENSION TUNING

#### ADJUSTMENT

**Tire pressure, front**

**Tire pressure, rear**

**Front tire width**

**Rear tire width**

**Front wheel width**

**Rear wheel width**

**Camber, front wheel**

**Camber, rear wheel**

**Front springs**

**Rear springs**

**Front sway bar**

**Rear sway bar**

**Weight front/rear**

#### To Add Understeer

Lower pressure

Raise pressure

Reduce width

Increase width

Reduce width

Increase width

Add positive camber

Add negative camber

Stiffer

Softer

Larger, stiffer

Smaller, softer

Move forward

#### To Add Oversteer

Raise pressure

Lower pressure

Increase width

Reduce width

Increase width

Reduce width

Add negative camber

Add positive camber

Softer

Stiffer

Smaller, softer

Larger, stiffer

Move rearward

Courtesy Norman Garrett's *Mazda Miata Performance Handbook*.



our first suspension modification tech sessions, one of our members made the mistake of connecting his rear swaybar end links to the center, rather than outermost, holes. In the front, he DID use the outermost holes. What was the effect? The rear bar, being effectively shorter than the front, became relatively stiffer, reducing compliance in the rear and introducing oversteer. The next thing we did was run Highland Valley Road fairly quickly, and he got a ride he'll probably never forget! The first thing he did when we got back was move the rear end links to the outer hole. The second thing he did was change his underwear.

Most manufacturers design their chassis with a bit of understeer for the non-enthusiast driver's comfort. Understeer is relatively easy to deal with at moderate speeds. If the front of the car isn't going quite where you're pointing it, simply dial in a little more steering wheel. Oversteer, on the other hand, can be very disconcerting. For the experienced driver, it can be more fun than understeer, but for the average Joe, it's no fun and a lot more potentially dangerous.

The Miata, designed with enthusiast drivers in mind, starts out as a pretty neutral car, so the less you disturb its inherent balance, the better. By all means, modify it and make it even better if you can, but tread lightly on wholesale changes to its handling. If you detect some imbalance in the car after modifying it, change the tire pressures slightly, add or remove a click if you have adjustable shocks, or make some other subtle change and test drive the car before taking your next step.

With suspension settings, you are always dealing with the same basic set of parameters...reducing the stiffness (to a point) on a given end will give that end more grip, making the other end relatively less able to follow the path of the car, increasing its slip angle. If the end with the increased slip angle is the rear, you have oversteer; if it's the front, you have understeer. Keep that basic principle in mind by using whatever metaphor works best for you and go slowly with changes and you can't go far wrong.

Tire pressures, by the way, is one area where my compliance model doesn't work very well, because tires are flotation devices and stiffness is not the issue with



PHOTOS: ED LANGMAD

**Autocross is the safe way to learn how your car handles and to tune your suspension with only cones to run into.**

them. With tires, you want to minimize distortion, so grip increases directly with tire pressure until you reach the point where you begin to cause the tread to "crown" and lose contact patch area. Up to that point, increasing tire pressure at a given end of the car has the same effect as does reducing suspension stiffness.

For a more in-depth technical analysis of oversteer, understeer, and other aspects of your car's suspension and chassis, no book is more highly recommended than San Diegan Fred Puhn's

*How To Make Your Car Handle*. Also take a look at Carroll Smith's *Tune to Win*. If you want to know more about how to react to handling imbalances as a driver, any one of several books about driving techniques by various racing legends will serve well. My personal favorite is *Sports Car and Competition Driving*, by Paul Frere. The better you understand this subject, the more fun you'll have with your Miata, and the better able you'll be to stay away from that tree!

— VOODOO BOB KRUEGER



## Phoenix International Raceway —2 Day Class

**March 6-7 Sponsored by National Auto Sport Association**

Here is another way to check out understeer and oversteer! While most autocrossing is done in second gear, on the track you can test the performance of your car at speed. This session is a good way to learn how your Miata performs under extreme conditions. The two-day class includes a drivers' school (and a special Saturday novice school) and open track sessions.

Contact Cliff Couch as soon as possible, (602) 404-9394, for details and to register. Cost (\$195-\$245) is dependant on the number of registrants. *No roll-bar requirement*; helmets are available at the track.

Cliff, president of SAHUARO MIATA CLUB, will help with accommodations and answer any questions you may have concerning this event.





PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID

## Why Would a Lady Wanna Do That?

So my husband, the main man, Mr. Testosterone himself, decided he really really really wanted to get into autocrossing. Oh swell! Driving our sweet little car around a dirty old parking lot running into a bunch of



orange cones, while I sit and watch on 100 degree tarmac. Worse yet, he thought I ought to try it. Just what I need, more stress! All those people watching while I run over the cones? I don't think so!

At MOSS MOTORS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, the main man did some laps and really really really decided he had to get into this stuff. I have begun to understand it isn't going to go away. I also began to hear the ladies discuss it. Hmmm?

So, in search of an answer to why ladies would want to autocross, I talked to some of them.

I am told there is a tremendous rush from the power of the automobile as it gracefully races around those curves. All the times we wished we could run over someone, or at least burn rubber and leave them in our dust at an intersection come to mind as you leave the starting line. Power! Hear that engine roar (oops, should I shift here or wait til after the turn?). Concentrate. It really doesn't matter if you look good— no one can see you under that helmet. Oh, oh...is this an early or late apex on this curve? Did I enter it too late? Where is my line? Yikes, that could add 1/2 second to my time?

Women, just like our male counterparts, enjoy the challenge of something new, something foreign, something

dynamic. Each run is a little different, even if the course is the same. The things that catch your attention are always varying. The thrill of going faster than you are "supposed to" with nothing around to hit, no real danger, a chance to really "let 'er fly!"

It is a highly discussed fact that women's senses are more sensitive than men's. The ladies out on the track have an even greater sense of the smells, sights and feel of the course. That adds to the intrigue.

When I accompanied the main man to check the requirements for autocrossing, it became apparent that it was open to nearly anyone who wanted to participate. The classifications and limitations are discussed on page eight in this newsletter. There are specifically ladies

classes. The ladies can also run in the "men's" classes if they wish.

A few things to note: Whether going to autocross yourself, or with someone else, keep in mind that there are stadium porta potties only. The nearest businesses with restrooms are a couple of miles away. Bring a chair. The roach coach is there with lots of OK snacks and drinks and is cheap if you are hungry. Wear sunscreen, we don't want to encourage those nasty little lines!

The autocrossing ladies in our Club include JACKIE BREE, CATHERINE GODDEN, SUE HINKLE, and BARBARA SHEV (and maybe more that I don't know of). If you think this stuff sounds like something you would like to try, talk to one of them. Their enthusiasm is very contagious.

— LAURIE WAID



Sue Hinkle, C Street Prepared Ladies' Class



## Member Profile

JACKIE BREE—RACER 527

A few thoughts about autocrossing from my female, newbie point of view. I have never been into cars, hung out in auto shops, or paid much attention when my brothers were motocrossing. What I know of racing is Mario Andretti only because a friend of mine was working as his chef (apparently he has a weight problem). My husband DANNY bought a Miata (mid-life crisis' car) last year and we joined the club. We never join anything. We started going on events and Danny started teaching me how to drive the twisties. I have always liked driving on long trips—but twisties are *fun*. However, I always worry there will be a bike, or horse, etc. around the corner where I can't see. When someone mentioned racing on a track of twisties and slaloms, I said it sounded like fun and wanted to try.

My first time out was the same Sunday as the Classic Speed Festival and there was a small crowd at NTC. BRIAN GOODWIN met us there to help get us started. My first impression was how helpful and friendly everyone was. I was given a loaner helmet and Danny took the car through tech and taped numbers on (I was surprised Danny didn't freak out about this). The next thing I knew I was handed two flags, a walkie-talkie, and sent out onto the track to work the next race. Within minutes cars were racing around me. I was scared! I had no clue. Someone started yelling over the walkie-talkie to pick up a cone that had been knocked over and put it back, (were they crazy?) Another person ran over and replaced the cone. Fortunately no other cones were knocked over near my area and I watched the racing up close and very personal. The brakes smoking, the screeching tires, the smells and even the blue sky had my heart pounding.

Could I drive like this? I wanted to try. I had my chance, helmet on, seatbelt very tight, coach in the passenger seat, the flag went down! I was off. It was fabulous, like a roller coaster I could control (and I never liked roller coasters). I was flying. Could I really fly around the hairpin curves and fight the instincts? Push the car and speed up when every fiber screams slow down? 97 seconds later it

was over. The slowest track time of the day. It was great and knew I could do better. The advice from my coach was to keep both hands on the steering wheel (that should have been a no-brainer) and stay in second gear. Back in line and off again, my time improved by 10 seconds. The bottoms of my feet tingled. The next run I did alone and spun out—not a full 360 but close enough for me. I was pushing and not afraid. The last run of the day was my best—26 seconds faster than the first run. It felt great. I was tired. I couldn't wait until the next time.

Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> was my second time out. It was a practice day at the "Q."



I was ready. This course was much longer than the one at NTC and I walked it before driving. I was confident and excited. The flag went down! The first two curves tight, but not too bad, a slalom—I started it on the wrong side, O.K. Get it right next time. Straightaway, pedal to the metal, brake fast, hard left turn, another slalom, damn, missed again, and hey, where's the bloody track? O.K.—get back and finish. Did anyone else finish slower than 130 seconds?

Back in line, STEVE WAID came up and asked if I wanted him to ride along. Having a coach is very necessary and as



PHOTOS: ANTHONY WILDE

the day progressed, I learned.

Yes, I spun out (it's almost my favorite part). Yes, I got better times. Yes, I had a great time, and even dreamed about racing that night, (of course my jumpsuit matched my car and I didn't have helmet hair when I won the trophy).

I have two girls in college. I work in retail, selling fine linens and interior design items. Flower gardening has

always been my favorite hobby—Martha Stewart, my hero. Much about autocross is against my basic nature. It's dirty, smelly, and don't even ask about the bathroom facilities. (Maybe they need a woman's touch). What makes me want to race? When I figure it out, I'll let you know.

See you at the race. For some reason I just can't wait! *Who knew?*

—JACKIE BREE



## AfterMarket Goodies

### Oh Dannyboy, the PIPES are calling.....

**A**nd how sweet they sound! Next run, check out IZZY MAGGAY'S, JACK HINKLE'S, or JOHN LAWLER'S beautifully toned and crafted exhaust systems. Each is hand sculpted with *individually* stylized dual exits and tips. Not only is each system unique, each is the creation of Ed



PHOTO: IZZY MAGGAY

Hanson, the "PICASSO" of the muffler world. Ed's shop, I prefer *studio*, is in Spring Valley, crafting only the highest quality systems for the discerning car buff. Ed will create an exhaust system to your exact specifications, or given *carte blanche*, he will create a true work of art inspired by one of his "visions." (QUADzilla (0000) is one of Ed's "visions," crafted by Chuck Haga.) And exhaust tone— that sweet music to our ears— being equally important as aesthetics to Ed, is created from the huge selection of mufflers in stock. Flowmaster, Ultraflow, and Dynamax superturbo or Iroc are just a few of the great sound "instruments" Ed utilizes in his creations to give your Miata just that sound you're looking for. And for you performance dudes, don't forget these systems are known to add a few horses your Miata's getty-up!

Literally dozens of SDMC members have used Ed over the years, with his fine custom designed installations, coupled with unmatched prices (\$250-300 range for duals to \$400 for quads). And remember, that's *installed*. No other aftermarket company comes anywhere near this value. Just check out the smiles on Izzy, Jack and John's faces! 'Nough said.

"LOUD PIPES SAVE LIVES"

—PHIL DAoust

ED HANSON'S MUFFLER SERVICE  
3916 N. Barcelona  
Spring Valley, Ca  
(619) 698-7030



PHOTOS: RAINER MUELLER

Rainer's autocross trailer



## New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

### Charles R. Cantor

Del Mar  
1999 Emerald Green Leather

### Thomas Chan

Sacramento  
Unreported

### Sue & Randy Patterson

Oceanside  
1999 Emerald Green PEP

### John, Kara & Cara Scudder

Oceanside  
1999 White Leather

### Roy & Mary Tweedie

La Quinta  
1991 BRG LE

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

### Brad Brown

### Briane Byrne

### John & Gerry Conn

### Debbie & Art Cravets

### Michele Flud

### Joseph & Giselle Gigliello

### Robert A. Goode

### Given Harrison

### Allan & Linda Pabian

### William Sloan

### Wally Stevens & Nancy Ickes

### Bob & Kathy Welty

### Ethel York

There are now 284 memberships consisting of 427 members.

Memberships by Miata Color:

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



## Autocross Trailer For Your Miata

**O**kay, I admit it, I love autocrossing and I love my Miata! But....I hate having to drive to events on my autocross tires, and I hate having to put my air tank, floor jack, and other paraphernalia into my Miata. I knew there had to be a better solution.

I started seeing Miatas and cars of similar size show up at events pulling what I was to learn is called a utility trailer. Since I was so addicted to autocrossing, I figured I had to get even more serious about the sport. The trailer seemed to be the best solution for me.

I had at first also considered two other solutions. The first was a device called a "Bumper Buddy." This device attaches into a receiver-type trailer hitch and is somewhat like a shelf extending horizontally from the back of your vehicle. Regrettably this device requires either a Class II or III hitch, but upon further investigation I found that no one makes one that size for the Miata.

The second is a much more elegant solution, but totally out of my league — getting a tow vehicle and either an enclosed or open trailer to put my Miata and the rest of my equipment into it.

So it had to be a utility trailer.

Be warned that the Mazda manual does not recommend towing a trailer. But after talking to a number of drivers who have towed small trailers with their Miatas, some of them at remarkably high (read dangerous) speeds, I was convinced that this was a workable solution.

Using the Internet, I was able to find the suppliers and the part numbers for the equipment I wanted to buy.

The first item was the utility trailer itself. I liked the one built by Nuway. When I contacted Martin Industries, who builds them, they suggested I check out WalMart and K-Mart. None of their stores had the trailer here in Southern California. Another suggestion came from them to try Home Depot, but I had found an extremely similar trailer from Harbor Freight Tools on the Internet.

Harbor Freight Tools calls theirs a mini-utility trailer. It is 3½ feet wide and 4' long, made from heavy duty steel with

a baked red enamel finish. It comes complete with highway approved tail, turn, and side running lights, two 4.80 x 8" wheels, a couple assembly with safety chains, and a 1⅞" (Class I) ball hitch receiver. The trailer weighs about 125 lbs. and the load capacity is 1000 lbs.

I ordered this trailer over the Internet by credit card for \$169.99 plus tax, free shipping (parcel post in two packages).

Opening the packages I found all of the parts in what could be best described as an Erector Set. I loved those things as a kid, so I figured I could easily assemble the trailer. The instructions for this Taiwanese-made trailer state that it will take approximately four hours to assemble, including the electrical wiring. I found this estimate was bang on.

I assembled the entire thing on my front lawn with simple hand tools. My neighbors were relatively impressed with my construction capabilities, since I am a computer nerd by profession, but the instructions were straightforward and very easy to follow.

The fully assembled trailer is basically a frame with no floor. But this is what I wanted, since I would be fitting my four racing tires on the back of the trailer, and a tool/storage box to the front. I then cut two pieces of wood to fit into the front section of the trailer, onto which I would bolt the Pro Tuff Box by Contico— from WalMart for \$45.

I also attached a 37" piece of 2" PVC pipe to the inside rear of the trailer with nylon ties in order to prevent the edge of the trailer from biting into my soft racing tires. The pipe cost me \$3.70.

Next I needed a trailer hitch. My Internet research discovered Da'Lan Hitch, Inc. They directed me to a local trailer supply company where I found the hitch and a 1⅞" ball for about \$150.

Da'Lan's receiver hitch is built especially for a Miata and is attached under the rear bumper where the rear tie-downs were. Simply remove the two tie-down bolts on each side, and attach the trailer hitch into its place. Sounds easy, and I was able to remove the tie-downs, as well as put the trailer hitch into place, and put the bolts through the hitch into the Miata frame, but I was unable to attach the nuts to the bolts.

My tolerance for failure is too short, so I hired a company which normally attaches hitches to do mine. The folks

that did the work informed me that a converter was needed to connect the electrical connection, supplied with the trailer, to the electrical system of the Miata, since the Miata's turn signal lights are separate from the normal taillights. I spent \$100 to have them attach the trailer hitch and electrical connector.

I also purchased four identically-keyed padlocks, two to securely shut the Tuff Box lid, even though it came with a lock. The Tuff Box is pre-equipped for the padlocks. I used the other two padlocks to secure my racing wheels and tires to the frame of the trailer using a plastic coated bicycle cable. Price for the locks, cable and bungee cord to keep the tires together on the trailer, about \$25.

The trailer came with the proper paperwork and VIN tag to start registration proceedings. I spent a couple of hours at the DMV for this process. They nicked me \$50 for their fees, ouch!

I keep my racing tires and wheels on the trailer all the time, and store my helmet (in a helmet bag), my air tank, floor jack, assorted tools and parts, and my folding chair in the tool box. This truly speeds up the time it takes to get ready for an event. I also purchased an EZ-Up Sports Dome for \$100, a wall-less tent-like sun roof, which fits perfectly between the tires and the tool box, held down with another bungee cord.

I have hauled the trailer to several events and it tows beautifully. It is small enough that it doesn't obstruct the rear view. The trailer doesn't sway and tracks perfectly. I am the envy of other autocrossers and I've been told that I not only have a "cute" car, but also a "cute" trailer— Cute. Hey, I may not be the fastest guy on the track, but I'm stylin'!  
—RAINER MUELLER

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS  
(800) 423-2567  
<http://www.harborfreight.com>  
trailer product number: 2727-2VFA

DA'LAN HITCH, INC.  
(800) 325-2613  
receiver hitch product number:  
for 1990-97 Miata: 247262  
for 1999 Miata: 247314

CONTICO MANUFACTURING COMPANY  
(800) 831-7077  
<http://www.contico.com>  
Tuff Box product number: 3725

NUWAY MANUFACTURING  
A Division of Martin Industries  
(205) 767-0330  
[www.martinindustries.com/nuway/index.htm](http://www.martinindustries.com/nuway/index.htm)  
trailer product number: NW13601GH

