



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3

MARCH 1999

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



March 5-7
Laughlin Getaway



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



March 14—Sunday
**California Basset
Fun Run & Roast**



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



March 25—Thursday
Monthly Meeting



March 27—Saturday
**Miata Dis-Mantler and
Peterson Auto Museum**



April 1—Thursday
**Miata Parade to the
San Diego Auto Show**



April 3—Saturday
**Orange Blossom
Special Fun Run**



April 10—Saturday
**Racing Beat
Open House**



April 17—Saturday
Annual Meeting



April 24—Saturday
**Run to Warner Springs
Gliderport**



May 15—Saturday
**Miata May Madness —
Rallye for the Cure
Benefit for Leukemia Society**

From the Editor

To Tech Or Not To Tech?

One problem with the Miata is that it is so reliable. Compared to other cars, the Miata doesn't seem to break, so we invent things to do to it. Seems we have to install an accessory of some kind or a widget that promises more power.

While many of us will gladly do most of the work on our Miatas, some members have trepidations about picking up a wrench and approaching their beloved Roadsters. Some of the more daunting tasks have to be observed before many members will attempt to try it on their autos. Some members have more experience working on automobiles or specifically on Miata-related tasks. Most are willing to share this experience with other club members and educate them about certain procedures.



This, in general, is the idea behind Tech Days. We get together at a members' home and help each other. While some things, like shock installs, are pretty common now, when we first got the club going many members had never considered changing their own shocks or springs.

Tools are another reason to participate in a Tech Day. I purchased a quality spring compressor to install my own shocks, and it has been used to do a couple dozen installs since. It is available to any club member who would like to use it. Member JON BRAISTED has a special tool he purchased to help with timing belt changes on the Miata. Since the tool costs around \$100, he is offering it to SDMC club members for their use. Aren't we a couple of swell guys?

Speaking of timing belt installs, that is one area where a Tech Day can be a good learning experience. To properly do a timing belt change, you should take your time and follow the service manual closely. This is not a job that you want to rush. Especially if you have a 1990 or early '91 car with the crankshaft that is prone to breakage, as I do (*SDMC News* Volume 1, Number 7, Page 2). By witnessing a timing belt change, club members have either felt confident enough to do the job or thought better of it and paid someone else to do it. You never know until you see for yourself.

Some Tech Days are organized around a demonstration of a product or service by a vendor. In the past we have met at Just Dings to witness the magic of paintless dent removal or listened to an informative lecture from a representative of Meguiars'. We have also made a day of it by travelling to Jackson Racing in Orange County. Oscar Jackson and his staff showed off, and sold, some of their products for the Miata, but the big reason for being there was to have each persons' Miata run on the DynoJet dynamometer. This expensive instrument measures the horsepower generated by a car at the rear wheels.

Dual club (SDMC and SOCALM) members JOHN and GERRY CONN have hosted potluck Tech Days at their house in Fullerton for the past 4 years. These events have proven to be quite popular, and as always the food and fun are part of the attraction.

So if you would like to host a Tech Day, here are a few guidelines:

Do it for the right reason. If you are installing something on your car, invite others to learn or to help. Tech Days are not meant to be a way to get someone over to do

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



the work for you, they will be there to help you, not be your private mechanic.

Pick a date that does not conflict with another event. Check the Calendar of Events in the newsletter or on the club web page.

Announce it. Submit it for publication in the newsletter and on the club E-mail list. This will allow others who would like to help or need help to attend. If this is a project you have not done before, ask for help from someone who has.

Make an event of it. Provide some refreshments. Food always seems to motivate people to attend, and some even bring more goodies to munch as well!

Keep it reasonable. Don't try and set a record for the most shocks installed or the most timing belts changed. Usually one or two large projects (shocks or timing belt) is enough. Others who attend might have smaller things to do on their own cars.

Members who live in apartments are often not allowed to work on their Miatas in the complex. By hosting a Tech Day, you will be giving them a place to do the work they need to do as well, within reason. Engine rebuilds are not an appropriate way to repay the hospitality of someone who hosts a Tech Day.

Most of all HAVE FUN.

—ANTHONY WILDE

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.

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

No events scheduled for June or July.

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 (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.

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.rn.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 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

SOCALM EVENTS

Social in Orange

Date: Tuesday, 16 March

Time: 6:30 p.m. (they won't take a reservation so we'll gather first and then go in all together)

Place: Dave & Buster's, 20 City Blvd. West (at The Block), Orange (714) 769-1515
Dave & Buster's—a million dollar midway with electronic simulators, shuffleboard, pocket billiards, a turbo ride theatre, and oh yes, food — sandwiches to steak and seafood \$7-\$17.

Quarterly Membership Meeting

Date: Saturday, 27 March

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Place: Malibu SpeedZone, (626) 913-9663, 17871 Castleton St, City of Industry
SpeedZone will be providing a continental breakfast of fruit, muffins, bagels, pastries, jam/jelly, cream cheese, juices, coffee, and tea. The cost is \$5.00 if you want to eat breakfast, otherwise you can attend the meeting for free. Topics

on our meeting agenda include: the 10th Year Anniversary party for the Miata in Irvine, and future event planning. After our meeting is completed, everyone is encouraged to purchase a driver's card and have fun on the exciting driving rides at SpeedZone.

Note: no open-toed shoes. The cost for the different driving activities ranges from \$1.50 per lap (Grand Prix, ideal for the autocrossers out there), to \$5 for five minutes (Slick Track), to \$10 for three runs (Top Eliminator Dragsters). There is also a miniature golf circuit.

Social in Orange

Date: Tuesday, March 30

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Olde Town Brewery, Orange (714) 744-4181 great sandwiches and salads \$6-\$15 range.

Socalm contacts:

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



Meeting Places

Laughlin Overnight Getaway

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 a block of rooms, all non-smoking, at \$55. Call Harrah's in Laughlin, (800) 427-7247 and ask for the "Miata" booking— If you need smoking please request 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.

Blue Angels Air Show, El Centro

Date: Saturday, March 13

Time: Leave at 6:30 a.m.— *don't be late!*

Place: Mission Valley K-Mart (Oscars) parking lot

Coordinators: Skip Lowder and Stef Gould, (619) 297-4272 or stef@miata.net (RSVP to Stef)

Why drive all the way to El Centro to see the Blue Angels? The air is clear and the crowds are light. We've arranged for VIP flight-line parking for our Miatas— they will be on display— let's make a good showing and have a great day!

For those of you who prefer to drive out on Friday night, a contingent from SOCALM is planning on driving to El Centro on Friday night. They will be staying at the Vacation Inn (800) 328-6289, Exit I-8 at Imperial Ave., 2015 Cotton Wood Circle. The king room rate if AAA member is \$46, without it's \$52. Bari Hyde has blocked 5 non-smoking king rooms "Miata" or Bari Hyde, for March 12th & 13th, call and transfer a room to your credit card. Comes with continental breakfast and coupons for evening cocktails.

If you plan to stay overnight make your motel booking ASAP, they're filling fast. Saturday morning, 8:30 a.m, we'll meet at the entrance to Sunbeam County Park, just west of El Centro. We have been asked to enter the base as one group.

RSVP not required, but please do.

Remember: bring sunscreen and straw hats— it can get hot in the desert sun! And a warm jacket as it may get cold on the trip home.

California Basset Run & Roast

Date: Sunday, March 14

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Deer Creek Winery, 8 miles north of Escondido (exit I-15 at Old Castle and take Hwy 395 1 mile south).

Run Leaders: Barbara and John Templeton, jtempleton@att.net or (760) 751-8636

Barbara, John, and their extremely rare, and selectively-bred, *attack* Basset hounds, Fred and Maggie, invite you to join them on the continuation of a series of Basset Runs and Roasts begun while John was president of the Windy City Chapter. These early spring outings in Illinois became extremely popular. (*Anything* in the Spring in Illinois is popular.)

We'll traverse a few twisty roads of Bonsall, Fallbrook, Temecula, etc. before returning to the Basset Farm for succulent roast Basset and trimmings, beverage, dessert, and socializing. The car museum and winery is just around the corner for those that want to "taste."

The tour will be done "Windy City Style" with few (if any) "queue-up" points. Instead you'll be given a detailed route sheet with official mileage (the Tour Nazi's odometer is always official). Honestly it works, or at least adds to the conversation at the end of the run.

RSVP required: All we ask is for an RSVP so that we know how much feed the Bassets will require before slaughter and a few bucks as you feel appropriate at the table. All kidding aside, the meal's for real, we promise a *great* time. Ruff-Ruff!

SCCA National Autocross Tour

Date: March 20-21

Time: 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. each day

Place: Qualcomm Stadium, west lot.



Come out and show support for our club's autocross racers at this once a year event— See the article on page 4.

Monthly Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 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

UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Saturday & Sunday March 6-7, 1999

Phoenix International Raceway Driving School/Track Day

The two-day class sponsored by the National Auto Sport Assoc. includes a drivers' school (and a special Saturday novice school) and timed track sessions. Cost (\$195-\$245) is dependant on the number of registrants.

Contact: Cliff Couch of the Sahuaro Miata Club, (602) 404-9394, or cliffcharyn@home.com, for details and to register. *No roll-bar requirement.*

Wednesday March 10, 1999

Laguna Seca Driving School/Track Day Monterey, California

Cost: \$265, Rollbars recommended not required, 2/3 tread on tires, no leaking fluids, good brakes. Helmets required: SA '95 or above, M '95 or above, DOT Contact: Aaron Tachibana, (408) 738-3290 or aaron@miata.net

This is the best way for Miata owners to improve their driving skills and find the limits of the car in a safe, controlled environment. There are excellent SCCA instructors on the track at all times.

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 or (510) 370-8262

May 6-9, 1999

Miata World '99

Miata 10th Anniversary Celebration,
Lone Star Miata Club (Dallas/Ft. Worth)
(877) MIATA 99, \$325 couple, \$255 solo



meet your fellow club members, ask questions, share stories, etc. Don't miss the fun!

Miata Dis-Mantler and Peterson Automotive Museum Tour

Date: Saturday, March 27

Time: 8:45 a.m., *Leaving promptly at 9:00*

Place: The Windmill (formerly Pea Soup Andersen's), east side of I-5 at the Palomar Airport Road exit, Carlsbad.

Caravan Leaders: John Lawler and Helen Lang, jlawler@webcc.net or (619) 268-3617, and Ian Dacanay

This event will have something for everyone. We will start by heading north to George Narzarian's Sport Imports (818) 765-3333, 7054 Laurel Canyon, Boulevard No. Hollywood, CA. He is one of the original Miata salvage yards and has a huge variety of Miata stuff. This is a great opportunity to find a replacement steering wheel, new alloys, and all sorts of after market goodies— Make a wish list!

Lunch will follow at Hot Wings Café.

Afterward, we will head over to the Peterson Automotive Museum, 6060 Wilshire at Fairfax, (213) 930-CARS.

"Most definitive museum in North America dedicated to the interpretive study of the automobile and its influence on our lives." Three levels of displays, galleries and book & gift shops. Features Streetscape, a historical walk through time showing the evolution of automobile and Los Angeles landscape, including a full-sized "Dog Cafe"— built in the shape of a sitting bulldog, replicating a small beach-area diner.

A review of their collection is at www.theautochannel.com/news/writers/bhagin/1998/fs9839.html

Admission is \$7.

Club Stuff— Available at Monthly Meetings

The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB has a variety of "Club Stuff" available for purchase at every Monthly Meeting.

- Static-cling window decals in most every car color
- Nametags
- Engraved glass mugs
- Hat/lapel pins
- Ladies' watches
- T-shirts, even a few sweatshirts!

Our special San Diego County Miata Road Maps and Membership Rosters are available, free of charge.

Solo II National Tour

In March, specifically March 20-21, the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) will be holding their yearly Solo II National Tour here in San Diego at the



Qualcomm Stadium west parking lot. This event is one of the qualifiers necessary for local Solo II participants to attend so that they are eligible to race at the National Championship in Topeka, Kansas, this September.

The National event is similar to regular autocrosses held at the stadium, but the rules are more stringent and heavily enforced. The racing is held over two days, Saturday, March 20, and Sunday, March 21. There are three runs each day, the course direction is opposite on the second day. They take your best time from each day, add them together and get a cumulative time for the two-day event.

When you sign up, you register a number between 1 and 99. If there is a second driver using that car in the same class, then that driver adds a 1 in front. So if one driver has the number 23, the second driver will be given number 123. Small number placards are placed in the pre-grid area corresponding to your car number so you know where to line up. After each run, you go back to your pre-grid spot and wait for each car to do its run. If you get a re-run because of cones knocked down by the previous driver or

because of a spun car, you are held in the pre-grid area for 5 minutes so that your tires are able to cool off (don't want an unfair advantage from pre-warmed tires). After all cars have done their run, there is a cone audit to make sure that the records show that the clobbered cones get credited to the proper (guilty) drivers.

After all three runs are completed, all the cars are placed in the impound area with the hood and trunk open so that the other competitors can verify that each car visually complies with the rules. If a competitor thinks that another car has an illegal advantage, that competitor can protest the car and place a protest fee with the SCCA. If the protest is upheld, the protestor gets the money back and the illegal car/driver is disqualified. If the protest is rejected, the vindicated driver gets the money, with a share for the SCCA, to compensate for the impound and inspection hassle.

Many of the best drivers attend this event. Look for national champion, and local driver, George Doganis to be one of the front-runners in his Miata in B Stock. Also Gary Thomason looks to be hot in Bob Purcell's 1999 Miata. If you want to see some of the best drivers in the hottest Miatas competing, then plan on coming to the National Event Saturday and Sunday, March 20-21.

—ROBERT 'JT' HOLLAND

InTENSE, the 10th Anniversary Book

As most of you are aware, orders are now being taken for the Miata 10th Anniversary books. The books cost \$65.00 each plus a \$15.00 shipping charge (7 lbs. each!). There are a few of the 5th Anniversary books available for an additional \$20.

I have contacted the publisher, Barbara Beach, to make arrangements for SDMC club members to save the shipping cost. Geri Causarano and I will pick up the books and deliver them to members at an upcoming monthly meeting.

- Only 1500 10th Anniversary books will be autographed.
- For those of you that have a 5th Anniversary book and want your 10th to have the matching issue number, give us the number— Barb will try to match it.

Barbara has requested that all checks be mailed to me so that Geri and I can keep track of how many books have been ordered by our membership. If the printing schedule stays on track, the books should be available by mid- to late-April and will be delivered to you at the April monthly meeting.

If you have already mailed a check to Barbara Beach, but would like to save the shipping charge, please let us know so that I can add your name to our delivery list.

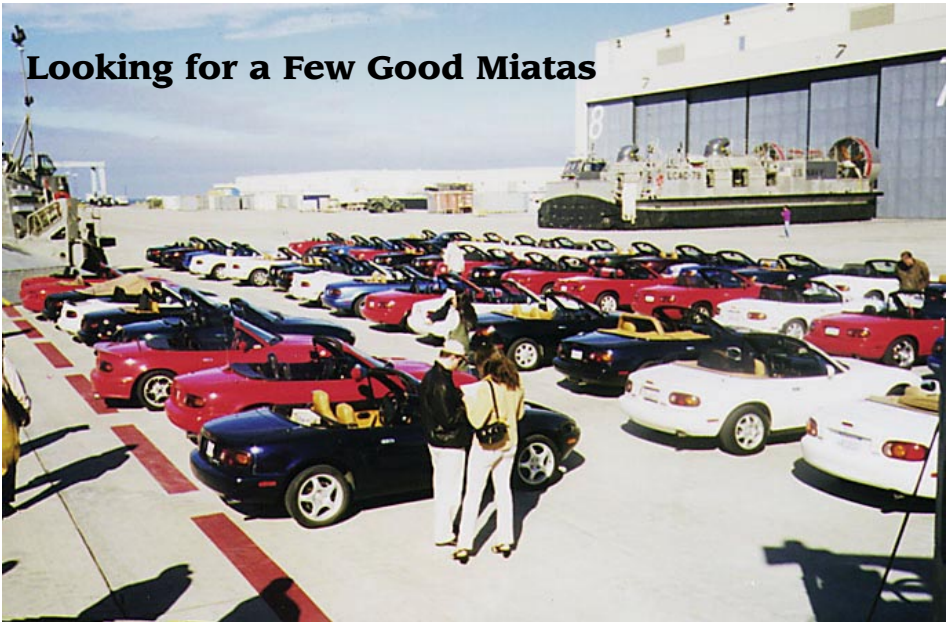
— Sue Hinkle, sportscarr@aol.com or (760) 735-9456.

Make checks payable to: MEDIA SOURCE

Mail them to: Sue Hinkle

733 S. Kalmia Street
Escondido, CA 92025





Looking for a Few Good Miatas

PHOTO: DIANE LONG



Left: 57 Miatas line up for inspection at the LCAC facility.
Below: Members tour a hovercraft while Ed Langmaid straps on a safety harness in preparation for the highpoint of his day!

Camp Pendleton Tour and Champagne Brunch Run

February 7th, 1999

From the beginning, we were given VIP treatment by the Marine Corps. We were met early in the morning by Marine Community Relations Chief Staff Sergeant Stephen Gude. Under sunny skies and light winds 57 Miatas and 1 RX-7 blasted out of the Windmill's parking lot in Carlsbad, en

route to a most interesting day at Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton. As always, the long line of Miatas attracted lots of attention on the short run North on I-5. Smiles and waves from the Sunday OTM drivers were juxtaposed with the driver of one particular large truck that seemed (justifiably) to take exception to our presence.

As previously arranged, we were greeted at the main gate by a military police vehicle from the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO) which was to be our escort for our time on base. For those of us who have been stationed here before, this sort of special treatment was certainly a first! With our escort vehicle at Code Three (running siren and flashing lights), we headed for our first destination— inside the security fence of the Navy's LCAC facility West of I-5, a place many of us had wondered about for years.

LCAC stands for Landing Craft, Air Cushion. These hovercraft can deliver a 60-ton payload to 70 percent of the beaches in the world. We were invited to



PHOTO: BOB KRUEGER

climb aboard and inspect these \$23 million dollar vehicles. Three LCACs were stationed on the flight line for a one-of-a-kind photo-opportunity. What a thrill! Our Miatas were parked in three rows of sixteen and a final row of nine. ED LANGMAID fearlessly strapped on a safety harness and rode a man lift to shimmering heights to take photos of this impressive sight. Meanwhile the rest of the group received guided tours of the LCACs from Petty Officer First Class Andy Maderas, a Miata owner himself, and fellow personnel of Assault Craft Unit 5. All in all, a truly interesting and informative morning, but just the beginning of a great day.



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



We had been on base for about two hours. What next?...You guessed it... must be time to eat! Once again with our escort car at Code Three, we were off to the Officers' Club at San Luis Rey. Our caravan trekked nearly the entire width of this vast installation. We passed through intersections against the red lights, and we didn't even get into trouble! Our escorts made sure we stuck



PHOTO: BOB KRUEGER

together by stopping non-Miata traffic for our colorful parade to pass by. At the OC, our hostess for the day, Cathy Monroe of Morale, Welfare and Recreation, shepherded 93 starving Miatans inside to enjoy a fabulous all-you-can-eat brunch. The food and camaraderie were outstanding and a good time was had by all. Cathy also treated our PMO escorts to brunch— good move, Cathy— what a



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID





PHOTO: ED LANGMAID

fine group of young men!

Afterward, a bit slower following our eating frenzy, we headed out for our next destination with our escort vehicle blazing the trail. After retracing our previous route, we arrived at Camp Del Mar and the Marine Corps' LTV Museum. It was clear to see that the group was transfixed as the curator, Tom Adametz, passionately told the history of the Land-

ing Track Vehicles (LTV) and how they helped to gain victory in the Pacific during WWII. Each of us could imagine the hellish experience endured by the gallant young Marines, including a large number of them who paid the ultimate price.

After such an emotional experience, some in the group decided to head home. ART HAMILTON, who, as a retired Master Gunnery Sergeant had spent many years on the base, guided a group of us up Basilone Road, giving a narrative on his CB while proceeding by the various camps and out of the gate near San Onofre and I-5.

Thanks to Art and IZZY MAGGAY for co-planning the event, MARK BOOTH and STEF GOULD for

collecting the money and keeping the numbers, Cathy Monroe from Camp Pendleton for organizing from the Marine Corps side, Andy and Tom for their most informative programs, and the PMO personnel for enabling us to enjoy clear sailing throughout our time on the base. Most of all, to all of you for supporting our run by your attendance and for the very kind words and letters afterward showing your approval. Ready for next year? They definitely want us back!
—JERRY CISINSKY



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO



Mini-Tech Day at Diane Long's

February 13, 1999

Wow, perfect top-down driving or top-down wrench-wielding weather! I arrived after things were underway, at least two cars getting new swaybars. I offered up my deviled eggs that I'd made for the occa-



sion. They were immediately gobbled up. (Amazing how something so simple to make is considered such a gastronomic treat.) We discussed swaybars, floorjacks, jackstands, simulated gravity, seatcovers, sound systems, add-on interior lights, etc. etc.

Uh-oh, looks like we might be getting finished with the swaybars, what else can we get our hands on? JON MARTINEZ asks if I'm installing anything today and I say yes, an oil filter relocation kit. Next thing I know he's drilling holes in the firewall with his right-angle cordless Makita drill. A really nice application of the right-angle feature.

After a trip to Kragen for an oil drain pan, Jon and IAN DACANAY put my car on ANTHONY WILDE'S snazzy jackstands and finish the installation. Voila! Looks like the rep at Moss Motors was right about the kit fitting a '99.

Ah, but we're not done yet. GENE STANLEY and Jon both notice the tie-downs still on the front of my car. Gene decides they're too hard to remove, but Jon is determined and eventually gets them off. The car looks so much better now. Maybe it's time to start thinking about a front grille? We discuss front grilles, front license plates, traffic light cameras that'll give you a ticket. We don't want to talk *too* much about tickets, might be bad karma.

Back to "good karma" discussions about CBs, antenna splitters, cold air intake units. We go look at Ian's "home-grown" CAI. Oooo, look at Ian's airdam! Lots of scratches on it. Yeah, says Ian, that's because the car has shorter springs. Makes the airdam hit everything. It's flexible, though, survives everything. We discuss springs, shocks, tires, wheels, forged wheels vs. machined wheels. We look at SCOTT SCHROEDER'S new slotted brake rotors. "What are the slots for?" "Gas dissipa-



PHOTO: DIANE LONG



PHOTO: ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: ANTHONY WILDE

Why are these people smiling? They are feeding Miatas new parts—Miatas are especially fond of arms and hands!

tion. Improves braking performance under hard braking conditions on the track." Hmmm, I don't think I'll be needing slotted rotors this week...

Back to the garage to scope out the installation of STEF GOULD'S oil filter relocation kit. (Different kit, much much cheaper but not as clean a fit since it's generalized for various cars.) Gotta relocate the alarm horn first, it's in the spot the filter will go. Did someone say horn? Discussion about horns, horn buttons, visibility and blind spots on the big rigs, safety of Miatas, stories about rollover crashes in Miatas. Rollover? Discussion about rollbars, stylebars, racing harnesses.

Even discussion about gas caps! Ian has a way cool filler cap. And JOHN LAWLER is The Velcro Man--gives me a little piece of velcro to use as a gas cap holder on the underside of the filler door. Is that clever or what?

Tech day's winding down--we feel satisfied and pleased with all the work done, the great camaraderie, the sharing of experiences and ideas, the gorgeous day. After thank-yous and good-byes, I'm heading home and wondering, do these folks have this much fun *every* tech day? If so, I'll definitely have to come to more of them!

—GALE CHAN

Upcoming Event

Racing Beat — Miata Open House

April 10th, 1999 10am -3 pm

- Tour the Racing Beat production and R&D facilities. — Product Demos
- Meet the Reps from: Yokohama Tires, Tokico Shocks, K&N Filters
- Prize Drawings
- Meet the Socalm and San Diego Miata Clubs
- Special Pricing on Selected Racing Beat Merchandise
- Free Food, Drinks, and More!

Of course we'll have a caravan going up to their facility in Anaheim, check the April newsletter for details. Racing Beat is promoting this event via Miata.net and print media for all Miata owners.

www.racingbeat.com Street address— 4789 E. Wesley Drive, Anaheim CA





PHOTO: JON MARTINEZ

Upgrading to a Torsen Rear Differential

One of the things that can really improve the handling of a Miata is the Torsen Differential. The Open Differential that comes standard on the Miata is fine for most street driving but if



you autocross, add a supercharger or turbo, every time you come out of a right hand turn your right rear tire will just spin. Valuable horsepower is going up in smoke until the spinning wheel regains traction.

The Torsen fixes the problem by delivering power to both rear drive wheels via an elegant gearing mechanism inside the differential. Both wheels will always have traction allowing you to apply full power earlier exiting the turn. The result is better control and much quicker lap times.

Changing the differential in a 94-99 Miata just requires swapping the Open Differential "Pumpkin" with a 94-99 Torsen unit. Anyone with good mechanical experience should be able to complete the job with a shop manual and a complete set of tools. There is also some good tech information on Miata.net's web site.

The early 90-93 Miatas are a different story. They came with a smaller differential and differential carrier (the part that bolts to the undercarriage of the car). Because of this, a Torsen "Pumpkin" won't fit without changing a lot more parts. Here is the list:

- 94-97 Torsen unit
- 94-97 Differential Carrier
- 94-97 Halfshaft Axles (these are shorter because the differential is wider and the bolt patterns are different)

94-97 Driveshaft (shorter because the differential is longer)

29 mm, 1/2" drive socket (a 1 1/8" Unified socket is close enough)

A long-handled breaker bar

All of these items are available from a junkyard specializing in Miata parts such as Sports Imports (818) 765-3333, ask for George; or Marshall's (800) 367-1901, ask for Erik. Be prepared to negotiate in order to get a good deal.

The hardest part of the job is removing the original axles. The 29 mm nuts that hold the axles to the wheel hub are torqued to 190 ft./lbs. — have long-handled breaker bar handy. Next was getting the axles out of the hubs.

After eight years on the car, my axle splines that fit inside the wheel hubs had rusted tight. The right side came off with a few hits of the hammer but I had to borrow my friend's sledgehammer and really whack the heck out of the left side before it would come free.

Once that was accomplished adding the new parts was fairly simple.

It was a challenging job to do, but well worth the cost (\$600 plus tools). The difference is remarkable, you just can't beat the traction in the twisties. Now I can't wait to get on the track at the Thunderhill Performance Driving School in March!

— JON MARTINEZ

Left: Closeup view of the Torsen Differential with the cover removed. Below: The main components of a differential swap.

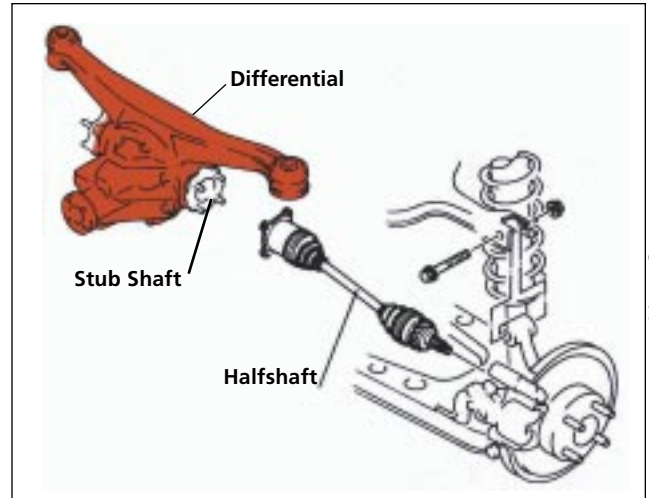


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AfterMarket Goodies

A Grille For Your Miata

I believe that Mazda dropped the ball when they designed the Miata's mouth. They left off the signature... the grille. Sure, there are sports cars out there without grilles, but I can't think of any right now... which is exactly my point!



While I have looked, I haven't been able to find a grill that I thought fit the Miata's personality. I wanted one that is distinct and traditional, yet subtle. It has to be un-obstructing, while offering the radiator some protection against flying projectiles. After seeing the Miata's grille in the *MX-5 Miata Anniversary Album*, page 27, I was inspired to design and create my own.

My goal was to keep the grill light and aerodynamic. I used six strips of high grade aluminum, which run horizontally across the opening. These sleek bands are tied together with three vertical bars to give it strength. The result is classic!

I made the first one in time for the Holiday Party gift exchange, and have made a few others on request. I am making these grilles on an "as needed" basis for club members. Turnaround time is about one week and the cost is \$65. My E-mail address is jlawler@webcc.net or (619) 268-3617.

Thanks for supporting my autocrossing habit!

— JOHN LAWLER



PHOTO: JOHN LAWLER





Member Profile

BENGT SPETSMARK

Around 6 months ago I moved over to San Diego from Sweden to work as an electronics engineer. One of the *many* things to do when you arrive in a new place in the world is the pleasant task of finding a new car. At least I thought it would be pleasant until I met the American car salesmen. They are terribly pushy and stick like glue — that takes the fun out of car shopping. I was not prepared for them and it took some time to realize that you have to get really rude to shake them off and get out of their cubicles without buying a car. I was fighting a terrible war for three weeks.

Since I didn't know exactly what I wanted and how much car you get for the money over here, I visited a lot of different dealers before I found *the car*. I only knew that I wanted something sporty and fun *and* practical in everyday life at a reasonable price. I had owned and really liked a couple of BMW's, they fulfilled all my demands except the reasonable price, so I was prepared to try something else this time.

The car happens to be a beautiful '95 Montego "Blue" (but in my opinion it's green) with black leather and top. What really made me interested was that the dealer had beefed up a '99 Miata next to it with some awesome custom alloy wheels—17" with 205/40 tires. They really made my car-crazed heart beat faster. I didn't buy the car right away, since it didn't live up to my demand for a practical car. The bug hit me hard and I caught myself all the time picturing in my mind that green Miata with those wheels. And I guess somewhere deep inside I knew that I was going to buy

that car. I've had that bug before.

Well, one week later, after I almost bought a Nissan 240SX but backed out in the last minute (Thank God), I was back and made an offer on the Miata including those wheels. Practical or not, I thought a

convertible sportscar is the way to go in Southern California! I probably paid too much, because I think we came to an agreement a bit too fast. (Why is it always like that when I buy a car?) But now it's mine, and I love it. Those wheels look very good and the tires make the car really cling to the road. I have driven Highland Valley Road several times already, with a big smile on my face. Sure, the low-profile tires are a bit uncomfortable on bad roads but the handling on smooth curvy roads more than makes up for it. Now I only have to figure out why oncoming cars are honking at me in the curves. Is it because they think I have a great car, or do I scare them with my speed? Well, my guess is that they like the car.

The impractical side of the car really proved itself when I bought a TV and tried to get it home. TVs don't fold and bend like a Christmas tree does, but I got it home after a while.

One of my previous cars was a '66 Triumph Spitfire which was very similar to the Miata. In fact I have heard that the Mazda designers had the MGB and the Spitfire as their main source of inspiration when the Miata was created. I understand now that it is true. The Miata really reminds me of my Spitfire, but the Miata has all that the Triumph lacked, quality, comfort, reliability and safe handling. The Miata is beautiful but I still think the Triumph looked better.

My only concern now is that it already has 65,000 miles on the odometer, but it seems very healthy and in good condition. I just wish it had 25 more horsepower, then it would be perfect.

I hope to see you all at some of the club activities in the future.

—BENGT

New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

Lewis Berger

San Diego
1999 Emerald Green Touring

Brian Bousman

Seal Beach
1990 Red A

Kathleen Gauden Clarke & Joshua Clarke

San Diego
1993 Red

Bobby Kleemann

San Diego
1999 Emerald Green PEP

Gail Parish

La Jolla
1994 White C

John Robbins

San Diego
1990 Red A

Lauren & Robert Thompson

San Diego
1999 Silver PEP

Jeremy Wong

San Diego
1990 Red B

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

Bob & Liz Brown

Thomas Busch-Sorensen

Sal & Geri Causarano

Bill & Bari Hyde

Erin & Greg Levorchick

Jon Martinez & Judy Powell

Robert Olsson

Nicola Reynolds

Frank Shine & Stephen DeLonge

Ronald & Jean Short

There are now 288 memberships consisting of 433 members.

Memberships by Miata Color:

- 95 Red
- 59 White
- 36 Black
- 17 Silver
- 14 Montego Blue
- 12 Mariner Blue
- 11 Laguna Blue
- 10 Emerald Green
- 9 BRG
- 7 Merlot
- 6 Twilight Blue
- 5 Starlight Blue
- 5 Marina Green
- 2 Yellow
- 1 Cranberry Red
- 1 Hunter Green
- 4 Unreported



Rainer's Ramblings

Isn't it amazing how our group pulls off new and exciting events month after month? You may think that you've seen it all, and then someone puts together a new run which is nothing like any of the previous runs we've done before. Hats off to JERRY CISINSKY and ART HAMILTON, for coordinating the tours of LCAC facility and the LTV museum, and TO IZZY MAGGAY for coming up with the idea of the champagne brunch at the Camp Pendleton Officers' Club!

These former Marines got us (all 57 Miatas and almost 100 people) on board Camp Pendleton to view the LCACs and their "air/seaport." If you've ever driven on I-5 between Oceanside and San Clemente, you must have seen the huge Medieval fort-like rammed earth fence topped by poured concrete shields that surround the facility on the west side of the freeway in Camp Pendleton. If you're like me, you've always wondered what the military has "hidden" there. Now we know.

We were given a full military police escort all over the base. This meant that the MPs blocked intersections so that the Miata entourage could pass through red lights to get to their destinations without having OTMs mess up our parade. (In case you didn't know, OTM stands for Other Than Miata.)

After an informative tour of the LCAC facility and getting our pictures taken, we traveled across this huge base (one of the largest in the entire country) to the Officers' Club to enjoy a phenomenal Sunday morning champagne brunch. As anyone who has ever traveled with this club knows, we are a drive and eat club!

But this time we may have outdone ourselves with the great brunch.

Several club members are veterans, and some, like me, served aboard Camp Pendleton. But I'll bet none of us have ever enjoyed our visit to the base as we did this time. Thanks to all who made this happen.

At the Autocross

A strange thing happened at the autocross on Valentine's Day at Qualcomm Stadium — more and more Miata club members are showing up at the events and either racing or watching the rest of us race. According to an informed source, there were 12 Miatas registered in just one of the six heats run that day—I told you this stuff is addicting!

BARB and ELLIOT SHEV were killing the course with the latest modifications to their beautiful blue with white striped Miata. According to Barb who had never spun the car before, it goes faster than ever now. She even enjoyed taking the Miata for a spin!

JT'BOB HOLLAND apparently loved the Kumho tires he was driving, because he was turning in some pretty awesome times. BRIAN "GOOD-WIN RACING" GOODWIN was running neck and neck with JT in the CSP class—some friendly rivalry here!

JOHN LAWLER came out for the first time to baptize his BRG Miata, and now both he and the car are converts. John was also seen fitting his custom made grills into some Miatas. PHIL DAoust was a recipient of one of those grills and was last seen drooling excessively!

Big STEVE WAID was getting his kicks in the BS class, since someone told him it stood for Big Steve.

ANTHONY "NEVADABOB" WILDE was shooting photos of anything and everything in sight. I'm sure you'll see some of his handiwork elsewhere in this newsletter. And VOODOO BOB KRUEGER was checking out all the drivers utilizing his gearshift knobs on the course. If you didn't know it yet, you should—his gearshift knob will take at least two seconds off of your best time on the course!

And even though I was probably the slowest Miata out there all day, I sure did have a bunch of fun acting as the track announcer for the second heat.

Hey, I think this club is ready to be one of the official racing teams which puts on autocross events in San Diego at the stadium on a rotational basis with the four existing clubs. What do you think? I'd like to get your opinion.

A Year As President Draws to a Close

My term as president of this club is rapidly drawing to a close. Many have asked me if I plan to run for a second term. As much as I have enjoyed being the president of the club, I believe it is only right for me to complete only one term. When I became president of the club, I was working out of my own home, able to devote a large portion of my life to the club. But as you all know, I am now working for a company which has me flying all around the country for weeks at a time. I just don't think it's fair to have a job like the president and then not be able to fulfill all the requirements necessary to make it the position it is.

I'll miss the job and the position, and I will always remember and treasure the wonderful year I've had as the president of the greatest car club on the face of the earth. I couldn't have done it without you.

So, it's now time to have a new face as your president. I'm sure that there are many people in the club who can do an outstanding job.

Let's drive (and eat) on that one!
—RAINER MUELLER, *El Presidente*



PHOTO: DIANE LONG

A long line of Miatas retreats from the fortified LCAC facility and prepares to attack the Officers' Club brunch.

