



TWISTS & TURNS

The newsletter of the San Diego Miata Club

Volume 11 Number 4

April 2006

Celebrating 10 years

JERRY STANDEFER

When the Miata was introduced in 1989, I was all of 13 years old. I wasn't into cars yet, although my father was going to change that in another year when he took the family to the 1990 Los Angeles Auto Show.

I don't remember the commotion that the Miata caused, but for some reason, one of Mazda's "It just feels right" commercials stuck in my head. I remember the Classic Red Miata sitting in the countryside, just as a proper

British sports car would. Three years later, my first car was a 1974 MG Midget MKIII, and the Miata, in my mind, was that Japanese copycat. It wasn't until I drove my first Miata five years later that I even paid attention to the car (and fell in love).

Apparently, my reaction to the car's introduction (I was probably too young) wasn't typical. Mazda's little roadster took the world by storm. Here in the United States, buyers flocked to Mazda

showrooms, and the Miata craze stepped into full swing. The Miata Club of America (MCA) was formed, and local chapters soon began popping up all over the place. Sunny California was no exception.

In June of 1990, the Southern California Miata Club (SOCALM) was born as a recognized chapter of MCA. SOCALM provided a meeting place for enthusiastic Miata owners all over Southern California, and

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SDMC members gathered at the San Diego Automotive Museum on Labor Day 1996 for a group photo. This photo was featured in *Miata Magazine*, where SDMC was featured as a spotlight chapter. Photo: Rainer Mueller

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Vice President



Brenda Kay
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Submissions to the newsletter are welcomed and encouraged. When possible, please e-mail your submissions to the newsletter editor. Submissions may also be mailed to the club's post office box.

Submission deadline is the 15th of each month. The Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

Contact SDMC

On the web

WWW.SANDIEGOMIATACLUB.ORG

24-hour voice message line

619-434-2007

By mail

P.O. Box 180833
Coronado CA 92178-0833

Club e-mail

Most club communication is conducted via e-mail through a Yahoo Group named SDMC-List. A free Yahoo account is required. Follow these steps to join.

1. Go to <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/SDMC-List>. (Note: Capitalization matters!)
2. Click "Join This Group!"
3. If you have a Yahoo account, log in. If you do not, click "Sign Up" and follow the instructions.
4. After logging in, you will be returned to the SDMC-List "Join This Group" page.
5. In "Comment to Owner," state that you are an SDMC member.
6. Complete remaining selections, perform Word Verification, and click the "Join" button.
7. Your SDMC membership will be verified. The verification and approval process may take several days.

For more detailed instructions, see the club's website.

Membership roster

The membership roster is available to SDMC members only. Follow these steps to access the roster.

1. Go to <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/SDMC-List>.
2. Log in and click "Database"
3. Click on the most current table in the tables list
4. To print, click "Printable Report." The printed copy will be 15–20 pages.

For more detailed instructions and options, see the club's web site.

Membership Page

New members

Welcome to our five newest members (since last newsletter):

Jack Davis, San Marcos	1993 Red
Jerry Lee, La Mesa	1999 Green
Larry & Mary Ellen Pascoe, Del Mar	2002 Yellow
Joel & Katherine Spengler, San Diego	2003 Midnight Blue
Dixie & Ric Lawson, San Diego.....	1999 Green

As of March 14, 2006, we have 292 memberships (110 single, 182 dual) and a total of 474 members.

Renewals

Only 52 members still need to renew. *Don't get left behind.*

Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings are a great opportunity to meet your fellow club members, ask questions, and share stories. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, except in November and December when we meet on the third Thursday.

Members begin arriving around 6 p.m. to enjoy meals, snacks, or beverages while chatting with their

Miata friends. The informal meeting starts at 7 p.m. We guarantee you'll have fun.

We meet at the Boll Weevil restaurant, 9330 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., in San Diego (between I-15 and SR 163). To contact the restaurant, call (858) 571-6225.

This month's meeting date:
Thursday, April 27

Celebrate SDMC's 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting & Elections Saturday, April 29

San Diego Automotive Museum, 2080 Pan American Plaza, #12 (Balboa Park)

Our annual meeting will celebrate the club's 10th Anniversary and elect officers for the coming year.

- ◆ See a special video presentation by Mark Booth of our past 10 years
- ◆ Hear a guest speaker from Mazda
- ◆ Try your luck in the Annual Meeting Raffle (tickets sold at the meeting—\$1 each/6 for \$5)
- ◆ Purchase a limited-edition 10th Anniversary T-Shirt (\$10)

The meeting will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch will be catered by Filippi's Pizza Grotto at a cost of \$10 per person. *Lunches must be prepaid.* Send checks (payable to "SDMC") by April 15 to: Brenda Kay, 6867 Fashion Hills Blvd., San Diego, CA 92111.

For further information, contact Sue Hinkle.

Dues

Dues are \$35 per calendar year, for either an individual or a dual membership (two members in the same household). Members who join the club in the first half of the calendar year (January through June) pay \$35 for their first year; those who join in the second half of the year pay \$20 for the remainder of the year.

Badges

Have you wondered how to get one of those engraved plastic name badges that other members wear to match your Miata?

The cost is \$6.50 each for badges with safety-pin closures, or \$7.50 for badges with magnetic fasteners. Prices including shipping to your home. Badges must be prepaid.



To order, see Vicky at a monthly meeting or send e-mail to VICKY@TEAMVOODOO.COM.

Our mission

The purpose of the club is to promote the enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, one of the world's most exciting sports cars—the Mazda Miata.

Owning and driving a Miata is one of life's great pleasures, and adding the company and camaraderie of like-minded enthusiasts only enhances the experience. Won't you join the fun as we enjoy the beauty of San Diego County from the seat of a very special little roadster?

Let's have fun driving our Miatas!

What a ride!

SUE HINKLE, PRESIDENT

Shortly after our club's second regional event, I was approached by members who encouraged me to run for club president. This was not an easy decision for me after just closing out the Surf 'N' Safari event and serving as club secretary for the past two years.

Shortly before the Annual Meeting, I received a call from friend and member, Jerry Boster, who informed me that he would run for vice president if I would run for president. After much consideration and with a green light from my family, I made the decision to run for the office of president.

Last April was an exciting time for me when the members of SDMC elected me to serve as president. The year has been full of challenges and changes, but I have to say that it has been more fun than I ever imagined.

The San Diego Miata Club has become a huge part of my life, and it will not be easy to turn the wheel over to a new leader. However, my great "ride" must come to an end, and a new leader will take over on April 29.

I believe that, after serving as secretary for two years and as co-chair for two regional events, the time has come for me to take a vacation. No, I'm not dropping out. I'm just going to participate as a member and take time to smell the roses. How long that will last, only time will tell. Who knows? I'll probably be co-chairing another SDMC event sometime in the near future or volunteering for the club in another way. I believe new leadership will bring to the club a new vision and fresh ideas as we celebrate SDMC's 10th Anniversary and enter our 11th lap.

Many helping hands

I owe a debt of gratitude to the

members, and I don't know where to begin in saying thank you for a tremendous year and the fun ride. The club membership has played an important role, and I thank all of you for your enthusiasm and Miata spirit.

Thank you to those members who organized runs and events during the past year, and for keeping the fun factor at an all-time high.

A special thank you to our Executive Board: Jerry Boster, vice president; Jason Brent, treasurer; and Brenda Kay, secretary. Each of you helped make my job a little easier, and kept things in order and running like a fine-tuned Miata.

Thanks to one great newsletter team: Laurie Waid, Eunice Bowman, Jerry Standefer, Larry Clark, Bruce Lewis, Robin Faircloth, Kelley Raymond, Scott Lewis, Janice Boster, Barry Billingsley, Carl Martens, and Cindy Jennings. Our newsletter is one of the best, if not the best, Miata newsletters published today.

This past year has been a busy one for membership with the conversion to an annual membership month. Thanks to Laurie Patton and Judy Ryan for their patience and hours of hard work managing the club membership records.

We saw changes to the club website, and I extend my sincere thanks to Dan Garcia for updating our website and making all those change requests.

Another change during this past year was the introduction of our event calendar, which was implemented by Mark Booth. Mark has definitely been labeled as one of the club cheerleaders, and I thank him for his support, and for keeping our events calendar full.

Our Regalia Team has brought some new and creative items to regalia. Thanks to Linda Payne, Mary



Clark, Kelley Raymond, Veronica Didier, and Sandra Bolster for keeping all of us in trendy car club fashion, and for making available goodies for our Miatas.

Thanks also go to Bob Kleeman, our postmaster, for keeping the Yahoo list updated and current. Geez, there certainly are a lot of folks who keep this club running.

On the home front, too

Lastly, I need to personally thank and acknowledge the love of my life. During the past year, Jack has been patient and supportive of me in my role as club president. He has definitely served in his role as "First Man" well. He has done a great job supporting me and club activities. I'm sure he'll be happy to have me back in my first role as his wife.

Finally, I won't have to compose another President's Message for the club newsletter. That will be one of the duties of your newly elected club president.

It has been an honor to serve as club president for the past year, and I've enjoyed every minute of it. So until we meet again, keep the top down, the sun on your face, and your hair blowing in the wind.

Losing that “Miata feeling”

JERRY STANDEFER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What is the third generation Miata (NC) compared to the first two generations (NA and NB)? The NA was an instant classic. It didn't have a ton of power, but its nimbleness and undying spirit sure put a smile on your face. The NB seemed to put more of a focus on overall performance. A sleeker body, more rigidity, more handling, and more power were meant to make the Miata less cute and more brute. But since it was still based on the NA, it never lost that “Miata feeling.”

What about this new NC? With a complete redesign, it grew bigger, more powerful, and now possessed even better handling. In the process, it also gained more comfort, more safety, and more luxury. But it barely weighs more than the NB (less, in fact, than the Mazdaspeed) and doesn't cost any more. On paper, it looks like a win-win situation: More performance, more comfort, more safety, same weight, and same price. What could possibly be wrong?

I have owned an NC for five months. (Has it been that long already?) It is a top-of-the-line Grand Touring model with just about every option you can get, including the all-important suspension package and the budget-upheaval Premium Package. Is the car great? You bet! Does it fulfill its promises of more performance, more comfort, more luxury, and more safety? Absolutely. Is it the best Miata ever? Whoa, hold on there!

From the very beginning, I knew something was missing, but I couldn't put my finger on it. It didn't feel like a Miata most of the time, but I wrote that off to the stiffer body (no rattles and barely noticeable cowl shake), softer ride, and the interior's larger dimensions. I mentioned to

several club members that it felt more like an Audi or BMW. It felt just about as powerful as the 2004 Mazdaspeed I traded in on it, so that couldn't be it. The handling was certainly there because I was taking curves faster than I was in the Mazdaspeed, and the steering wheel told me every detail about the road's surface. But there was still something that just wasn't there.

In late February, I was involved in an accident that put my NC in the body shop. Instead of going with the insurance-reimbursed rental, I decided to drive Gabe's 10AE while my car was being repaired. That next morning, I opened that driver's door and wedged myself into the driver's seat, only to find myself wondering if I should get that rental instead. Once you are used to the NC's interior, the NB's feels entirely too tiny inside. My left shoulder was against the door, and my thighs pinned between the steering wheel and seat. Did I really live with an NB?

Putting more rental thoughts aside, I inserted the key into the ignition and fired her up. Suddenly, I felt better. On my way to work that first morning, I had this strange feeling on my face. I looked in the mirror to see what it was, and I was greeted with a broad smile. On my face! And then it hit me. This was what the NC was lacking!

The 10AE—despite its lesser power (relative to the NC), horrible seats, even worse cup holders, rattles, groans, and stiff ride—is fun to drive. I felt at one with the car. I felt like I was driving a Miata. The steering, clutch, and throttle were all so light and smooth; it did what you asked of it and didn't fight back. The NC's controls are not as light, although they are smooth. Cer-



tainly, this couldn't be what made the 10AE so much more fun to drive than the NC, although they don't hurt. What was lost during the transition to the third generation?

It took a few days, but then I realized what was lacking in the NC. There is a 30 mph curve that I drive everyday, which is ruined by broken pavement. The NC doesn't like that curve, and I didn't think much of it. What car would like that curve? Well, the 10AE doesn't seem to have an opinion either way—it doesn't even notice it. Even at 45 mph, the 10AE sticks to the road like glue, despite the cheapo tires that clad its special wheels. At any speed above 30 mph, the NC side-steps several inches at a time over that same broken pavement. After I realized this, I really started thinking about the NC's suspension.

It's no secret that the NC rolls like a flat-bottomed boat in rough seas. Even with the optional suspension package, it lists with each turn of the small steering wheel. To make matters worse, it squats and dives more than Richard Simmons sweating to the oldies! With my Xenon headlights, this is especially noticeable. Accelerate, and you're blinding that 4x4 F-350 in front of you;

(Continued on page 19)

Coming Events

The Puke 2006

Date: Sunday, April 2
Time: Brunch at 9:00 a.m. (\$10)
Drivers meeting at 10:00 a.m. (patio)
Meet: Dalton's Roadhouse, San Marcos
(on Nordahl just north of Highway 78)
Contact: Steve & Laurie Waid, 760-432-0727,
SWAID@COX.NET

Details: We will be driving some of San Diego County's twistiest roads, back to back to back. We will break into five smaller groups to increase the fun factor, and run each group in the opposite direction of the previous group. Each will complete a loop of about 160 miles with two pit stops at Dudley's Bakery in Santa Ysabel. We will return to Dalton's for a late afternoon dinner in the patio ... right back where we started. The groups will start arriving back at Dalton's at about 3:30 p.m.

Some things to look forward to: Couser Canyon Road, Mt. Palomar, Wynola Road, Julian, and Engineer Road. A car show will be going on at Dalton's throughout the day. We will see the show as we leave and as we return.

Church-Goers' and Late-Sleepers' Puke

Date: Sunday, April 2
Time: Driver's meeting at noon (parking lot)
Meet: Dalton's Roadhouse, San Marcos
(on Nordahl just north of Highway 78)
Contact: Steve & Laurie Waid, 760-432-0727,
SWAID@COX.NET

Details: This course will be about 23 miles shorter than the full Puke (see previous announcement), but will end at approximately the same time as the other groups. This run will also accommodate the Daffodil Group (for those who prefer to puke more sedately).

Egg-zactly – A Photo-Gimmick Rally

Date: Saturday, April 15
Time: 9:00 a.m. registration
Meet: Mazda of Escondido (formerly Cush Mazda)
1560 Auto Park Way North, Escondido
Contact: Larry & Mary Clark, 760-737-8971,
LARRYCLARK@POBOX.COM

Details: Egg-zactly is an untimed gimmick rally, which you can drive at your own pace. You will travel some of the interesting roads in the Rancho Santa Fe area (and pass a lot of real estate you probably can't afford).

The object of the rally is to follow the prescribed course and find certain signs, called "Easter Eggs," that you pass along the route. Easter Eggs are defined in the

route instructions by photographs. When you find an Easter Egg, you write down your estimate of the official mileage to its location.

If you ran *Search for the Great Pumpkin*, you will recognize this as a similar concept, except that this time the Pumpkins/Eggs are identified pictorially. (If you missed that event, ask the members who ran it how they enjoyed the concept.)

Scoring is based on how accurately you identify the eggs' locations. One point will be assigned for each tenth of a mile you are off in your estimates, up to a maximum of 10 points for guessing wildly or completely missing an egg. The object is to obtain a low score.

But be on guard—some Easter Eggs in the route instructions may be invalid. For example, the object photographed may be on the wrong side of the road. We call those *rotten eggs*. If you write down any mileage to a rotten egg, you will be assigned 10 points.

Finding the valid eggs and avoiding the rotten ones will be your primary goal. You can improve your score by pinpointing the mileages accurately. The rally instructions provide official mileages to most instructions, so you can easily adjust for any odometer differences.

Both Miatas and OTMs are welcome. Each car should have two people (driver and navigator), pencils, and a clipboard.

The entry fee is \$5 per car. Registration opens at 9:00 a.m., with a drivers meeting at 9:30. The rally will finish in early afternoon at Killer Pizza from Mars, which has a new location at Felicita and Centre City Parkway.

SDMC Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 29
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Place: San Diego Automotive Museum
2080 Pan American Plaza, #12 (Balboa Park)
Contact: Sue Hinkle, 760-735-9456,
PRESIDENT@SANDIEGOMIATACLUB.ORG

Details: Join us for the club's 10th Annual Meeting and SDMC Elections. This is a milestone year for the San Diego Miata Club, as we will be celebrating our 10th Anniversary. The festivities will include a special video presentation by Mark Booth of our past 10 years, a guest speaker from Mazda, and the Annual Meeting Raffle. Raffle tickets will be sold at the door (\$1 each/6 for \$5). The meeting will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m.

A lunch, catered by Filippi's Pizza Grotto, is available for \$10 per person. Lunches must be prepaid. Make checks payable to "SDMC" and send (postmarked by April 15) to Brenda Kay, 6867 Fashion Hills Blvd., San Diego, CA 92111.

Coming Events

Search For Madonna 2006

Dates: Saturday–Monday, May 6–8
Time: 7:00 a.m. sharp to leave McDonald's
Meet: Oceanside McDonald's, on the south side of Oceanside Blvd. just east of I-5
Contact: Steve & Laurie Waid, 760-432-0727, SWAID@COX.NET

Details: Tentative events planned: Saturday drive to the Madonna Inn, Saturday evening visit to the Hearst Castle, Sunday morning visit to the Morro Bay Car Show, Sunday afternoon fun runs (Wine Country Tour and Great Roads of the Area), Sunday evening dinner (place TBA), Sunday evening room hopping, and Monday morning drive home with a stop in Solvang for brunch.

To join the Search, log onto The Madonna Inn website and go to the 109 Unique Rooms page and browse. Select your three favorite rooms (some may already be reserved), then call the Madonna Inn and ask for Barbara or Amy in Group Reservations. Be sure to mention the Miata Club and that will get you a \$50 discount on Sunday. Then e-mail or call Steve with your room name and number. You will be placed on the Search e-mail group.

Links: (Madonna Inn) WWW.MADONNAINN.COM
(Hearst Castle) WWW.HEARSTCASTLE.COM

Rock and Roll Run

Date: Saturday, May 20
Time: TBA
Meet: TBA
Contact: Les and Dyanna Smith, 858-578-1416

Details: Just where did all of those twisty roads we love to drive come from? Join us for answers on Saturday, May 20, during the San Diego Miata Club's Rock and Roll Run.

Our roads have been in the making for over 120 million years. We will drive several of our favorites, pull over occasionally to examine rocks and other geologic formations, then roll on to the next stop. Dr. Monte Marshall, a geologist and professor who retired recently from SDSU, will join us for this tour.

Tentative plans are to begin with an overview of San Diego County's geologic past, perhaps over breakfast, before taking to the roads. Dr. Marshall will walk us through the geologic past with comments at each stop and on the CB radio as we drive. Background information prepared by Dr. Marshall will also be available in advance of the run.

The Greatest Show on Turf

Date: Saturday, June 3
Time: 7:00 a.m. for registered Miatas
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for the show
Meet: Balboa Park, grassy areas between the Hall of Champions & Park Blvd.
Contact: Mark Booth, (619) 670-3789
MARKBOOTH@COX.NET
Cost: \$20 (benefits the San Diego Automotive Museum and Car Club Council)

Details: The San Diego Automotive Museum's annual Car Club Council Car Show. If 10 or more Miatas participate, the Museum will include a special class (trophies!) for Miatas!

This show is "Pre-Registered, On-Line Registration Only." It is limited to 400 cars (sold out last year), and you *must* pre-register by May 25. Pre-register online at the link below (have your credit card handy). When you register, select "S-14 All Other Sports Cars (1950-present)."

Registered Miatas will meet in the parking lot at the Northeast corner of Park Blvd. & President's Way at 7:00 a.m. to caravan onto the show grounds as a group and get parked together. If a registered Miata arrives late, you might be unable to park with the rest of the Miatas.

Registration Deadlines: We need at least 10 Miatas registered by May 14 to ensure a best-Miata trophy. The absolute last date for registration is May 25.

Link: WWW.STREETRODINSIDER.COM/EVENTSDetail.ASP?EVENTID=314

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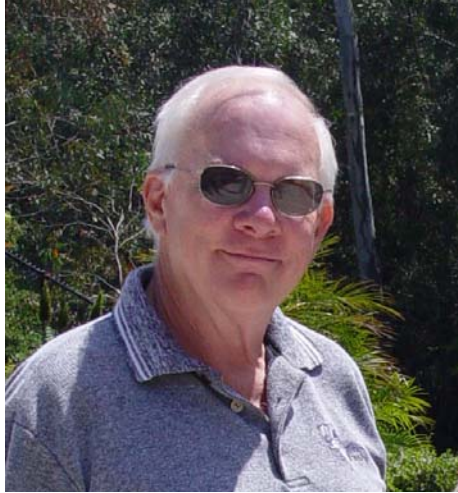
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Candidate Statements

For Vice President: Larry Clark

It is said that nobody ever runs for vice president. If that's true, I must be nobody because my hat is in the ring.

I'm writing to introduce myself. I'm a recently retired software developer, living in Escondido. I've been married to my best friend, Mary, for 42 years. We are relative newcomers to SDMC, having joined about a year ago, but



we've been around sports cars and car clubs for most of our lives.

My first sports car was an Austin-Healey Sprite (Bugeye), bought while I was in college. In the intervening years, I had the pleasure (sometimes pain) of owning an interesting variety of others. They included two Sunbeam Alpines, three Datsun/Nissan Zs, a Jaguar XK-E, four Porsches, a Corvette C6, all three generations of RX-7s, and all three generations of Miatas. Mary's Marble White NC ("Maryata") is our latest fun car.

We have belonged to sports car clubs from northern and southern California to New York, Georgia, and Florida. And, since organizations always need volunteers, we've wound up as officers in most of them. Shortly before joining SDMC, we were honored as Enthusiasts of the Year by the local Porsche Club region.

Our major activity has been rallies. I cannot begin to estimate how many miles we've logged while organizing and competing in them. I occasionally dabble in autocrosses, too, although I'll never win Top Time of Day. We also enjoy tours, social events, and the company of like-minded car nuts.

Having learned that clubs are more fun for the folks who get involved, as soon as we joined SDMC, we began writing articles for the newsletter. Mary joined the Regalia team. We laid out and presented a rally called *Search for the Great Pumpkin* (and we're working on another, named *Egg-zactly*). I recently assumed the role of newsletter Production Editor.

I certainly don't need another job, but there appears to be a shortage of candidates for the 2006 Board. I am

For Treasurer: Judy Ryan

Hi, my name is Judy Ryan. I have been a member of SDMC for 3.5 years. I was actually a co-pilot on Scott's membership, but once I found out how neat a car it was, I just had to go and get one of my own. Now, of course, it couldn't be just your average Miata. No! I had to get a 10th Anniversary model, and I wouldn't trade it for the world.



Well, no more than six months into the club, I found myself volunteering for Membership, so of course I had to be a member to do that, and that is how I became a member myself. I have been doing the membership for three years now, but I feel it is time for me to move on and run for something else.

I would like to run for treasurer. I have done a treasury position in my past. I have been on my HOA board as treasurer for two years, and that was maintaining 440 units. So vote for me! I promise I won't be too shy to give you the totals!

willing to serve if the members wish. Although I'm still learning SDMC's history and culture, I feel I can share ideas that have worked well in similar clubs.

The vice president's slot seems like an ideal position for me because it carries few formal duties. I believe I can support and assist whoever becomes president while still doing justice to my responsibilities to the newsletter.

SDMC is a terrific club, full of upbeat, enthusiastic people. We need to channel that enthusiasm to get more members involved in leading events, writing articles, serving on committees, and handling the numerous tasks that make the club work.

The Board should provide overall guidance on policy matters, ensure fiscal prudence, and see that volunteers have the resources they need. Beyond that, it should stay out of the way and let the others do their jobs as they see fit. That's my philosophy, and my pledge if you elect me.

Internet Tech Day sheds lights on bytes

KELLEY RAYMOND

I guess it's fitting that I'm writing the article for this event since it was my idea.

I told Mark Booth that I felt overwhelmed and frustrated trying to use the SDMC-List Yahoo Groups site, and thought that there were a few other members who might be having the same trouble. I was also certain that there's a lot of great information about Miatas "out there" in cyberspace, and that I was missing out because I was too intimidated to do much more than casual browsing of any of the Miata-related sites.

I was right on both counts, and I'm sure glad I asked for help. As usual, SDMC members came to the rescue. Bravo and thanks to our e-mail Postmaster, Bob Kleeman, and Mark for putting this event together and doing such a great job with it.

Unfortunately, I didn't get to go to the eating portion of the event. I hate that I missed it because Chili's is one of my favorite places; I love that Molten Chocolate Cake. It's really good if you wash it down with their chips and salsa, and a cold beer. Hey, life is uncertain—eat dessert first!

Everyone (there were about a dozen of us) eventually made their way to MusicMatch, Inc.'s headquarters. This is where Bob used to work, and they were kind enough to let us use their lovely Spanish-style facility. (There's an interesting little story about the building's architecture and interior design; ask Bob about it if you get a chance.)

Using a computer that projected the monitor's image onto the wall in front of us, Bob showed us how the SDMC-List Yahoo Groups site works, and what some of the features provide. He and Mark were very patient with all of us, even taking time to show us how to create a Yahoo account (to access Yahoo Groups and other Yahoo features besides e-mail) and how to check to

see if we already have a Yahoo Groups account established.

They also showed us how to use the database that's on the group site to look up members' phone numbers and e-mail addresses. (*Note: The database contains only information that members have given SDMC permission to share.*) All of us realized

Seriously, all model years, every customization you could ever dream of, many that you would *never* dream of—it's all right there. If you don't know about this feature of Miata.net, visit it today.

All of the information is contributed by Miata owners who are members of the forum. In true Miata fash-



that access to this information is very handy, and we all felt much more capable about using the site after Bob was done.

Then Mark showed us the Miata.net website. Most of us knew about it, a few of us had even visited the site, but none of us understood how to use the site's forum feature. Wow, that's a lotta Miata! That's where everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-Miatas-but-were-afraid-to-ask is available. All Miatas, all the time.

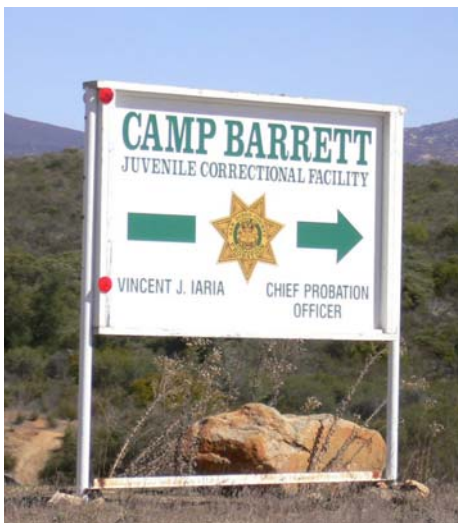
ion, these folks have generously donated a ton of time and effort to share this information with all us other Miataphiles. Conversely, if you have something new/fun/cool to share, this is the place to do it. (Now Dennstedt and Rocky may actually get to eat their dinner during the monthly meetings because they won't be answering a million questions from me and other SDMC members—nah!)

Thanks, guys! Now there are a few more Miatas flying down that information superhighway.

Reluctant Readers Run

DEBBYE LEWIS

Saturday, March 4, was a great day for a run through the backcountry of Jamul (well, all of Jamul is backcountry I suppose). We were all ready to go as we arrived, books in hand, to kick off Les and Dyanna Smith's Reluctant Readers Run, a fun run designed to provide reading material to the young men housed in the Barrett Honor Camp Facility.



This sign marks the entrance to the Barrett Honors Camp. Photo: Debbye Lewis

Les, that lucky guy, gets to drive through the country on twisties every day as he commutes to his teaching job at Barrett Honor Camp, while the rest of us fight the gridlock on our "in town" commutes.

Les states, in the wonderfully prepared run information packet, "Barrett Honor Camp is a residential camp for young men from 16 to 19 years of age who have committed serious criminal offenses. Residents would normally face lengthy sentences in facilities such as the California Youth Authority and Arizona Boys Ranch. Average length of stay is nine months to over a year. Barrett High School, at the facility, is the educational component for the Juvenile Corrections Intervention Program. It has a maximum capacity of 125 students. The school's pro-

gram emphasizes literacy, school-to-career, General Education Development (GED) and general educational courses required for graduation." What a great idea it was to incorporate a fun run with helping the education of our youth.

The weather couldn't have been better: blue skies, a few wispy clouds, sun shining, and a cool 61 degrees. We left Rancho San Diego heading east, and took in some great roads winding up into downtown Jamul (don't blink or you'll miss it!), then eastward on Highway 94. Since we had several new members on their first official run, it was nice to have a peppy pace and hit some fun twisties on the way to our destination. As we twisted and turned our way north, south, east, and west to get to the oak-lined road that twisted deeper and deeper into the Barrett Honor Camp property, we saw the ocean from atop Skyline Truck Trail, the legendary "Lady in the Water" (one of the Coronados Islands), cows, horses, and bicyclists, too.

We parked (with ample room for all 17 cars that made the run), placed our books and magazines on a rock retaining wall, and proceeded to a picnic area, complete with restrooms. We sat in the warm sun and chatted to pass the time until Les and Dyanna shared information about the lunch possibilities we all would have at the Viejas Casino and Outlet Mall.

After exiting Barrett Honor Camp, we skirted the south end of Alpine, traveled through Harbison Canyon. Passing the Swallows nudist camp, we enjoyed Les's quip on the

run instructions: "Sun Club on right; put top down if not already topless." On that sunny day, we already were!

Entering via Arnold Way, we passed through Alpine and made our way to the Viejas Casino. After parking and a quick shuttle ride to the casino entrance, we decided where we wanted to eat. Most folks opted for the Outlet Mall and the variety of fast-food establishments encircling the outside dining area. There were salads, pizzas, fish tacos, and much more that we all chose to enjoy as we talked and soaked up the warm rays of the afternoon sun.

After lunch, some folks went shopping, some may have even hit the casino, but most others jumped back into their Miatas, homeward bound. It's assumed that most of the best twisties are in north county (e.g., Couser Canyon, Rice Canyon, Palomar Mountain, etc.), but truth be it known, there are some mighty fine twisties in the east county too, and leave it to Les and Dyanna to find them.

Thank you, Les and Dyanna Smith, for a great fun run. The new members all seemed to enjoy themselves, and I'm sure we'll be seeing them on more runs in the future; the club veterans will always enjoy the time and effort of anyone who plans a run and executes it as well as this one was. Heck, I still have my hat on, and I am looking for another run to go on. Any volunteers?



Club members relaxed in the picnic area while Les Smith and one of the Sheriffs talked about the camp. Photo: Debbye Lewis

Letters

March 4th's Reluctant Readers Run attracted a number of first-timers. Several happily shared their "first impressions."

Being relatively new to the state of California and to San Diego County, the Reluctant Readers Run was a great opportunity to meet new people, take photos of the amazing views, and best of all, have a chance to be a part of a group of cars driving together on back roads.

Since we live up in Oceanside, we don't often get down to the eastern part of the county. Jamul and Alpine were two areas in which we got at least a glimpse of the terrain, geology and even a little bit of history. Of special interest to us was the stop at the Barrett Honor Camp, where we learned more about Les' work as a math teacher there, and their need for books (particularly about cars!) for the students to read during their free time.

Our day ended at Viejas Outlet and Casino where people extended the hand of friendship to us.

Since it was our first run with a group, it took a little while to figure out how much distance to allow between cars, the pace of the person in front, and to be sure not to leave the car behind you in the dust! It's never easy moving to a new area, but it is nice to know what an open and welcoming organization the Miata club is for newcomers like us.

Thanks Les and Dyanna for taking the time to organize a fun intro to East County!

Bobbi Schildt

Thank you! Thank you!. Thank you!

YIPEE!!! What a great time!! I had a blast. That was my first run ever, and I had the best time ever. Just had to say thanks again.

George Khoury

It's all about the curves

CARL MARTENS

I must write this. I have to get it off my chest; it's been on my mind since I acquired my first Miata about 8 months ago.

First, I should warn you that this is for adults only. Second, I sure don't want anybody to be insulted, offended, or incensed by the subject matter. Third, this commentary is not about Type-1/-2/-3 or hairpin turns...or late apexes. (However, some gentle curves negotiated by my '97 Marina Green M Edition actually do create a great deal of excitement.)

Yes, this really is about the sensuality of my Miata. Pure and simple, the darn thing is just plain sexy!

I had a slight sense about it when the Miata was first introduced in the late 80's, but I didn't really have enough guts to get a close-up look during those formative years (mine, not the Miata's). It wasn't until I moved to San Diego in 1999 that I began noticing them in earnest. There was no real point in Omaha; a convertible in that climate was just out of the question. (In fact, the idea of anything going topless was quite frowned upon.) And you know, I really didn't know why I liked looking at them, but I sure did. It was kind of like when I met my wife. I couldn't take my eyes off her. I didn't know why, but I just couldn't. I

kid her today that it was because of that little dimple on her ...oops, almost let it slip there. Sorry, honey.

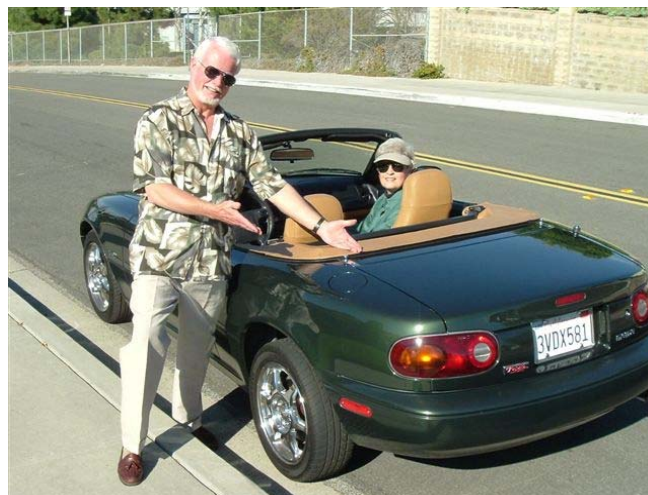
Well, I might as well say it. It's the rear end—the butt...the boot—of my baby (car) that really has me gushing like a blithering idiot. It's all about the curves. It's the contour of the rear fender as it folds gently into the trunk area. It's the soft edges—no sharp angles. It's the deep reflection generated by the beautiful paint job, and the graceful line of the light as it continues the delicious contour of that tight body.

Since I have white hair, I feel I can take some liberties when discussing curves. I've always admired them, from the French curve templates in Architectural Drawing class in high school to the gentle curves so important in designing rooms, gardens, and buildings adhering to the principles of Feng Shui.

Yes, I've also enjoyed—for as long as I can remember (and that's a long, long time)—the sensual curves that the female form so generously offers its admirers. Now tell me, guys (and gals), how many times have you taken a second look at a particularly provocative curve on the body of another human being? Don't lie; we all do it!

Now, I catch myself turning around after I park my Miata, just to take a long look (oh, hell, call it a stare) at that gorgeous rear-end curve, that sensuous piece of metal and paint, which was designed over a decade ago and still retains its classic line today. This really is what classic beauty is all about, a Venus de Milo of the automobile world.

Is there anything that can compare to it? I think not!



Carl Martens, admiring his baby's butt. Photo: Jim Strozier

Serious suspension mods transform Miata

ABE MARA

Inspired by a new month and newsletter, I thought this would be a good chance to share some of my impressions of some new hardware I've put on the "Little Miata that Could." This is a reasonably extensive list, but since all of the parts work together, I may as well review them as such.

Listed below are the approximate "street" prices (to be taken with a grain of salt), which should include shipping, tax, etc. Remember, some places will charge you more, but the extra support you'll get from a good shop may make paying a few extra dollars worthwhile.

- ◆ Koni Sport adjustable shocks ~\$600
 - Also known as "Koni Yellows"
 - Custom revalved for higher spring rates (~\$500)
 - I used NA shocks, as they have a bit more travel and three-step adjustable perches
- ◆ Eibach springs ~\$275
 - Free with Ground Control Continuously Adjustable Perches
 - Universal Type (2.5" inside diameter, 6" / 7" length front/rear)
 - 500/375 lbs/inch front/rear
 - I used 6" springs in the rear since I had a set for free
- ◆ Ground Control adjustable perches ~\$425
 - These come with a set of springs (generally 375/250 lbs/inch front/rear)
- ◆ Fat Cat Motorsports NB shock mounts ~\$200 w/bump stops
 - Allows the use of NB style mounts with NA shocks
 - Can be used in either NA or NB
- ◆ Fat Cat Motorsports open cell foam bumpstops (included with shock mounts)
 - Provide increased suspension travel and a smoother transition

I know this sounds like a lot, but bear with me. First off, I want to mention my ride.

I drive a 2000 NB with a limited-slip differential. My suspension has been from the Flyin' Miata parts

catalogue through and through. That means their 342/228 lbs/inch (front/rear) springs, which lowered the car a lot. These were paired with KYB AGX shocks, and tied together with Flyin' Miata heavy duty (1" front and 5/8" rear) sway bars. (Flyin' Miata is in the process of changing over all of their suspension parts; the newer springs are a little taller, and the shocks a little better.) Before that, the car was bone stock on the base suspension, including the non-sport 11 mm rear sway bar.

I can actually launch from a left-handed traffic light with some confidence of maintaining vehicular composure.

The car also has a front shock tower brace, Flyin' Miata frame rail reinforcement with a butterfly brace, Flyin' Miata Cannon rear sub-frame brace, and a Hard Dog Deuce rollbar. There are a few more ponies under the hood, which inspired the stiffer spring rates, but affects the handling little.

The good stuff

I would like to publicly thank Shaikh of Fat Cat Motorsports for his tremendous help in designing this whole setup. Having a high-horsepower car, I really needed to get that rear end under control. Taking me on a whirlwind tour of "front roll couple" and other vehicular dynamics, he made some learned suggestions about how to set up a Miata with less reliance on

a heavy rear sway bar. Through the use of a great spreadsheet he wrote, he was able to predict not only what springs would give me an "ideal" set up, but also what would leave me with the most flexibility to change the characteristics of the car from understeer to oversteer and back again.

Miatas can suffer from "snap oversteer," where the rear end suddenly lets loose in a turn. This often happens after a harsh transition from the springs to the bump stops, jarring the suspension, and upsetting the car.

My car is totally transformed! The adjustable perches allowed me to get to the "ideal" ride height where the lower control-arm pivots are level, allowing the double-wishbone suspension to keep the wheel flat to the ground over large vertical displacements.

The increased travel afforded by the Fat Cat Motorsports bump stops and mounts means I *never* bottom out, even when doing things I would ordinarily only attempt in a rental car. The big speed humps are a breeze even at 30-35 mph, and bumps in my path even during high-speed (let's not mention *how* high!) turns become nothing more than scenery to the driver. The stiffer spring rates help control dive and squat, although they don't seem to make up for the smaller rear sway bar.

Speaking of the smaller rear sway bar (I went back to the factory non-sport 11 mm bar), the car has a different feel. The back end is *much* stickier. Even with the turbo, I can actually launch from a left-handed traffic light with some confidence of maintaining vehicular composure. On the tighter U-turns, I will admit the car pushes some, and I think I will try to further tune this out with the sport model's 12 mm rear sway bar.

As luck would have it, resident club mechanic Larry Dennstedt has

a small collection of bars, so I didn't have to look far. The trade-off for a loose-feeling rear end is greater high speed confidence and the ability to stay on the power when normally I'd be riding the brakes to keep the front end sticking.

Shocks. Koni Sports for the NB do not have adjustable ride height. This is not an issue if you're going to be adding a Ground Control set-up, as the stock perches will be removed. The NA version of the shock has three levels, which you can change with relative ease and minimal cursing. All Koni Sports have fixed valving for compression, and an adjustable rebound. Unlike the AGXs, the knob is not conveniently located on the shock body, but rather is sort of buried in the top of the shaft. That means popping the hood to adjust the fronts (with a special tool); the rears are an involved process of removing the trim pieces in the trunk, and exposing the shock mounts. The standard sports are "good up to 500 lbs/inch," and most people say that as years go by, they adjust them stiffer to make up for their wear. I imagine the closer you are to this 500 lbs/inch limit, the sooner you

would need them adjusted. I had mine custom revalved to their "race shock" specification, which is designed for SPEC Miatas and other high spring rate applications.

So far, my impressions are that it is *not* too much shock for the job—having them turned halfway up, I still feel they could use a bit more, which means I'm in a comfort zone. The custom revalving is pricey—around \$400 plus shipping, handling, and parts—and has to be done by Koni or an approved shop. It also takes a long time; I don't recommend taking apart your daily driver and waiting for them to finish, unless you have another suspension to put in the car while you wait. I had mine done before taking my car apart, so the total downtime was only a few hours.

Here's a tip: You can do what I did—look online (Miata.net or the SDMC classifieds) for used Konis. If you're going to have them rebuilt, why spend over \$1,000 on new shocks, then take them apart and throw away perfectly good innards? I bought mine used, very cheaply, and then had them rebuilt and revalved, all for the cost of just new shocks.

Perches. The Ground Control set up is a little pricey—but it's not the cheap stuff that you can find on eBay. Perhaps for an application like mine (set and forget; I will NOT be adjusting my ride height once a week for each new track I race), the eBay ones would be fine, but the Ground Control set-up really seemed first rate. Adjusting them (with the car in the air) is a complete breeze; the only tool you'll need is an Allen wrench to loosen the lock nut. It's nice to know that if I get trapped on the wrong side of a rocky field, I could raise the car on the side of the road!

Of course, keep in mind any changing of the ride height will require a full realignment, so don't expect to be changing the car three times a day without shelling out \$70 for Terry's services at Lutz tires. The set-up does allow the use of "standard" springs, so you don't need to buy Miata-specific lowering hardware each and every time you want to change spring rates or ride height.

Fat Cat Motorsports. The rubber and foam bits from Fat Cat Motorsports don't seem like much—a custom made nut and a few other bits—but the total package works quite well. The bump stops are MUCH smaller than stock, and are very, very stiff. Still, when (or should I say if?) I've touched down on them, I have never noticed a jarring bump. Fat Cat Motorsports claims quite a bit of additional suspension travel—enough that you add spacers to prevent the wheels from touching the fenders.

The result

My car is definitely transformed. I have a feeling that, without all of the extra stiffening in the car, the spring rates I'm using would be too high for most people (as the car will flex, where the suspension does not!). So far everyone who has ridden in my car tells me how surprised they are by the stock-feeling ride of the car. To me, it's better than stock.



An impressive array of components transformed Abe Mara's 2000 NB into a potent weapon for taming curves. Photo: Abe Mara

Linda Payne—One busy “retired” person

KELLEY RAYMOND

Don't let her tiny size fool you. There's a lot to this little lady. Like many a proud grandparent, the first thing Linda started talking about was her grandchildren. This photo [center], taken just last December, shows 9 of her 10 grandchildren—and she's very excited about the 2 that are on the way (one due in April, and one in May).

The funny thing is that, when Linda was a little girl, she thought that when she grew up she would like to have 12 children... that is, until she had her first child. Then six suddenly sounded like a much better number!

After the birth of her second child, she decided she was done. As the saying goes, “be careful what you wish for; you just might get it.” In the end, Linda got her dozen children. Thanks to the blended families that her two children have created, Linda now considers herself kind of a “professional grandmother,” and she loves it.

Actually, it's because of Linda's son Peter that she is in the SDMC. Peter and his family live in Japan, and he drives a Miata there. Since he enjoys his so much, he tried, for quite a while, to convince Linda to get one.

Meanwhile, she was also being encouraged to get a Miata by her neighbor, SDMC member Mary Martin. Linda had even been on a couple of SDMC runs with Mary, but still didn't think she was interested in having a Miata.

It wasn't until Mary mentioned the magic phrase “Crystal Blue” that Linda became interested. The 2002 LS was being sold by a former SDMC member, and Linda thought that Crystal Blue sounded nice. When she told Peter that Mary had told her about this Miata for sale, he quickly dismissed it, insisting instead that she should have a British Racing Green. Unbeknownst to Linda, Peter conspired with Mary to buy the Crystal Blue and then sur-

prised Linda with it. Although technically the car is for him “to use when he's in town on business,” Linda drives it all the time and loves it as much as both of them had told her she would!

prised Linda with it. Although technically the car is for him “to use when he's in town on business,” Linda drives it all the time and loves it as much as both of them had told her she would! (He didn't mind a bit; he thinks they're great.) Although she doesn't consider herself a “joiner,” Linda has really enjoyed being in the club. She even led her first run shortly after joining the club; in March '05, she led a run up to Borrego Springs to photograph wildflowers. But, it wasn't until Veronica Didier asked for help with the club's regalia items that Linda became much more involved with SDMC.



Linda Payne, surrounded by her large—and still growing—family. Photo: Tony Amat

One part of the business that her son owns, and she manages, involves screen-printing designs on T-shirts, so Linda volunteered to handle SDMC's shirt inventory. Thanks to her business savvy and personnel changes, her role on the Regalia Team has expanded considerably.

“Who would have thought, after 42 years in the computer industry, I ended up being a T-shirt screen printer! ... You never know.”

Linda spent almost 20 of those years with Wang. She attended a computer school (similar to today's ITT Technical Institute) and quickly got a job, then decided she needed a change of scenery—a big change! Linda loaded up the kids and moved to New Zealand in 1974. Wang was glad to see her. “Oh, you're from America; you must know all about Wang!” Linda was scratching her head and asking herself who Wang was as she began her new job. Once she figured out that Wang was both a who and a what,

she learned so much that she eventually earned the nickname “Queen of the User Aids” in software support.

Since Linda had gotten in on the ground floor, she became a critical go-to person and was responsible for everything from installation to training and tech support. She became accustomed to staying on the proverbial learning curve because Wang was growing so quickly and always coming out with new products.

When she returned to the U.S., she worked for Wang primarily in the Washington, D.C. area. Wang transferred her to San Diego in 1980. She said it was a great company—very progressive—and she had a lot of fun.

Like the Miata that she thought she didn’t want, Linda initially didn’t want to move to San Diego. After a couple of weeks here, she and the kids found themselves going to the beach so often that they always made sure there were plenty of towels and bathing suits at the ready in the trunk of the car. They all had quickly fallen in love with San Diego.

Although she worked very hard, Linda found her job with Wang very rewarding. Unfortunately, the company disintegrated almost as quickly as it had grown. As offices were being closed and virtually all employees were laid off, she found

herself acting as the sole support system for all of Southern California. She had to become a professional commuter of sorts, and was working practically around the clock. She was sad when, in 1992, they finally closed the doors and she was laid off.

Linda eventually took a job at an insurance company and found herself working part-time, helping Peter with his export business. He started the company because he thought a lot of cool stuff was sold in Japan that wasn’t being marketed or sold in the United States. Peter decided to use the Internet to sell some of the items and, within two years, quit his teaching job and quickly became a leading authority in his business circle on Japanese animation, toys, and games.

The American side of the business began in a closet in Linda’s house. As the company grew, the operation expanded into her garage and finally into a facility in Kearny Mesa. Linda’s now like Sinatra: Chairman

of the Board! She has a full staff, goes into the office only once a week to check on everything, and is having a ball. She’s couldn’t be happier that Peter finally convinced her to quit her corporate job six years ago to manage the business for him. It dramatically changed her life, obviously for the better.



The Crystal Blue color helped persuade Linda to become a Miata owner. Photo: Chris Payne

Linda lives in Tierrasanta with her two dogs and her grandson, Christopher. Chris is a senior in high school and works at Kragen Auto Parts. Even though he’s an enthusiastic member of the SDMC, Chris’s real passion is working on his 1995 Dodge Dakota.

We can’t give him any grief over it though, because he’s a real sport considering some of the things he’s had to endure as an SDMC member. Not only did he don the traditional pink bathrobe at the Madonna Inn last year, he also graciously served cookies while playing host during the tour of the rooms.

When SDMC recently had a best-Hawaiian-shirt contest, Chris went everybody one better by wearing a Hawaiian shirt, with a coconut-shell bra over it. He was last seen good-naturedly strutting his stuff down the Boll Weevil runway, sporting the latest in SDMC Regalia wear.

This year, Chris will sit out for the Madonna Run so that another of Linda’s grandsons, Jason, can go.

With kids and grandkids, SDMC, her dogs, and her business, Linda is very busy for someone who calls herself “retired.” She has traveled some very interesting roads and taken some very risky and rewarding turns in her journey on life’s highway.



Linda’s grandson Chris occasionally gets to take the helm of the Crystal Blue. Photo: Linda Payne

membership took off. That membership included several Miata fanatics from San Diego County.

A club for San Diego

Southern California is a big place. By 1995 it was clear that it was too large to properly serve all of the members. San Diego members had to drive up to the Los Angeles area to participate in many events, although there was the occasional event in San Diego County. Several San Diego members were already up and running on the young Internet, and they frequented a CompuServe forum named “Miataville.” It was in this forum that Rainer Mueller proposed an impromptu run in February 1996, the “Miata Regatta,” through the winding roads of San Diego’s north county. Ten other San Diego County residents joined Rainer on his run, which concluded at Stuff Pizza in Sabre Springs.

Over a hearty meal, Tony and Mary Beecher, Mark Booth, Robert Holland, Bob Krueger, Rainer and Marianne Mueller, Cindy Paloma, Ruth and Lou Stark, and Woody Woodhouse enthusiastically discussed forming a San Diego club. With the support of SOCALM’s president, they received approval from MCA to form a San Diego chapter, and they began spreading the word to other San Diego Miata enthusiasts.

The club’s first meeting took place on March 31, 1996, at Angelo’s Italian Restaurant and Bar in Kearny Mesa. The club officially formed as the San Diego Miata Club, a chapter of the Miata Club of America. 34 memberships joined at that meeting, consisting of 55 members: Tony and Mary Beecher, Mark and Cathy Booth, Celia and John Bowen, Jack Brandais, Timothy Chen, Micahel Chiappetta, Jack and Sue diLustro, Greg Dunlap, Alan and Debbie Elster, Ken Evory, Art and Michelle Fayer, Dwight and JoAnn Fisher, Joe and Diane Garrison, Alan and Valerie Gieseke, Grant and Mari Goodman, Tom and

Stephanie Gould, Art Hamilton, Steven and Yvonne Hart, Mel and Kristie Hildebrandt, Robert Holland, Tony and Maria Igar, Anna and Craig Jameson, Cynthia Jones, Cindy Kershaw, Bob and Vicky Krueger, Cynthia Krueger, Bob and Debbie Llewellyn, Rainer and Marianne Mueller, Cindy Paloma, Richard Scherschel, John Simpson, Ruth and Lou Stark, Joe and Leine Williams, and Woody and Maggi Woodhouse.

An Executive Board was voted in, consisting of Mark Booth (president), Cindy Paloma (vice president), Ruth Stark (secretary), and Mary Beecher (treasurer). Soon after, the first newsletter was published, the club’s bylaws were formed, and SDMC incorporated as a nonprofit organization. Cush Mazda began offering discounts to club members, and Tom and Stef Gould designed three logos for the club. At a club meeting in late June, the membership voted in the official SDMC logo, which we still use today.

Membership trends

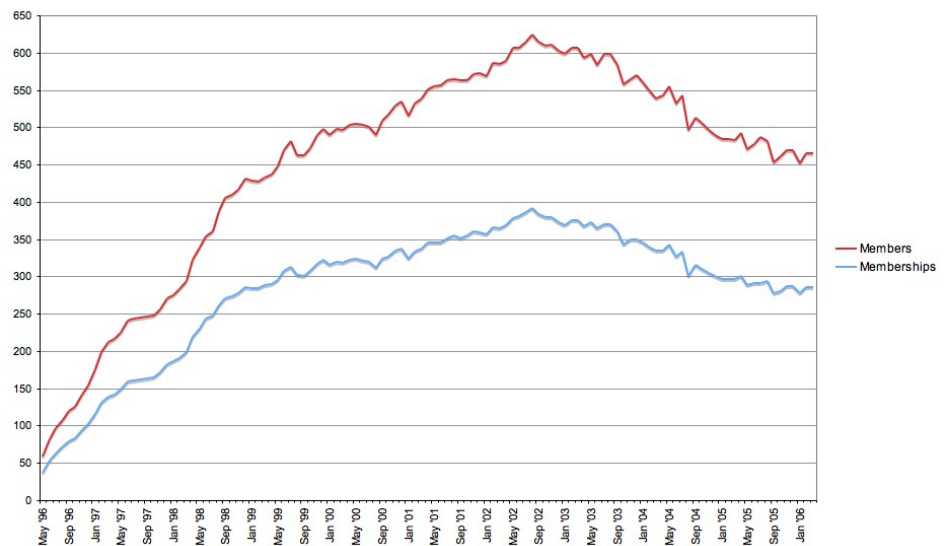
Through the years, SDMC has grown. In August 2002, membership levels peaked at 391, consisting of 624 members. Today, the membership levels have declined, but have remained healthy at just under 300 memberships.

The Miata Club of America, on the other hand, did not fare so well. At its peak, MCA had more than 30,000 members, making it the largest single-model car club in the United States. Legal issues between MCA and the publishers of *Miata Magazine* prompted a rapid decline in MCA membership. SDMC officially ended its affiliation with MCA in September 2000, and MCA terminated operations eight months later.

One of the main reasons that SDMC has maintained a healthy membership level is a very active events calendar. Over the past 10 years, members have participated in nearly 600 planned events and countless impromptu runs. Events have ranged from simple Wheels’n’Meals social get-togethers to elaborate multi-day events. There have been signature events that have run just about every year of the club’s existence, and the famous and highly successful Surf’N’Safari regional events in 1999 and 2004 are icing on a very large cake.

Activities bring recognition

The club’s membership levels and active calendar made waves across the Miata community worldwide, even in its early days. In November 1996, just eight short months after forming, the San Diego Miata Club was featured as a Spotlight Chapter in the national *Miata Magazine*.



The club’s membership peaked in August 2002. Today’s levels remain healthy at just under 300 memberships. Graph: Jerry Standefer

However, the club has not been without its sad moments. In late 1996, founding members Ruth and Lou Stark lost their home to wildfires. SDMC members stepped in to offer support. Through the years, SDMC members have passed away, and again, club members were there. After the horrible 9/11 terrorist attacks, SDMC sent a letter to the New York area Miata clubs, offering prayers, condolences, and assistance. In more recent events, Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf States last year. In cooperation with Miata-Fun.net and SOCALM, SDMC helped raise \$11,000 for Habitat for Humanity. These unfortunate events show that SDMC is more than just a bunch of Miata fanatics; it's a close-knit network of friends and family willing to help out themselves and others.



Separate, but always friends, SDMC and SOCALM members met at Mazda's North American headquarters in May 2005 to see the new NC. Photo: Jerry Standefer

All of the members of SDMC, past and present, deserve a pat on the back! The club has an amazing history and a very bright future. As long as its members remain committed to having fun in their Miatas, I

have absolutely no doubt that this club will survive to celebrate its 20th anniversary. But for now, let's celebrate a decade of excellence. Happy 10th anniversary, San Diego Miata Club!

Members pick new newsletter name: *Twists & Turns*

JERRY STANDEFER

Over the course of nearly three weeks, SDMC members submitted 70 potential names for the Dub the Pub newsletter-naming contest. The executive and administrative board members narrowed those 70 entries down to just three finalists: *Contact Patch*, *MXpress*, and *Twists & Turns*.

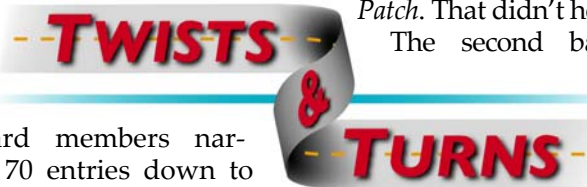
At the February 23 meeting, members were given ballots to vote for their favorite name. After collecting the ballots and counting them, the unthinkable occurred: *Contact Patch* received six votes, but *MXpress* and *Twists & Turns* both received 34 votes! Unfortunately, this was a scenario I didn't think of. What to do?

Just before the Dub the Pub ballots were handed out, the Regalia Team conducted their first round of voting for the 10th Anniversary T-Shirt contest. Thank goodness two of the Regalia Team members were too busy to vote in the Dub the Pub contest. When I asked if everybody had voted,

they said they didn't get a chance. I handed them ballots and when they returned them, I was disappointed when I unfolded the first one. *Contact Patch*. That didn't help!

The second ballot, however, held our tie-breaking vote. *Twists & Turns*, submitted by Jack Hinkle, won the contest by a margin of one vote!

I had prepared a short video to present the winning entry (actually, three videos—one for each possible winner), with an introduction that included all 70 entries. During and after the video, I heard several questions, which I would like to answer here. The car in the background, while all 70 entries were displayed, was a Mazda Miata Coupe, which I believed was built in very limited numbers for the Japanese market. The music selections used in the presentation were the *Jurassic Park Theme*, *Dual of the Fates*, and *The Olympic Spirit*, all by John Williams.



The 70 entries were: *As Seen on SDMC*, *Contact Patch*, *De-Go-Zoom*, *Diego-Zoom*, *Fast Forward*, *Fun Times*, *Horse and Rider*, *Key Notes*, *Mama Miata News*, *Miata Magic*, *Miata Matters*, *Miata Mentionables*, *Miata Miles*, *Miata Motion*, *Miata Musings*, *Miata News*, *Miata Roads Review*, *MX-5 Informer*, *MX-5 News*, *MXpress*, *Ragtop Times*, *Roadster Ramblings*, *SD NewZoom*, *San Diego Twisted*, *San Diego Twister*, *San Diego Twisties*, *SanDi Roads*, *Sandpaper*, *sandXtra*, *SDMC Cruise-Newz*, *SDMC Newz*, *SDMC Tribune*, *SDMC Viewz*, *SDMC Xcitement*, *SDMSeer*, *Spokes & Folks*, *Sun-Cal-Fun*, *The Club Pub*, *The Cruise-Newz*, *The Curves*, *The Daily Driver*, *The Dyno Dispatch*, *The Gear Grinder*, *The Miata Glow*, *The Miata Moment*, *The Road Hugger*, *The San Diego Miata Files*, *The SDMC Scene*, *The SDMC Spokesman*, *The Semaphore*, *The Sports Car Star*, *The Topless Tribune*, *The Tops Down Review*, *The Traveler*, *The Twisties*, *The Twistie Tribune*, *The Zoom Zoom-ette*, *The Zoom-Room*, *Top Down Chronicles*, *Top Down Insider*, *Topless Times*, *Turning Times*, *Twists & Turns*, *Twisty Tales*, *Velocity Chronicles*, *Windshield Vue*, *Zoom Zoom Chronicles*, *Zoom Zoom Report*, *ZoomNews*, and *Zoom-Zoom News*.

Member Discounts

Many vendors offer discounts to Miata Club members. The club does not endorse these vendors, but lists them as a membership benefit. Some offers may require you to show a current SDMC membership card.

Businesses that wish to be listed must offer a discount from their normal retail prices to SDMC members. Listings are limited to five lines (about 30-35 words). Contact NEWSLETTER@SANDIEGOMIATA CLUB.ORG for more information.

Automotive Services

Allen's Wrench. Mazda Master Technician. 1620 Grand Avenue, San Marcos. 760-744-1192. Discount: 10% (except oil changes).

American Battery. Miata batteries & all other batteries. 525 West Washington, Escondido. 760-746-8010. Contact: Jeff Hartmayer. Discount: Fleet discount on all products.

Bumper Express. Plastic bumper repair at shop or mobile truck will come to you. 9630 Black Mountain Rd., Ste. J, off Miramar Rd. 877-228-6737. WWW.BUMPER EXPRESS.COM. Discount: 20%

Coast Car Covers, Inc. Car covers, cockpit covers. 1229 Morena Blvd., San Diego. 619-275-7100. Discount: Wholesale price.

Express Tire. Auto repair, tires. 12619 Poway Road, Poway. 858-748-6330. Manager: David Dolan. Discount: 10% on parts and labor, including tires.

Geri's Bazaar. Custom deck bags, boot bags, travel bags. Maximize the space in your trunk. Contact: Geri Causarano. 828-400-1673. WWW.GERIS-BAZAAR.COM. Substantial savings to club members.

Good-Win Racing LLC. Miata intakes, exhausts, shocks, springs, & goodies from Racing Beat, Moss, and more. WWW.GOODWIN-RACING.COM. 858-775-2810. Special club price on everything.

Just Dings Ltd. Mobile paintless dent removal. 858-569-3464. Discount: 15%

Kesler Customs. Miata chassis braces, adjustable dead pedals, hide-away license plate brackets. Installation of aftermarket parts, fabrication, light welding. Ted Kesler, 619-421-8472. Special club prices.

Knobmeister Quality Images. 3595 Gray Circle, Elbert, CO 80106-9652. Joe Portas, JOE@KNOBMEISTER.COM. 303-730-6060.

Langka Corp. Guaranteed paint chip and scratch repair system. Cleaning, detailing, and restoration products. 800-945-4532. WWW.LANGKA.COM. Discount: 30%.

Larry Dennstedt's Auto Repair. 4283 41st Street, San Diego. 619-284-4911. Discount:

10% on labor.

Lutz Tire & Service. Alignment specialist, tires. 2853 Market Street, San Diego. 619-232-2957. Ask for Mike. Discount: 10% on parts (tires not included).

Magnolia Auto Body. Restorations, body work. 476 West Main Street, El Cajon. 619-562-7861. Ask for T.J. Discount: 10% on labor and parts.

Porterfield Enterprises Ltd. Brake pads, rotors. 1767 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa. 949-548-4470. Discount: 15% on Porterfield & Hawk brake pads; \$10 off rotors; \$9.25 for Motul 600 brake fluid (1 pint).

Smog Squad. 3342 Rosecrans, San Diego. 619-223-8806. General Manager: Jose Munoz. Discount: \$10 on smog tests.

Team Voodoo. Nearly legendary shift knobs, t-shirts, hats, decals, etc. VBOB@TEAMVOODOO.COM or fax 858-679-9484. Discount: 10% and no sales tax.

Thompson Automotive. Cool accessories for our cool cars; oil filter relocation kits, gauge kits, air horns, brakes, Voodoo knobs, & MORE. WWW.THOMPSON-AUTO MOTIVE.COM. 949-366-0322. Discount: 10%

Tri-City Paint. Professional detailing, products, paint, airbrushes, car covers. West Miramar Area: 858-909-2100; Santee, Mission Gorge: 619-448-9140. Discount: Body shop pricing #CM6660.

WheelStore. Wheels, tires, suspension,

alignment. 208 S. Coast Hwy., Oceanside. 760-967-1336. Contact: Joe Jordan. Discount: Wholesale price on tires; \$10 off alignments.

Mazda Dealerships

Bell Road Mazda. Phoenix. 800-765-5292. Ask for John Mardueno or Scott Moehn. Discount: 20% on Mazda parts and accessories.

Mazda of Escondido. 760-737-3200. Discount: 15% on parts and labor (not including smog certification.)

Westcott Mazda. National City. 619-474-1591. Discount: 10% on parts or labor (except oil changes).

Other Services

Alarm 2000. Residential and commercial alarm installations and monitoring. Free equipment with 2-way voice & free install. Buffy Hergenrader, 619-221-0948. BUFFY@IOPENER.NET. Discount: No connection fee.

Coldwell Banker Real Estate. David T. Bryan, Realtor. 619-334-4625. DAVIDBRYAN@COLDWELLBANKER.COM. Free market analysis. No transaction fees for SDMC members or referrals!

Rosin & Associates. Attorneys at law. Accidents, insurance issues, general civil law. No recovery, no fee. Anita Rosin, anita.rosin@rosinlaw.com. 619-543-9600. Discount: 10% on attorneys fees.

David Shabestari designs winning T-shirt

MARY CLARK, REGALIA TEAM

At the February meeting, members selected a design by David Shabestari for the club's 10th Anniversary T-shirts. The design, along with several others that he submitted, reflected David's expertise as a graphic artist.

For his creative efforts, David will receive one of the first shirts off the presses, along with the club's appreciation. The design will be used in other promotions celebrating the club's anniversary year as well as appearing on the T-shirts.

The contest drew eighteen designs, submitted by seven different

members. All of the designs were on display at the meeting, both in hard-copy and in a video slide show prepared by Mark Booth. Two rounds of balloting were used to narrow the field to three selections and then choose the ultimate winner.

Other members submitting entries were Daryled Bristol,

Larry Clark, Barry Kershaw, Rocky Murphy, Jerry Standefer, and Tom Wood. The Regalia Team is grateful to all the contestant participants, and to the members who enthusiastically supported their favorites.



Classified Ads

MIATAS FOR SALE

2006 MX-5 Miata. Top of the line Grand Touring edition in Copper Red (metallic) with tan leather interior. 6-speed manual. The car is MINT (as new) condition with 850 miles. All systems on the car work perfectly. It includes the Premium Package 2 (xenon headlights, traction control system, dynamic stability control, anti-theft alarm, advanced keyless entry), Suspension Package (Bilstein shocks, limited slip, sport tuned suspension), 18" conditioning, Bose radio and CD player, 18" five spoke alloy wheels. Also included: style bags, 170 hp engine, leather interior, improved convertible top. Purchased this car from El Cajon Mazda on 12/15/05 and paid cash. I just loved the car. I have to sell it because I have arthritis, which makes it too difficult for me to enter and exit. The price of the car with all options was \$27,095. I am asking \$24,000. It was my mistake. Someone will get a virtually brand new, garage-kept, carefully broken-in MX-5 at a good discount. I have all original documents and paperwork. Please call me for any further details. Robert Slifka, 858-454-6818. FLYBOY88@DSLEXTREME.COM (Jan)

PARTS FOR SALE

Various parts and accessories. 1995 5-speed transmission, 90,000 miles, good condition, \$150 (new front and rear seals at 85,000 miles w/ clutch change; swapped out for 6-speed). Short-shifter from Good-Win Racing, \$125 (\$180 new, used 5,000 miles on above tranny; effort too high on 6-speed). 1991 starter from above tranny, \$20. Nearly new genuine Mazda tonneau cover, \$125 (used twice before style bar installation; \$180 new). Steven Fortson, 619-286-7384, SFORTSON2001@YAHOO.COM (Feb)

Suspension components. Urethane sway bar bushings for NA (Flyin' Miata, two sets, will do both front and rear bars), never used, \$60 or best offer. Factory front shock tower brace from 2002 SE, make offer. Carl Kuck, 858-395-2299. TECHNOGEEK@SAN.RR.COM (Jan)

Various parts. 1.6 engine long nose crank, 78,000 miles, \$400. It's complete, but has some damage internally. 10AE seats, \$500.

Lots of suspension and other parts, 1990 to 1999. Two sets of new 2006 seats, two tops, and other miscellaneous parts (take offs from 2006 spec Miata race cars). Wally Stevens, 619-232-2801 ext. 313; or evenings 619-234-2858. Note new E-mail address: WALLYMIATA@GMAIL.COM (Jan)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Buying or selling your Miata or Miata accessories? You can do it for free on Miata-mart—the Miata for Sale web site, run by SDMC member Rainer Mueller. Check it out at WWW.MIATAMART.COM.

Classified ad space is provided at no cost to *SDMC members only*. Ads must include first and last names, telephone number, and e-mail address, which must agree with current club roster.

Send ads to NEWSLETTER@SANDIEGOMIATACLUB.ORG. Ads will run for four months unless canceled, and may be revised and resubmitted.

EDITOR (Continued from page 5)

brake, and you're illuminating the ground... three feet in front of your bumper! But the fun doesn't stop there! Even in steady-state cornering, such as a sweeping freeway on-ramp, the car is weaving and bouncing around. You have to control it very carefully, gripping the steering wheel tightly. Concentrate, because you know one wrong move can send the rear out sideways. Do it all correctly, and you slingshot around that curve faster than any factory-equipped Miata before it.

So, what's wrong with that? Well, it's not fun anymore, at least during most driving. On the Rose Parade Run, I had a blast in the NC. I was pushing the car to its limits, and for the first time since I've owned it, it felt like a Miata. Do I have to push the car that hard all of the time to

have fun in it? What happened to that fun personality that was always there, regardless of speed and lateral *gs*? The 10AE has it, and so did my Mazdaspeed. Is that the "Miata feeling?" Is that what was lost?

Upon further thinking, I realized that I have yet to change the oil in the NC. In five months, I have yet to put enough miles on it to warrant an oil change, although I should change it because of the time that has lapsed. That fact further reinforced my belief. I no longer take the long, out-of-the-way route to get somewhere. When I had the Mazdaspeed, a trip to the 7-Eleven down the street was a two-hour affair! Now, I even contemplate just walking, or taking the SUV.

I still thought I was crazy. This has to be just my imagination. However, I mentioned my concern to Mark Booth in a few e-mails. A few

days later, he pointed me to a thread in the Miata.net forums. There, I read page after page of NC owners complaining about the suspension and how much concentration was involved driving the car. What is interesting is that most of them have the optional suspension package, just like mine. I'm not alone!

There was a big commotion when Mazda made known that "Miata" would no longer grace the flanks of the third generation. Perhaps they already knew what we are learning now. If it's not as fun to drive most of the time, weaves and bobs in turns, and feels unstable while cornering, is it really a Miata? I know that suspension modifications can bring back what has been lost. But, do I really have to spend money to make my MX-5 feel like a Miata. Is that right? What do you think?

Address

APRIL 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 SJVMC Poker Run
2 Puke 2006 Church/Late Puke	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 Egg-zactly Photo Rally DEADLINE
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24	25	26	27 Monthly Meeting	28	29 Annual Meeting

MAY 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Search for Madonna
7 Search for Madonna	8 Search for Madonna	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 DEADLINE	16	17	18	19	20 Rock & Roll Run
21	22	23	24	25 Monthly Meeting	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DATE	EVENT	TIME	MEET	CONTACT	PAGE
Sun 4/2	The Puke 2006	9:00 a.m. Brunch 10:00 a.m. Drvr. Mtg.	Dalton's, Nordahl, just north of SR 78, San Marcos	Steve Waid 760-432-0727	6
Sun 4/2	Church-Goers' & Late-Sleepers' Puke	12:00 noon Drvr. Mtg.	Dalton's, Nordahl, just north of SR 78, San Marcos	Steve Waid 760-432-0727	6
Sat 4/15	Egg-zactly Photo Rally	9:00 a.m. Registration	Mazda of Escondido, 1650 Auto Park Way North, Escondido	Larry Clark 760-737-8971	6
Thu 4/27	SDMC Monthly Meeting	6:00 p.m. (eat) 7:00 p.m. (meet)	Boll Weevil Restaurant, Clairemont Mesa Bl.	Sue Hinkle 760-735-9456	3
Sat 4/29	SDMC Annual Meeting	10:30 a.m.	San Diego Automotive Museum, Balboa Park	Sue Hinkle 760-735-9456	3, 6
Sat-Mon 5/6-8	Search for Madonna	7:00 a.m.	McDonald's, Oceanside Bl. at I-5	Steve Waid 760-432-0727	7
Sat 5/20	Rock & Roll Run	TBA	TBA	Les & Dyanna Smith 858-578-1416	7
Thu 5/25	SDMC Monthly Meeting	6:00 p.m. (eat) 7:00 p.m. (meet)	Boll Weevil Restaurant, Clairemont Mesa Bl.	Sue Hinkle 760-735-9456	3