



TWISTS & TURNS

The newsletter of the San Diego Miata Club

Volume 11 Number 8

August 2006

A Miata-spangled Fourth of July

JIM PATTON

What makes a memorable Fourth of July? Grilling, fireworks, and hitting the beach are always popular, but could anything be better than a parade? SDMC has a long history of showing our patriotic spirit by participating in Fourth of July parades across the county. We've done small towns and suburbs, but there was always one out there we couldn't crack the code on: Coronado's Fourth of July Parade. That is until this year!

Coronado's parade is a centerpiece to an entire day of celebrating our nation's birth. Reputed to be the largest Fourth of July parade on the west coast, the parade anchors the day's events—5K and 10K runs, concerts in the park, beaches, fireworks, and plenty of patriotic pride. As the spirit of the club preceded us, we were asked to form the parade's spearhead, escorting the parade's honored guests. SDMC was also offered a premier place in the parade to

demonstrate our club's zeal. Needless to say, we gratefully accepted the honor.

Parades are not without their flexible planning. Coronado's is no exception. From a seven-Miata spearhead and a ten-car club entry, the changes kept on coming. A week before the parade, they asked, "We've got more dignitaries, can you get more cars to carry them?" A few days later, they asked, "Several of the guests would like

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Cheering crowds greeted Miatas celebrating Independence Day in Coronado. Photo: Jim Patton

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The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB is a nonprofit California corporation. *Twists & Turns* is the monthly newsletter of the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. Use of articles or stories by other Miata clubs is hereby granted, provided proper credit is given.

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> (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

Membership Information

New Members

Welcome to our newest members (since the previous newsletter):

Mike Webster, Del Mar..... 1990 Red
Steve & Laurie Williams, San Diego 1995 Evolution Orange
Alma (Mitch) Mitchell, San Diego 1990 Red

As of July 14, 2006, we have 288 memberships (109 single, 179 dual) and a total of 467 members.

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.

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.

Many members arrive 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.

This month's meeting date:
Thursday, August 24

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 noticed those engraved plastic name badges that other members wear? Would you like to get one?

Badges are available in colors to match your car. The cost is \$9.00 each for badges with safety-pin closures, or \$10.00 for badges with magnetic fasteners. Prices include shipping to your home.

Vicky Krueger handles the ordering. Badge request forms are available at the Regalia table at monthly meetings and on the club's web site. All orders must be prepaid.

SDMC Summer Picnic

RSVPs required

Sunday, August 27

Fun run from Westfield North County Fair at 10:30 a.m.
Potluck picnic at home at Pam & Dave Hunt at 2:00 p.m.

Bring a dish to share for the picnic. SDMC will provide barbeque meats, condiments, and soft drinks. (Bring your own alcoholic beverages if you wish.) Also bring chairs, swimsuits, towels, and sunscreen.

RSVP to Pam Hunt to indicate what food you'll bring.
858-679-7711
p_hunt13@yahoo.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!

Give our vendors a chance

SUE HINKLE, PRESIDENT

The San Diego Miata Club, through the executive board, appointees, and various members, has arranged vendor discounts as a benefit to our membership. The vendors who support club members with discounts are listed in our club's newsletter. Over the years, members have received an abundance of discounts that include service and maintenance, body repair, and aftermarket goodies, to mention just a few. Jack and I have used many of these vendors and, for the most part, have been totally satisfied. There have been occasions when we had to revisit a vendor when we weren't totally satisfied and found that the vendor was more than willing to work with us.

Occasionally, I receive e-mails from members who complain about one of our vendors and recommend that we remove them from the vendor's discount page in our newsletter. I find that it is necessary to look into the matter at hand and further investigate the member's complaint regarding a vendor and the service provided. In many cases, I have found that the vendor has corrected the error and the vendor was under the impression that our member was satisfied. Many times, the member will still be upset and frustrated with the vendor even when the two parties have agreed that the problem has been resolved.

Jack and I have personally had work done on my '93 Classic Red by a recommended vendor who was very highly regarded by our club members. Work had been done on the car prior to leaving on a 3,000-mile trip, and about half way into the trip we realized that the vendor had made an error. We called the vendor from the road detailing the problem, and the vendor informed us they would make the correction when we returned and assured us that it would not cause further dam-

age. Of course, we weren't happy at the time and worried that the error would cause more damage even though the vendor had informed us that it would not.

Upon our return, the vendor was more than happy to correct the error and also provided additional service at no extra cost. Even though we weren't totally happy at the time, we did not complain to the club officials or recommend for the vendor to be removed from the vendor discount list. We felt that the vendor did what he needed to do to keep us as customers, and we would recommend him to club members.

Recently, the club was notified by one of our long-time vendors that they would no longer provide service to Miata owners, especially San Diego Miata Club members. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that a vendor has communicated this to our club. Why would a long-time vendor make such a statement? I felt compelled to contact the vendor and find out why: They no longer wanted business from our members. For the most part, I was informed that many of our members are never satisfied no matter what service has been performed. The vendor felt that too much time was being spent on complaints from SDMC members, and that this was taking time away from their business. Additionally, two other vendors have informed me that SDMC members are far too picky to the point of being ridiculous.

Members recommend vendors to other members quite frequently. Member referrals are the best free advertising a vendor could ask for, and referral business is extremely important to them. If a member deals with a vendor and is not satisfied with the work or service provided by the vendor, the member by all means should communicate their



dissatisfaction with the vendor. The member, on the other hand, needs to give the vendor a chance to make things right before complaining to the club and making demands to remove the vendor from the discount list. If the member finds that the vendor will not correct or resolve the problem, then the member should inform the board. The board will then contact the vendor to obtain all the facts and make a conscientious decision on whether we should continue to advertise and promote that vendor.

Hey, we are all very picky. Why? It's because we own Miatas. One bad experience doesn't mean that every experience with the same vendor will be a bad one. Let's give our vendors a chance, communicate with them, and provide them details on why you are dissatisfied. I'm sure you will find that they are more than willing to work with you; after all, it's their business and their livelihood.

Many vendors support our club with discounts, raffle prizes, special events, and sponsorships. In turn, we need to support them and thank them for their continued support of the San Diego Miata Club.

See you around the next curve!

I don't want a Ferrari

JERRY STANDEFER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A few months ago, I wrote an article about the NC losing something ("Losing that 'Miata feeling,'" April 2006) during its ground-up redesign. It would have been easy to misinterpret that I dislike the NC, and I wish I had clarified that when I wrote it. The fact is that I like the NC quite a bit, just not the factory suspension tuning.

There are many virtues about the NC that I like much better than the previous generation. Some of them have to do with performance, while others have to do with creature comforts and luxury. Did I just say creature comforts? Luxury? In a sports car?

I suppose I should start off by revealing my vehicle preferences. My dream cars, if money was not an object (and believe me, it is), do not have Lotus, Ferrari, or Lamborghini badges on their hoods. Those are fine machines with only one thing in mind: performance. Comfort be damned, everything about these cars were designed around making them go faster and handle harder. That's fun, I'll admit, but I want my cake and eat it too.

My dream cars are along the lines of Aston Martin or Maserati. These cars can go nearly as fast as those pure-performance machines, but their interiors are decked out in hand-stitched leather and wood, not in carbon fiber and aluminum. I want a sports car on the outside, and a luxury car on the inside.

I suppose that's why I didn't like my old '04 Mazdaspeed MX-5 as much as I thought I would. It had terrific factory performance, and I didn't mind the stiff ride. It was the all-black interior that I never grew used to. Sure, it was spruced up with red contrast stitching, and an aluminum-look center console, but it was definitely made to look and feel sporty. The only thing luxurious about it was the leather.

When I decided to get an NC, I knew the Grand Touring was the only

model that I should consider, given my tastes. I knew I wanted the Suspension Package (sport), and the Saddle Tan leather (luxury). I looked closely at a 3rd Generation Limited, but this particular car had the black leather interior. I would have considered one with the red leather, but once I found out that you couldn't get the Suspension Package on it, I went back to the Grand Touring. I had no idea what color I wanted, but my insistence on the tan leather limited my choices. Well, I really wanted a True Red MX-5 with the tan leather, like the press cars that kept ending up in the magazines, but Mazda decided nobody likes red and tan (they do have the worst marketing department).

To make a long story short, I ended up with my Brilliant Black and Saddle Tan Grand Touring, with the Suspension and Premium Packages. From day one, I loved the car—from the inside. The styling has since grown on me, and I have received a shocking amount of positive comments on the styling, but only from people who don't own Miatas. Once I get these Eibach Pro-Kit springs installed (they've been sitting in my living room) and bring the ride height down from the stratosphere, I think I'll actually like the styling.

To cure my sports car wants, the NC's engine offers excellent power delivery. Power is plentiful, even at low rpm. This was the most impressive improvement I noticed when I first drove the NC, and it still surprises me today. The car's handling is still there, and I still insist that it matched the handling of my old Mazdaspeed. It's not as confidence-inspiring with the large amount of body roll, but if you just trust the car, it rockets around the corners just fine. The steering feel has improved almost to the point of being just too communicative, but I'll live.

So the sport part is still there. But it's



the car's newfound luxury that really attracted me. The bigger interior is immediately noticeable, particularly if you are used to an NB. The piano black panels are particularly eye-catching, especially with the tan interior. I can't imagine how I lived without steering wheel-mounted audio controls, and the new seven-speaker Bose system is a big improvement over previous Miata Bose systems (although that's not saying much). I especially like that the stereo automatically equalizes for top-up and top-down conditions; there's a switch in the top latch.

Speaking of the top, this new design is amazing. Dan Edmunds, Director of Automotive Testing at *Edmunds.com*, was so enamored with the new top that he timed its operation: 1.35 seconds to go down and 3.88 seconds to put back up. With no boot cover to fight, the top operation is so convenient. What's more convenient than that? This Smart Key that came with the Premium Package has really surprised me. I didn't think much of it at first, but not having to fool around with keys makes life with a Miata just that much better.

So I'm not a purist. I like creature comforts and luxury just as much as acceleration and handling. Give me that Aston Martin over the Ferrari any day.

Coming Events

Cruisin' Grand

Date: Fridays, August 4, September 1
Time: 6:00 p.m. for dinner; 7:00 p.m. to cruise
Meet: Tom's #23 restaurant in Escondido (SW corner of Centre City Parkway and 5th St.)
Contact: Steve & Laurie Waid, 760-432-0727, swaid@cox.net

Details: On Friday nights from April through September, Escondido opens up Grand Avenue for cruising. On the *first* Friday of each month, SDMC members meet at Tom's #23 at 6:00 p.m. to eat before leaving at 7:00 p.m. to cruise Grand. After taking a spin up and down Grand a few times, we park and then walk Grand. You will see hot rods, street rods, muscle cars, restorations, motorcycles, and more. A fun "Blast from the Past."

After cruisin' and walkin' Grand, we will drive a short distance to find dessert. This will be a full evening of car fun for car people.

Moon Over Miatas

Date: Saturday, August 12
Time: 8:30 p.m.
Meet: Dudley's Bakery, 30128 Hwy 78 (at Hwy 79), Santa Ysabel
Contact: Steve or Laurie Waid, 760-432-0727, swaid@cox.net

Details: Join the Miata contingent as we unite for the fourth year to drive the balmy desert while the moon rises overhead. Temperatures will vary from the low 70s to the mid 90s as we drive along highway S2 at the base of the mountains. We will leave Dudley's by 9 p.m., and most people will be home by midnight, even with a stop at the Golden Acorn Casino for a late snack on the way home.

Come with a full tank of gas, and be prepared to experience the unusual nature of a string of Miatas driving in the dark in one long strand as we seem to share the road with no one and the moon lights our way.

Arranging to meet fellow Miataphiles somewhere for dinner before arriving at the meeting spot is highly encouraged. Make your own arrangements.

SDMC Summer Picnic

Date: Sunday, August 27
Time: 10:30 a.m. for the fun run, 2:00 p.m. for the picnic
Meet: Westfield Shoppingtown (North County Fair), Escondido (east end of lot near JC Penney)
Contact: Sue Hinkle, 760-735-9456, president@sandiegomiataclub.org

Details: Club members Dave and Pamela Hunt have volunteered to host the club's Summer Picnic. This will be a potluck picnic, and SDMC will provide the meats for barbecuing, condiments, and soft drinks. The Hinkles will lead a casual run from Westfield through North County, winding our way through Ramona, and arriving at Casa Hunt around 2:00 p.m.

Enjoy your Sunday driving some great Miata roads, basking in the sun, taking a swim, or just visiting with other club members. Bring folding beach chairs, bathing suits, towels, and lots of sunscreen. No alcoholic beverages will be provided, however you may bring your own if desired.

NOTE: Please RSVP for the picnic to Pam Hunt (858-679-7711, p_hunt13@yahoo.com) by August 15, and be prepared to tell her what potluck item you will be bringing.

Debbye Does the Santee Drive-In

Date: Saturday, September 2 (**NOTE NEW DATE**)
Time: TBA
Meet: TBA
Contact: Bruce and Debbye Lewis, 619-447-0930, ouizoom@yahoo.com

Details: Bruce and Debbye Lewis will once again lead us on a short run to the Santee Drive-In for movies, Miata-style. More details to come.

Meguiar's Car Care Tech Day

Date: Saturday, September 9
Time: 7:00 a.m. caravan; 9:00 a.m. class in Irvine
Meet: McDonald's parking lot, Oceanside (on the south side of Oceanside Blvd., just east of I-5.)
Contact: Ken Hurd, 858-459-4847, khurd@semprautilities.com

Details: This class will involve hands-on demonstrations of Meguiar's five-step paint care cycle, Meguiar's consumer line of products, and Meguiar's professional line of products. The use and techniques for hand application, rotary buffers, and dual-action polishers will be covered. In addition, each participant will receive a Meguiar's gift bag.

We will meet in Oceanside and caravan to Meguiar's offices. If you prefer to meet at Meguiar's, the address is 17991 Mitchell South, Irvine. The class starts at 9:00 a.m.

Due to limited space, *only 30 people may attend*. Couples are welcome but count as two, so please make sure that everyone attending will enjoy and benefit from this event. Otherwise, please allow the spaces for other members to learn about the Meguiar's product line.

You *must* RSVP for this event by visiting the link below. You *must* become a Meguiar's forum member and

RSVP in the forum thread provided. If you *don't* RSVP, there will be a \$30 charge.

Link: <http://meguiarsonline.com/forums/showthread.php?threadid=11113>

Back to Bates Nut Farm

Date: Saturday, September 9

Time: 10:00 a.m. for fun run

Meet: TBA

Contact: Vicki and Brian Kiehl

Details: TBA

Miata Mountain Gold (out of town)

Date: Thursday, September 28 – Sunday, October 1

Place: Breckenridge, Colorado

Contact: Bruce Cliff, 303-595-4550, bcliffe@msn.com

Details: Join the Colorado Miata enthusiasts for some fantastic driving on the twisting, curving roads of the Colorado Mountains, not to mention the great colors.

There will be lots of great runs for 2006, as well as good food, good drink, prizes, awards, parties, and plenty of time to socialize.

Link: www.mountaingold.peaktopeakmiata.org

Viewpoints

Coronado Parade

About two-dozen Miatas showed up to participate in the Fourth of July Parade in Coronado. Despite the estimates of huge crowds, I don't think any of us were prepared for what we experienced!

We began our day by meeting at Perry's Cafe at 7 a.m. sharp. We caravanned over to Coronado and onto the base where Jim Patton met us. He led us to a parking area where we could decorate our cars. At about 8:30 a.m., we left for our parade staging areas. The single-driver Miatas went on to First Street to pick up the various dignitaries and veterans, while those Miatas to be in the San Diego Miata Club "unit" staged on H Street between First and Second.

Cathy and I were in the later group and, once at our staging area, we were met by Pat, the coordinator for that section of blacktop. She made sure we were all arranged in the right order.

At 10 a.m., the parade began. Slowly, street-by-street, the various parade units were moved onto First Street and headed down toward Orange Avenue, the main parade route. The organization and execution was flawless. These Coronado parade organizers have got this down to a science!

As our turn came (we were unit number 57 out of well over 100 entries), we slowly worked our way toward Orange. The closer we got to Orange Avenue, the more spectators we saw on the sidelines. But, as we turned onto Orange, the site was almost overwhelming. Both sides of the route were filled with row after row of spectators. People were standing or sitting at least five to ten rows deep the entire parade route, which was the length of Orange Avenue from First Street to one block short of the Hotel Del Coronado. It was incredible!

It was a great crowd. We heard repeated comments about how great our Miatas were decorated. The crowd loved the flags waving back and forth on our windshield wipers. To our amazement, on every major block along the route there were loudspeakers

and announcers that broadcast each unit's name and gave a little history about the participants. This truly was a very professionally organized parade, and Cathy and I felt damn proud to be a part of it in the name of SDMC!

I understand that we have already been enthusiastically invited back for next year. I encourage all of you to start planning your participation for 2007 as SDMC converges on Coronado for the second year.

—Mark Booth

I would like to share in the experiences I had during the Coronado Fourth of July parade. I am not sure of his age, but I too had a young Iraq veteran Marine in my Miata as a dignitary. He served two tours of duty in Iraq and has been continuing his duty as a Drill Instructor at MCRD.

The applause never stopped the whole length of the parade route for these service men and women we were carrying. So many were thanking this young man for his service. It felt so good for me to return a small service in his honor. But, my best memories will be of him taking the small American flags we used for decorating our cars, me pulling over to a very small child, and the Marine handing that flag to the child. The people around that child each time a flag was handed out seemed even more proud to be an American. So am I. I will buy even more flags for next year. Semper Fi!

—Scott Lewis

The Coronado Fourth of July Parade was one of the best events the San Diego Miata Club has ever participated in. As president of the San Diego Miata Club, I was beaming with pride seeing all of our Miatas adorned in red, white, and blue. American spirit and pride were in abundance, making this a true July Fourth celebration

—Sue Hinkle

their spouses to ride with them, how many drivers are willing to take two people?" The night before the parade, they asked, "We've asked a busload of Marines injured in the War on Terror to be part of the spearhead. How many more cars can you get?" SDMC met the challenge by fielding a 23-Miata fleet of enthusiastic drivers.

As anyone who has spent a Fourth of July on Coronado knows, the island becomes crowded almost to the point of gridlock as the day progresses. Laurie and I were happy to alleviate the problem of the club finding a location to decorate our cars in offering our home on-board the Naval Air Station (NAS), North Island. Under the able leadership of our president, Sue Hinkle, all of the willing participants met at the very early hour of 7 a.m. outside Perry's Roadside Café in Old Town. Once queued up, Mark Booth led the procession to the base for the decorating to begin. As with any SDMC parade event, extra decorations soon appeared, some traded, most shared, and oh yes, a lot of friendly advice was offered. In no time at all, our terrific, fun cars were dressed to the hilt in patriotic glory. Wally Stevens had been able to gather some additional cars at Perry's to join us for the last parts of the decorating frenzy.

Ready at last, Laurie began leading us to our appointed parade assembly areas. Her exuberance overtook her and once past NAS's only twisties, she opened it up to the maximum base speed limit: 25 mph. Flags flying (off the cars), Mark Booth's calm side prevailed. Sedately leading the SDMC club entry group to the marshalling area, Mark and his faithful minions recovered the various decorations lost by the spearhead Miatas staying with "SLVA CAH" no matter what. Once in the club's assigned spot, 57th out of the 116 groups who requested a

place in the parade, Mark was able to return the wayward items to the cars whence they flew.

The club's assigned parade location was indeed primo. There is no place better to be than right behind the Hotel Del Coronado's float if you want to get noticed along the route. If, however, you're looking for a view when actually driving in the parade, the belly dancer team just two spots ahead of our intrepid band's lineup might have been just a bit more entertaining for Mark and his crew.



Mark Booth straightens the hyphen in "Zoom-Zoom."
Photo: Jim Patton

Belly dancers practicing, cavalry groups practicing maneuvers, bands tuning up, and parade officials frantically scurrying about, everything was right on track at 9:30 a.m. We were all in our places—admirals, generals, colonels, and mayors arriving; Marines mustered; and everyone getting to know their respective drivers and riders. A brief bit of confusion was settled when Art showed us how to handle Marines by decisively offering a young corporal to join him for the ride down Orange Ave. The rest of us quickly followed suit, "capturing" our own Marines to escort. After observing our club's spirit, several of the guests asked their drivers to keep the speed down below 70 mph or so, and if we could restrain ourselves from hitting the twisties. Wherever you were in the parade, you couldn't help but be tremendously impressed by the organization of all that went into the parade. Then, before we knew it, 10 a.m. had come and the parade was on!

Rounding the corner from our assembly areas on First Street onto Orange Avenue was a phenomenal sight. Nearly two miles of people lined the parade route. The sidewalk and median were filled five to six people deep in most places. In others, the crowd was 10 people deep. Families and friends all sporting red, white, and blue clothes, caps, balloons, and banners; and homes along the route festooned with bunting, flags, and streamers were all showing their respect and fervor for our great country. The noise of the clapping was nearly deafening as the spearhead cars proceeded slowly along. We looked terrific, of course, but the stars were the heroes we had the honor of escorting. The crowd showed their appreciation through their cheering and clapping, and every person seemed to be waving a flag. Several times our honored guests asked us to pull over so they could speak to someone in the crowd, or present one of the flags we had on the cars to someone along the route. All of us were deeply touched by the obvious, unabashed pride the people felt for those servicemen and the compassion shown by those same ladies and gentlemen in return.

Our club entry was warmly received as well. Our approach was announced by emcees placed at about 100-yard intervals along the route. As we neared, the announcers would provide the crowd with a short synopsis of our club's history and statistics. Our cars decorated with the flags on the windshield wipers were as always a terrific hit. Whether a bright red M1 with the headlights carefully decorated with festive paper plates or a blazing yellow M2 carefully highlighted with just the right amount of bows and bunting, our patriotic pride was appreciated by all along the route. SDMC truly showed our colors this past Fourth of July.

In the words of our very own unflappable Ted Kesler, "This was not just a parade. It was an American experience that I will never forget."

Miatas ignite Coronado's parade

GEORGENE KRUZEL

John and I rose bright and early on the Fourth of July to meet up with the rest of the patriotic faithful at Perry's Cafe in Old Town. As we drove in about 7:15 a.m. to make the 7:30 a.m. sharp departure time, we noticed only three other Miatas. Hmm. We introduced ourselves and wondered, "What did we miss?"

Note to self: Never trust a Miata club e-mail that states, "This is the FINAL e-mail on a subject." Always check your cell phone for messages, and always bring your latest newsletter so you have a list of club leader phone numbers to find out what the heck is going on.

Fortunately, we connected and made arrangements to join the club on North Island for car decorating and sustenance.

The creativity of Miata owners never ceases to amaze me. The goal was to get as much red, white, and blue stuff on the car as possible without using any material that might harm the gorgeous paint jobs, shining chrome, or tire dressing. The patriotic poundage was thrilling to see!

Next, the cars queued up, and the single-driver vehicles took off to receive their assigned dignitaries; drivers with navigators (that included us) took off in another direc-

tion to our staging area. By 8:45 a.m. we were parked on a shady street with other parade participants. As we waited, we had plenty of time to walk around nearby streets and see a large variety of parade entries. For those who didn't care to wander, one of our parade neighbors was a troop of belly dancers who enjoyed passing the time practicing their moves.

"Not a bad way to spend a couple of hours," noted John.

As we entered the parade route, it was clear that these spectators were truly into the spirit of the holiday. The route was lined with people five to ten deep! Every Miata had American flags affixed to its windshield wipers, and when we turned the wipers on—so that the flags waived—the crowd went wild waving their own flags and shouting, "Happy Fourth of July!" We added to the cacophony by tooting our horns and shouting, "Happy Fourth of July" right back to them.

The organizers arranged for a parade announcer every few blocks so the spectators could be informed

about the participants. We heard the same announcement about the club at least eight times, and we had a good laugh at the variety of ways "Miata" was pronounced. There was "Mee-ahta," "My-ahta," "May-eeta," and more. Fortunately, the



Elinor Shack demonstrates Mazda's newest cupholder, as Mike decorates. Photo: Les Smith

spectators knew the cars and we heard plenty of positive feedback about their look, lines, and style. It was a fantastic feeling—not only being a proud American, but to be a proud American Miata owner and SDMC member!

When we completed the route (about noon), our group couldn't hook-up with the single-driver group. We made the executive decision to leave the island and enjoy a meal together in Old Town. Drinks at Jolly Boy's quenched our parched throats, and we shared our excitement about the parade over delicious Mexican food.

John and I would like to express our sincere thanks to Laurie and Jim Patton, and Sue Hinkle for arranging the club participation in the Coronado Fourth of July parade. We have heard we have the opportunity to participate again next year, and we'll be sure to be there. It was a perfect day (you can't beat that offshore breeze), and the perfect way to show American—and Miata—pride.



Miatas weren't the only attention-grabbing vehicles. Photo: Cynthia Paloma

Sayonara to the Brokaw's

ROBIN FAIRCLOTH

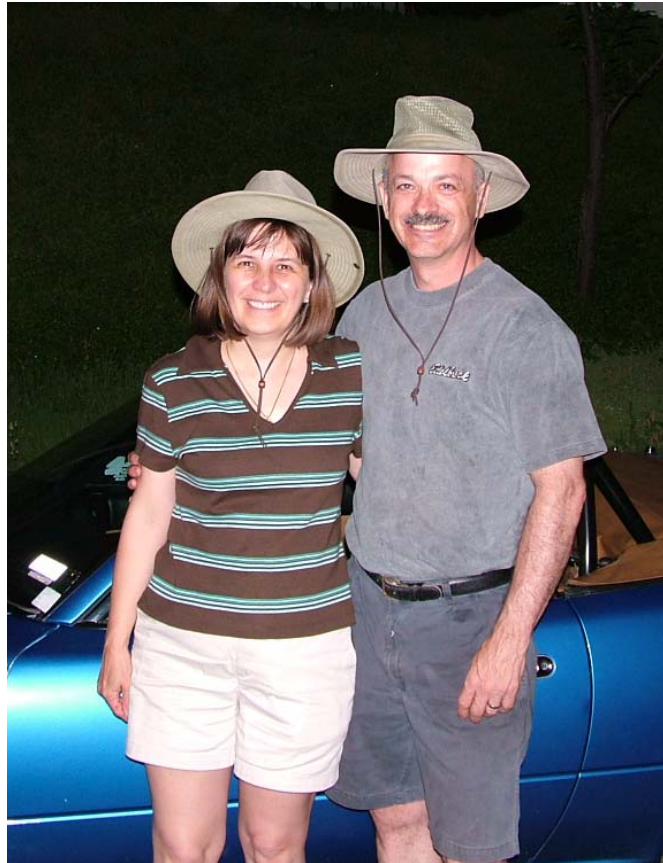
On Wednesday evening of June 28, we hosted a small get-together for Jim and Charlene Brokaw. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this couple, Jim and Charlene have been long-time members of SDMC. They own a 1994 Laguna Blue C-package Miata, and were very active in many events over the years, including autocross. You could recognize them right away as they drove up in their Miata, with their matching tan safari hats. As soon as you saw those hats, you knew the Brokaw's were there!

Three years ago, Jim, being a commanding officer in the Navy, received military orders for the U.S. Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan. They were very excited about moving there (they had done a tour of duty in Japan in the mid '70s), but what would they do with their "baby"? Mike and I just happened to be within listening distance and overheard their dilemma. They were contemplating storage and were worried about how their Miata would fare for the three years. Well, Mike and I quickly decided to come to their rescue and offered to "babysit" their Miata. We have two garages and plenty

of space, so their problem was solved. So for the past three years, we've had the honor of taking care of their beloved Laguna Blue.

Jim and Charlene returned stateside on June 24 and picked up their Miata from us on Sunday evening. It was wonderful seeing them again and hearing about their life in Japan. Of course, they were anxious to drive their "baby" after three years. Jim admitted later that it took some getting used to after driving in Japan on the "wrong" side of the road, and with right-hand-drive vehicles; he had to re-familiarize himself with the Miata. Every time he flipped the turn signal, the windshield wipers would come on.

We're sorry to see them leave San Diego—again. The Brokaw's are now headed for a new duty station in Maryland: Fort Meade near Washington, D.C. They will be back once this tour of duty is completed. They plan to retire right here in San Diego, and move back into the home they own in Chula Vista. One of these days you will see them drive up in their Laguna Blue and those famous matching tan safari hats.



Charlene and Jim are taking their Laguna Blue to Maryland.
Photo: Robin Faircloth

Correction

In the June 2006 issue of *Twists & Turns*, we thanked the vendors that donated items for our Annual Meeting raffle. We failed to include one of our very special vendors.

Thanks to *Miata.net* for providing donated items for our 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting, and for their continued support of the San Diego Miata Club.

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Miatas in the garden

GEORGENE KRUZEL

Five Miatas gathered for the Garden Party Run. There was plenty of chatting before the run as we slathered on the sunscreen in the shade of the schoolyard trees. The sun was high in the sky, it was hot, and we were ready to get some wind in our hair.

We enjoyed the 78-mile drive with its twists, turns, and a surprise U-turn. The sunny flats contributed to our suntans, while zipping through some twists under the trees gave us some welcomed shade. Our leaders, Linda and Peter Payne, made sure we had a

drink and bathroom break in an air-conditioned store—just what we needed to refresh ourselves for the return trip.

We arrived at Linda and Peter's house and marveled at the fantastic garden. Linda, with some help from her family, has created an oasis of green, color, and shady spots to sit and enjoy calm moments. She showed us the “before” and “after” shots, detailing the work and planning that went into the transformation. She had also recently done some interior decorating that made the most

of showing off her home-improvement projects.

The table was laden with cookies and cakes, and there were plenty of choices on the patio to quench our thirst. We dove in and enjoyed more than conversation. Several additional Miata members, who couldn't make the run, dropped in to join the camaraderie.

We went to a garden party. We put some enjoyable miles on our car, enjoyed old friends, and made some new ones. That is what an SDMC run is all about. Thank you, Linda and Peter!

Mazda delivers track thrills in the Midwest

KEN TOOKER

I'm in Chicago for the summer on a work assignment, so I checked out the Midwest forum on the Miata.net forums. There was one post about a Mazda-sponsored track event—the MX-5 SummerFest. The website (www.mx5summerfest.com) showed it to be an interesting event; the best part was that I didn't have to bring a Miata. This was important since I drove the Nissan Frontier to Chicago, and the Miata was snuggled in the garage in San Diego.

The idea was for Mazda owners to come out and run their own cars on the track and experience some new cars as well. If you didn't bring your own car, they were promising only two of the four sessions in a Mazda-provided vehicle.

The event was being held at a place called the Autobahn Country Club in Joliet, Ill. It was only an hour from my hotel. The weekend was divided into four half-day groups. I signed up for the Saturday morning group.

When I arrived on Saturday

morning, I found out that, due to low entries, the format had been changed. They combined both groups for each day to turn it into an all-day event. In addition, each track session was expanded from 10 minutes to a full 20 minutes.

It was obvious from talking to everyone that whoever was responsible didn't do a very good job of promoting the event. Since I didn't have my own Miata there, I had to haul around instructors in order to drive the new cars, but, as you know, the best cars to pound on belong to someone else.

The track events were on the “South Click” at Autobahn. I could write an article just on the facility; it is an impressive place. The asphalt was as smooth as glass, and the track was 40–50 feet wide all around with huge grass runoffs. I ended up doing four sessions of track time at 20 minutes each. The first two sessions were in the Mazdaspeed6; the second two were in the MX-5. There was a short (17 seconds) autocross course as well. The cars available for

that were the RX-8, MX-5, and CX-7.

I ended up doing 25–30 runs on the autocross course, running two or three laps at a stretch. Towards the end of the day most people were fairly worn out, so there were only three of us flogging the autocross course. I ended up running 30–40 laps total.

This event was run by the same group that put on the Mazda Rev It Up tours in the past. I was certainly impressed by the way the cars held up. They were all equipped with original-equipment tires, brakes, etc. All of the Mazdaspeed6s had less than 100 miles on them, and there was absolutely no brake fade, even during the last session of the day.

I had a total of 80 minutes of track time, an unlimited number of autocross runs, lunch, two T-shirts, and a hat. The cost for all of this was \$40. Let's hope the organizers realize that an event like this needs more than an e-mail sent to a few local club members to be successful, and that they will try it again.

Installing an Autopower roll bar

Added safety for NA and NB owners

TED KESLER

Autopower bars are the easiest to install of all the Miata roll bars. Even so, the job takes two people and six to eight hours the first time. In addition to the roll bar and mandatory SFI 45.1 padding, you will need the usual automotive metric tools, jack stands, a large fork, a grinder, tin snips or sheet metal nibbler, a drill and bits, spray paint or rubberized undercoating spray, Loctite, and Band-Aids.

Please read this over carefully before you start your installation.

Preparation and disassembly

1. Block the front wheels fore and aft. Jack up the rear of the car and find the notches in the rocker panel weld flange just ahead of the rear wheel opening. There is a corrugated pad just inside the notches. Place jack stands under that pad, *not on the weld flange*. A small piece of thin wood or rubber between the stand and body is a nice professional touch.

2. Remove the rear wheels and the plastic inner fender covers at the front of the rear wheel openings. The rear pads of the roll bar will be bolted through the body here.

3. Remove both seats. There are four bolts through the floor on all Miata seats, and they are really tight. A long socket extension will help give you room to apply the force needed to break them loose. Some cars have additional seat belt anchors into the transmission tunnel. There may also be wiring to disconnect under the seat.

Note: Cover the center console to prevent scratches; a blanket on the trunk lid makes a handy tool/parts shelf.

4. Remove the piece of carpet behind the seats. Remove the fasteners from the carpet on the package shelf, and roll the carpet and rubber pad back under the window. A meat fork works well to pull the carpet buttons, and a piece of wood about 18 inches long will help prop the convertible top

up out of the way after you roll the carpet back.

5. Remove the black metal piece at the top of the doorjamb, and pull up on the rubber edge that runs down to the doorsill. It will pop right out. You may need to loosen the rear screw in the sill plate to replace this rubber edge later.

6. Remove the seat belt swivel cover. They are a friction fit and quite fragile. Pulling up gently with your fingers works best.

7. Unbolt the seatbelt swivel. Note the amount of free play in the swivel before you remove the bolt. You will need to reassemble the swivel with the same amount of free play. Keep the various spacers together and in order (the bottom of the bolt should have a white plastic retainer collar). Lay that assembly over the front of the tower.

8. Remove the fasteners from the plastic cover on the seat belt towers. The plastic button on the side has a center piece that will release the button when gently pulled out a bit.

9. Release the plastic tower cover. Insert your hand between the plastic and the body about halfway down (where the rubber edge in step 5 was) and push the plastic inward, towards the center of the car. It will make a mighty pop as the spring fastener inside releases. Note the plastic alignment spud near the spring is at an angle. The cover does not go back straight on.

10. Fish the seatbelt out of the tower cover. There is a rectangular plastic piece that stays on the belt. There is also a small plastic piece holding the top together. This part usually breaks about now, but you will probably trim it away later anyway.

11. Unbolt the seatbelt reel. It has a screw on the top and a bolt on the bottom, and is filthy. There is a plastic bag in there that helps keep everything together. Notice how the belt twists and comes up, over, and down; you will need to put it back the same way.

Lay the belt assembly on the floor of the car.

12. Remove the curved sheet metal package shelf. Do not remove the separate flat panel—it covers the fuel gauge wiring on the top of the gas tank. Remove the heavy felt pieces beside the gas tank by grabbing the really sticky two-sided tape underneath and lifting the whole mess straight up.

Fit and install the roll bar

The next few steps are the core of this job and require two people. You may have the bar in and out several times. Be gentle with the wires in the area.

Note: This part will involve cutting and drilling within inches of the gas tank. Think about that often! A stray drill or grinder could be serious business. Don't rush and take your time.

13. Trial-fit the roll bar. The vertical bolts at the bottom of the main hoop go into existing holes in the seatbelt towers. The adjacent vertical flange fits flush against the rear face of the tower. The rear legs sit on the deck beside the gas tank. This is a two-person job. Even so, you will usually scratch the bar, but below the carpet level. Don't pinch, stretch, or break the stray wires in the area.

14. Trim just enough metal from the roll bar flanges to position the bar. Usually, just a bit on the body-flange alongside the legs is enough. Sometimes, the flange just behind the leg must also be trimmed. A grinder or nibbler works well here; the material is too heavy for snips.

Note: The front corner of the pad on the right leg usually touches the wiring harness where it goes through the deck. Trim the pad (and backing plate) to clear the harness and grommet. You can't bolt through there anyway.

Note: The pads and backing plates come with only three holes. You may have had to cut off one of the holes while trimming for the wiring harness, so you may need to

add the third hole at the back of the right pad. This backing plate may also need to be narrowed slightly to fit against the gas tank. Some people add a fourth hole in the left pad and backing plate. This is your call.

By now you may have tried and failed with your Dremel. It isn't the tool for this job. You really do need a grinder here and/or a nibbler later. Harbor Freight has a tasty 4.5" grinder that you will find hundreds of uses for after this job. It has been on sale for about five years now. Check it out. If Harbor Freight is not for you, we can relate. But you still need a grinder for this job.

15. With the bar firmly in place, all the way down in the seat belt towers and rear deck:

a) Drill a pilot hole down through the deck, using the hole in the front of each rear leg pad that your drill allows easiest access to. A small bit at the angle you can manage is ok. This is just a pilot hole. Some use a really long bit or an angle drill. If you like perfect holes and match-ups, this part will drive you crazy.

b) Drill up through the pilot hole from the bottom with your finish size bit. You may have to root around some to match with the pad hole above. This is fine; this first hole is usually ugly.

c) Bolt up the backing plate in the first hole, eyeball it into position, and drill another hole. Bolt through this one, repeat, and the third hole will be a perfect fit.

d) A messy option is to spray or undercoat the deck above and below now (step 17), and "wet mount" the pads and backing plates. This is your call.

16. Bolt up the entire bar finger tight. Then fully tighten the bar, in this order: The tower vertical bolts, the tower horizontal bolts, then the pad bolts. Loctite is a great idea for all roll bar bolts.

Note: The bolts down into the top of the seatbelt tower will require a delicate touch and small hands. You have to install a washer and the nut up inside the tower. Fun! A fender washer (a large diameter washer to spread the load better inside the

tower), which may not have been supplied with your bar, is a good addition at this point.

The horizontal bolts in the same location are easier, but if they don't quite line up, a little crow bar action may be required. Slip the bolt in from the back, with a washer and nut inside the tower.

17. Spray paint or undercoat the backing plates, exposed nuts, and surrounding area under the car. Replace the plastic inner fenders and attach the wheels.

Reassembly

The next few steps make or break the job visually. The package shelf will be hidden, but working with the thin, sharp-edged sheet metal is not fun. The carpet fit—and especially the seat belt tower cover fit—will be a source of pride or consternation forever. This is not the time to rush to finish up. Take your time. If it's getting late, this is a good place to knock off for the day.

18. Trial-fit and trim the package shelf sheet metal. Tilt it down on one side, and all the way back, then eyeball and mark the area to be removed. Snip away! Fit, mark, and snip the other side. (Instead, you can make a paper pattern and do a real pretty job. Either way, this will all be invisible under the carpet.) Vacuum out all of the chips and grinder dust. Trim the felt pieces to fit around the bar legs and replace them. Replace the shelf.

19. Replace all of the carpet. Trimming the hole for the bar can be done now or later, or by a professional. This is your call.

Hint: Make a paper template of the hole location relative to the edge of the carpet, and mark the cut from that. The hole will not be round! Whacking away at the carpet right now can be disastrous. Don't ask how many shredded messes I've seen from hurrying to finish at this point. You're going see this area every time you get in the car. Your significant other is going see it every time, too! Take your time.

20. Replace the seat belt reel in the tower. Take your time; it's not as simple as it might look.

21. Trim and replace the plastic tower cover (Refer to step 19 about who is going see this part.) This step is

a wrestling match with the seat belt, the little rectangular plastic part around the belt, the seatbelt bolt spacers (step 22), and the cover itself. This is also going to show every time you get near the car. There is no template available, nor is one necessary. Fit and mark, then cut, file, snip, or Dremel (yes, here there is a use for one—just don't melt the plastic). Take your time and plan ahead; this can also be done tomorrow. When you have trimmed to suit yourself, position the cover via the locating spud and the spring fastener (step 9), and smack it back into place with your hand or a rubber mallet. A drop of oil on the spring may help. Do this when you are done, not every time you check fit the part. These covers are not cheap, but they are fragile! Replace the other two fasteners.

22. Replace the seatbelt swivel. Mix and match the spacers as needed until the swivel just clears the top of the plastic and still swivels. You did account for the spacer diameter (step 21) in your trimming, didn't you? It's a different fit now due to the roll bar base plate. The spacers only go to the plate now, not down into the tower. Check the seatbelt for extension, retraction, and swivel. If you didn't break them earlier, replace the swivel covers.

23. Replace the rubber cover strip and the metal doorjamb top (step 5).

24. Install SFI 45.1 roll bar padding. Trial-fit and mark the position, then peel off the covering on the adhesive backing and press the pad onto the bar. Zip ties add that racer look.

Hint: The SFI 45.1 pre-formed padding from Hard Dog fits Autopower bars perfectly. Buy the bar and the padding from Brian at Good-Win Racing!

Do not drive or ride in a Miata with an unpadding roll bar. Yes, you are tall enough for your head to hit the bar. You've come this far OK, don't waiver now.

25. Replace the seats. Don't forget the wires underneath.

26. Remove the jack stands, lower the car, and torque the lug nuts.

If it is still light outside, go for a ride and enjoy your new toy.

Mistie Shaw: Doing what she wants

KELLEY RAYMOND

After months of research—made easier with the advent of the Internet—new member Mistie Shaw decided in the late '90s that the Miata was her car of choice. On April 1, 2000, she got stuck in Orange County traffic, so she stopped at a Mazda dealership to kill some time. Already in love with the MX-5, she picked out a color and selected all the options she wanted. Money was as tight as the traffic, so she did not take a test drive or sign a contract, but when she returned home, several hours later than expected, she told her family she had bought a new Miata. Looking at the sales material, everyone was excited about the cute, little white convertible. Later that evening she laughingly said, "April's Fool," as she admitted the truth.

Fast-forward four years: Mistie needed a new car. On the Internet, she had located a terrific buy from a dealership in Huntington Beach. She called, gave her credit card number to hold the car, and then had her husband drive to the beach community. Without even a test drive, she moved her stuff into the 2000 Miata and continued driving to Berkeley where she was attending school. With a sense of déjà vu, she discovered that the new ride had every option she had picked out four years earlier.

This past January, Mistie was at a Mazda dealership getting her Miata repaired following a minor accident. A new, white 6-speed kept calling her name so plaintively that she had

no choice. She had to take it home.

Recently divorced after being married more than half of her life, Mistie has been surprised to discover that doing what she wants to do when she wants to do it is a big change from being a soccer mom in a minivan. As a mother of three young adults and a "grammy" of two, from rollerblading to road trips, her life is a blur of going and doing. Mistie is passionate—the one word that best describes this little dynamo—about life, her job, God, having fun ... well, just about everything.



Mistie tries a helmet on for size in her Marble White NC. Photo: Steve Coe

Mistie works as hard as she plays. Prior to the divorce, she was an associate pastor at a church in North County. She hopes to return to the ministry after some recovery time, but for now she is a 911 dispatcher for the San Diego Fire Department. She is also retired from the Air Force Reserve where she served in the areas of intelligence and public affairs. If she starts asking you questions, watch out! She was an instructor in the art of interrogation.

An avid angler credited with catching a 53-pound sea bass just

outside of San Diego Bay, getting hooked is not a new experience for Mistie. After her first Miata Club event, the Rock and Roll Run in May, some of our members recommended she check out the autocross action at Qualcomm. One fun ride was all it took—she was hooked! Since then, she has joined SCAT, participated in two events, and is already talking about modifying her suspension (changing the front sway bar) to improve performance, but not knock her out of the "stock" category.

Shh, you won't believe this, but

Mistie is un-American: She doesn't own a television! Music, writing, cooking, and anything computer-related (e-mail name "SunDiegoMiata") keep her so busy she says she doesn't have time to watch other people pretending to live (on TV). She likes to read and has earned two master's degrees in the past six years—Religion,

from Pt. Loma Nazarene University, and Christian Spirituality from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley—and she often sees the world through the lens of a camera. She was a staff photojournalist for Forum Publications for a couple of years, so you East County folks may have seen some of her work. A native Californian, Mistie has considered San Diego her home for more than 30 years even though she has lived in several other places part of that time. She currently resides in Mission Valley.

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@sandiegomiataclub.org for more information.

Automotive Services

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.bumperexpress.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.

Geris 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.

Hawthorne Wholesale Tire. Tires, wheels,

brakes, and suspension. 877 Rancheros Dr., San Marcos. 760-746-6980. Discount: 10%

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. 619-234-3535. 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-automotive.com. 949-366-322. 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.

Simple fix prevents battery and alternator failures

LARRY DENNSTEDT

Recently we have seen several battery and alternator failures. The battery failures are due primarily to loose hold-down brackets. This problem comes with aftermarket batteries or sloppy installations.

The M1 (NA) failures usually are caused by the battery sliding around. The positive cable flexes enough times that it breaks the

strands and the cable separates, thus stopping the car. On the M2, I have seen the aftermarket battery not clamped down, and the battery slides forward and vibrates against the metal side of the battery well. Once the positive cable insulation wears away, the cable will short against the metal and kill the car. Sometimes the alternator will also short out

and need to be replaced.

Solution: Check that the battery will not move around when you try to move it under the bracket. Some batteries can be shimmed underneath to bring the height up to be held tightly by the bracket. Other applications can be remedied by relocating the bracket to a lower mount hold. Simple fix.

Mazda unveils MX-5 Power Retractable Hard Top

JERRY STANDEFER

On July 18, 2006, Mazda unveiled the latest version of the MX-5 roadster at the British International Motor Show in London. The new version sports a power retractable hard top with slightly revised bodywork and suspension tuning. It will be sold internationally alongside the current soft top version.

The new folding hard top is a feat of engineering. Utilizing three panels, the top folds up or down in just 12 seconds. Like the soft top, the driver must manually operate the central latch that secures the top to the windshield header. Up or down operation is controlled via dashboard-mounted buttons.

Unlike most retractable hard tops on the market today, the MX-5 does not lose any trunk space when the top is down. The top folds neatly into the same space between the seats and the trunk that the soft top fits into. A hard boot, which raises and extends out of the way during top operation, is used to cover most of the hard top when it is folded down.

To accommodate the retractable hard top, the rear boot lid had to be raised by 40 mm. The rear wheel bulges have been heightened slightly to compensate, giving the MX-5 a slightly more muscular look from the rear compared to the soft top version. The center brake light was also redesigned. Extra bracing in the rear was installed to maintain the chassis stiffness, and the storage compartments behind the seats have been eliminated.

Despite the addition of the hard top, power folding mechanisms, and extra bracing, only 81 pounds have been added to the weight of the car, which is approximately the weight of a

full tank of fuel. Although the weight gain is relatively minor, it does offset the car's balance. To compensate, Mazda has retuned the suspension, resulting in a ride that is softer compared to the soft top version. Mazda states that most buyers of this version won't care

about the softer suspension; some buyers will actually welcome it.

In Europe, the new version will be known as the MX-5 Roadster Coupe. In the U.S.—sales will begin later this year—the car will be known as the MX-5 (Miata) Power Retractable Hard Top. I'm sure just about everyone will agree that Europe gets the better name.

Powertrain options will remain the same as the soft top version: a 2.0L DOHC 4-cylinder engine producing 170 horsepower, with a 5-speed manual, 6-speed manual, or 6-speed automatic transmission. It will be offered in Sport, Touring, and Grand Touring trim levels. Two new exterior colors will be introduced for both the hard top and soft top versions: Stormy Blue and Highland Green. Marble White will not be available on the hard top.

Pricing has not been released, although rumors suggest a premium of \$2,000 over the soft top version. The 2007 MX-5 (Miata) Power Retractable Hard Top will give Mazda several bragging rights over its competition and other retractable hard tops on the market: At 12 seconds up or down, it has the fastest operating time; the hard top does not consume any trunk space; and it will probably be the lowest-price retractable hard top on the market.

The new version should be able to steal back some of the spotlight that has been focused on the Pontiac Solstice and Saturn Sky. It may not be a purist's roadster, but it should give the MX-5 a nice sales boost. The more performance-oriented soft top version is still available, although I'm wondering which version Mazda will decide to use as the basis for a Mazda-speed version.



Now you see it; now you don't. Photos courtesy of Mazda Motor Corporation.

Classified Ads

MIATA PARTS FOR SALE

Various parts. M1 Racing Beat hard boot, Starlight Blue, excellent, sharp: \$200. 18-inch Enkei 5-spoke rims with good Z-rated rubber: \$400. M1 rally bar (attaches to front "teeth") similar to Cobra nerf bar: \$75. RARE! M1 factory fog lights, mounts to existing hardware (European amber lens): \$200. M1 steering wheel (leather, excellent) without airbag: \$50. Phil Daoust, 760-789-7416, BEARSCHILI@aol.com (Aug)

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. One set of black cloth 2006 seats, a black top, 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 (May)

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

CG-Lock. This simple device attaches to your existing seat belt to

keep it tight when autocrossing or racing. See www.cg-lock.com for details. New ones cost about \$40. This slightly experienced one is yours for \$20 obo. Larry Clark, larryclark@pobox.com, 760-737-8971. (Aug)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Buying or selling your Miata or Miata accessories? You can do it for free on Miatamart—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.

Westfield Sportscars offers kit car for early NA Miatas

JERRY STANDEFER

Westfield Sportscars, headquartered in Kingswinford, England, has been building kit cars since 1983. Their first product was a replica kit of the 1956 Lotus XI Le Mans race car, followed by several Westfield-designed, non-replica kit cars. The company has since sold over 8,500 cars throughout the world.

Westfield has recently announced a new kit that utilizes major components from the '90-'93 MX-5 Miata. These components include the 1.6L engine, intake tract, exhaust manifold, and oxygen sensor; transmission; complete wiring loom; ECU; fuse boxes; dashboard switches; clutch pedal switch, sensors, and relays; gauge cluster; upper and lower steering column (lower requires modification), steering wheel, control stalks, and ignition cylinder; differential; front and rear uprights, hubs, and brakes; handbrake lever and mechanism; wheels and tires; emissions system; side repeaters; battery; and several other components. See their website (www.westfield-sportscars.co.uk) for a complete listing.

The kit will be available in the U.S. in the coming months; their U.S. dealer is Manik Technologies (www.manikllc.com) in Richardson, Texas. The price for a left-hand-drive kit will be \$13,499, which includes custom crating, shipping from England to New Jersey,

and all import duties, fees, and insurance. Buyers must find and purchase the Miata donor car if they don't already own one.



Westfield's latest kit car utilizes several Miata components. Notice the early NA wheels. Photo: Westfield Sportscars Ltd.

Address

AUGUST 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4 Cruisin' Grand	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Moon Over Miatas
13	14	15 DEADLINE	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Monthly Meeting	25	26
27 SDMC Picnic	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Cruisin' Grand	2 Debbye Does the Drive-In
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Meguiar's Back to Bates
10	11	12	13	14	15 DEADLINE	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Monthly Meeting Mtn Gold	29 Miata Mountain Gold	30 Miata Mountain Gold

DATE	EVENT	TIME	MEET	CONTACT	PAGE
Fri 8/4, Fri 9/1	Cruisin' Grand	6:00 p.m. (dinner) 7:00 p.m. (cruise)	Tom's #23, Centre City Pkwy & 5th St., Escondido	Steve Waid 760-432-0727	6
Sat, 8/12	Moon Over Miatas	8:30 p.m.	Dudley's Bakery, Hwy 78 & 79, Santa Ysabel	Steve or Laurie Waid 760-432-0727	6
Thu 8/24, Thu 9/28	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
Sun 8/27	SDMC Summer Picnic	10:30 a.m. (fun run) 2:00 p.m. (picnic)	Westfield Shoppingtown (near JC Penney), Escondido	Sue Hinkle 760-735-9456	3, 6
Sat, 9/2	Debbye Does the Santee Drive-In	TBA	TBA	Bruce & Debbye Lewis 619-447-0930	6
Sat 9/9	Meguiar's Car Care Tech Day	7:00 a.m. (caravan) 9:00 a.m. (class)	McDonald's, Oceanside Bl. East of I-5	Ken Hurd 858-459-4847	6
Sat 9/9	Back to Bates Nut Farm	10:00 a.m.	TBA	Vicki & Brian Kiehl 760-751-2272	7
Thu 9/28–Sun 10/1	Miata Mountain Gold	All weekend	Breckenridge, Colorado	Bruce Cliff 303-595-4550	7