



SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS



VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 1998

A CHAPTER OF THE MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA

UPCOMING EVENTS



December 12-13
Autocross at the "Q"



December 12—Saturday
Holiday Party



December 13—Sunday
**Holiday Lights
Fun Run**



December 17—Thursday
Monthly Meeting



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



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



January 17—Sunday
Whale Watching



January 18—Monday
Saharo Fun Run



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



March 20
**Miatas at the Getty,
One More Time**

From the Editor

Gear Change

The Miata's manual transmission is one of the car's greatest virtues. Since the introduction of the car nearly ten years ago, praise has been heaped upon the shifting action of the Miata by every automotive writer who can use a clutch. A sports car, by its nature, is one that is enjoyable to "run through the gears" even if you are just going to the supermarket.

Considering the pedigree of the transmission, the praise is not difficult to believe. This gearbox's beginnings are in the first and second generation non-turbocharged RX-7. One of the original design criteria for the Miata transmission, according to then project engineer Norman Garrett, was to fit the shift pattern inside a two-inch circle. This ability to shift with a small movement of the wrist helped the Miata win over previous owners of British sports cars. The "feel" of the shifter was also specified. It was not to be heavy, but light and quick, just as the sports car it was destined for.

The one downside to the feel of the shifting in the Miata has always been the shift knob itself. The texture and ergonomics of the stock shift knob felt strange in the



hand. This was the impetus for SDMC member (and Vice President) VOODOO BOB KRUEGER to develop the VOODOO KNOB for his own '91 Miata. Soon he had people wanting one to replace the plastic knob that Mazda provided with his spherical machined-aluminum one. This has proven to be the most popular aftermarket shift knob produced for Miatas. (See After-market Goodies on page 8.)

Over the life span of the first generation (M1) Miatas, only the one manual transmission was used. The new M2 Miatas for the 1999 model year are still using the same, but more refined, transmission. Improvements were made to eliminate the balkiness that sometimes occurred on first to second gear shifts, especially when the gearbox was cold. We owners have dealt with this by changing to synthetic transmission lubricant, but Mazda has attempted to design it out of the transmission's "character."

For the revised gearbox, Mazda created a new tail housing that is a single-piece casting, rather than the previous unit which had two separate components. This makes the shifter less prone to binding. The shift control rod now rides on two Teflon-coated bushings. The earlier rod was simply supported by machined aluminum bearing surfaces. Further improvements in the chamfer of the gears inside have also improved the performance of the shifting.

The gear ratios are still the same, 1st through 5th and Reverse, as they were in the first-year Miata.

But that's not all—a new manual transmission has been developed for the Miata. It has been available only in the Japanese market in the new M2 cars, but it is to be made available here, in a special edition Miata, sometime next year. Developed exclusively for the Miata by the transmission specialist Aisin-AI of Nagoya, the new gearbox is a six-speed manual. The ratios from 1st to 5th will be more closely spaced than the current five speed, with the 5th ratio being the same direct drive 1.0 as the current 4th

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SOCALM EVENTS

Holiday Party

December 5

Gene Stanley's home,
genes69@aol.com

Social in La Habra

December 10

Kris Sanders, REO2U@earthlink.net

Business Meeting / Fullerton

December 13

Zack is the coordinator

Malibu Charity Run

Date: Sunday, December 20

Time: depart at 10:00AM, rain or shine

Place: The Federal Building,
Wilshire District of Los Angeles

Contact: Zack, (714) 449-9280,
racerzack@aol.com

Directions: Exit the I-405 (north of the 10) at Wilshire and head East. Turn Right on Veteran, and right again into the parking lot for the Federal Building.

Bring: Canned foods or "personal care" items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, deoderant, shampoo, etc. Cash is cool.

Details: This run is a charity event to gather goods to send the Hondurans who were hit hard by Hurricane Mitch, and are facing a tough winter. The drive will be a fun one, and we will go even if it rains. Our route will include some of the cool twisty roads in the Malibu hills, and will end off of the 101 in Westlake Village. Come and enjoy some Miata-perfect roads and help the people of Honduras.

General Meeting & Election

Date: Saturday, January 23, 1999

Time: 10:00 a.m.

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

This is SOCALM's main, annual membership meeting. Topics to be discussed will be: (1) the Bylaws Amendment (found in this issue of The Reward), (2) club officer elections, (3) planning of the 1999 club calendar.

Queen Mary Run

February 6, 1999

Brian Bousman,
bousman@mail.deltanet.com

Socalm contacts:

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

From the Editor CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

gear. The closely spaced ratios will allow for a more optimum gear selection in most situations. The 6th ratio will be an overdrive gear of 0.843 which is slightly lower than the current 5th at 0.814.

The interesting thing about the new transmission is that it is the same overall length as the one it replaces. All other driveline components (driveshaft, powerplant frame) will remain the same. So you can run down to your local Mazda parts department and pick one up in a year or so and drop it right in your current Miata. Just be sure to bring lots of cash.

Take care and HAVE FUN!
—ANTHONY WILDE

AUTOCROSS AT THE "Q"



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

Saturday, December 12 practice day
Sunday, December 13 race day
Saturday, January 9. practice day
Sunday, January 10 race day
Saturday, January 23 practice day
Sunday, January 24 race day
Sunday, February 14 race day
Friday, March 19 National Tour
Saturday, March 20 "
Sunday, March 21 "
Saturday, April 10 practice day
Sunday, April 11 race day
Sunday, May 2 race day
Saturday, May 29 practice day
Sunday, May 30 race day

To confirm autocross information call:

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

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

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NOTICES

THE SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB is an official chapter of the MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA. We are a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote the enjoyment of— and enthusiasm for— the Mazda Miata.

SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB NEWS is the monthly newsletter of the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB. Use of articles or stories by other MCA chapters is hereby granted, provided proper credit is given.

Submissions to the newsletter are welcomed and encouraged. Did you just add a new accessory to your Miata? How about writing a review and submitting it to the newsletter? Where possible, please send your electronic submissions to the newsletter editor, Anthony Wilde. Submissions can also be faxed to the club's dedicated phone line or mailed to the club's post office box. Submission deadline is the 15th of each month. Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

Internet: The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB has established a dedicated World Wide Web Home Page at <http://www.sandiegomiataclub.org>. The club has also established a members-only electronic mail list for those members with E-mail capability.

Dedicated 24-hour voice/fax phone line:
(619) 670-7948

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



Meeting Places



Holiday Party*

Date: Saturday, December 12

Time: 7 p.m. – Midnight

Place: The View Café

Coordinators: Geri and Sal Causarano,
(760) 787-0624, wooddust@aol.com

Please bring: videos to share of club runs, karaoke discs or your favorite CDs.

Optional gift exchange: if you wish to participate in the gift exchange, you need to bring a \$20–\$25 Miata-related wrapped gift. The idea is, you bring a gift and you take a gift home. We draw numbers, and we are allowed to “steal” the gift once. But....we ask if it's okay first!

* Reservation deadline for the party has passed.

Holiday Lights Fun Run

Date: Sunday, December 13

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Family Foods Market parking lot, corner of Sweetwater Springs Blvd. and Austin Drive, Rancho San Diego/Spring Valley.

Run Leaders: Mark and Cathy Booth,
(619) 670-3789,
markbooth@home.com

If you aren't too worn out after the Holiday Party, please come join Cathy and Mark as we tour two of East County's best-decorated neighborhoods, topless in our favorite car! The two neighborhoods are Crestwood in Rancho San Diego (home of Mark and Cathy) and Pepper Drive in Santee/El Cajon (absolutely incredible Holiday decorations!). Should be fun!

Directions: Highway 94 East. Exit 94 at Sweetwater Springs Blvd. Turn right (south) at the stop sign at the end of the ramp. After traveling approximately one mile on Sweetwater Springs you will cross Austin Drive (a traffic light). Family Foods Market is on the right just past Austin Drive.

Note: This event will be cancelled if it rains!

Monthly Meeting

Date: Thursday, December 17

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Boll Weevil

9330 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
(At Ruffin Rd.), San Diego
(619) 571-6225

This event is the single best way to meet your fellow club members, ask questions, share stories, etc. Don't miss the fun!

Hangover Run

Date: Saturday, January 2, 1999

Time: 10 a.m. departure

Place: Ortega Business Plaza, San Juan Capistrano

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

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

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

UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

January 16–18, 1999

Whale Watching Weekend

SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB will host SAHAURO MIATA CLUB's weekend getaway. Mark your calendar for a Whale Watching Cruise on Sunday January 17th and mini-runs throughout the holiday weekend.

February 27–28, 1999

Madonna Inn Overnight Getaway

SDMC and VROOM— weekend of fun!

Saturday March 20, 1999

SJVMC '99 St. Patrick's Day Poker Run

Fresno – Clovis, California

Cost: \$45 per car includes— One t-shirt, participation in poker run, lunch for 2, and parking lot events. Optional dinner. Contact: Michael Toepfer, (209) 440-9866 RonHex27@worldnet.att.net

March 26–28, 1999

'99 Thunderhill

Miata Performance Driving School

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

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

Early Bird Special— register before December 1, 1998 and save \$25.

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

May 6–9, 1999

Miata World '99

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

Only two spaces left!

\$325 couple, \$255 solo

Web site: www.Miata99.com

Toll free info: (877) MIATA 99

May 20–23, 1999

3rd Annual Gathering at Four Corners

Vallecito Reservoir— Bayfield, Colorado



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

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

October 7–10, 1999

Surf'N'Safari

SDMC way-cool regional Miata event.





Upcoming Event—

Whale Watching Weekend

The Sahauro Miata Club, based in Phoenix, Arizona, requested help in planning a getaway weekend over the long Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. They were especially interested in a whale watching cruise. A committee of SDMC members was formed and has set about making the

dreams of the Sahauro Club a reality! Not only have we gotten a terrific group rate on a whale watching cruise, we are planning a couple of mini-runs and a get-together dinner that weekend too.

The Sahauro group will arrive the afternoon of Saturday, January 16. They are looking forward to a twilight tour of the sights of San Diego followed by dinner with SDMC members.

Sunday morning, January 17, will find us at Seaforth Pier in Mission Bay. We will meet at 11:00 a.m. for the 2-2½ hour Whale Watching Cruise which will depart at 11:30 a.m.

On Monday SDMC will lead a Fun Run over some especially scenic roads toward the east—a “Miata” way of saying goodbye to our new friends from Arizona.

Details of all the pieces of the Whale Watching Weekend will be in January's newsletter. You do need to make your boat reservation soon. You can pay for your tickets at December's monthly meeting or order them by mail.

Special group rate for the cruise is \$12 for adults, \$8 for juniors and adults 64 years and older. Paid reservations* for the cruise must be made by January 8. Please indicate how many tickets (adult, junior, and senior) you would like, there is no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase. Make your checks payable to the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB, and send them to:

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

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

Upcoming Event—

Weekend Overnighter to the Madonna Inn, San Luis Obispo

The enjoyment of being behind the wheel of my Miata, not knowing what will be around the next turn, and then, at the end of the day, being with friends and fellow enthusiasts sharing the excitement of recent experiences is what motivated Laurie and me to look for a weekend driving event to put together. The two items added were: a great destination, and someone to show us the roads that would add to the enjoyment.

So, here are the ingredients for a great weekend that will give you the driving, eating, and socialization that the SDMC requires for a successful event:

1. Miatas (Preferably white, but any other color is acceptable, even red)
2. The Madonna Inn, San Luis Obispo
3. VROOM (the Miata club that represents the central coastal area of California) is planning two Fun Runs for us.
4. The hills, valleys, and roads of the central California coast
5. Food! — Banquet dinner at the Madonna Inn
6. 600 to 700 miles of driving in two days (OH BOY!)
7. The weekend of February 27th, '99.

The Madonna Inn has been a landmark on California's central coast for over 40 years. Each of the Inn's 109 rooms is individually decorated with a special theme and color scheme. Many include fireplaces adorned with hand-placed native rock. From romantic honeymoon suites to European-style retreats; from Old West, Spanish, or Hawaiian motifs to incredible all-rock rooms with waterfall showers; pick the room you want.



PHOTO: STEVE WAID

Rooms are reserved under the name of the SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB for Saturday night. The rooms are \$85, or you can upgrade all the way up to \$249. Laurie and I have reserved the “Gypsy Rock Room,” featuring rock walls, rock shower, yellow carpet, and a multi-color painted beamed ceiling. Reserve the room you want as soon as possible. The sooner you reserve, the better the choice.

The Madonna Inn will also be the location of a banquet-style dinner Saturday night. Members of VROOM and SDMC will join together, tell stories and share the tales of the day's sojourn and Fun Run. The dinner will cost approximately \$25 and will include salad, dinner, beverage, dessert, tax, and tip. We will have our own banquet room and a no-host bar.

This weekend will be an opportunity to see a unique part of California history, drive some new roads, see some beautiful countryside, meet some new Miata people, and eat. If this sounds like an event that you would enjoy, don't wait. Make your reservations now. Madonna Inn (800) 543-9666 (Mention SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB). The money will be collected for the banquet dinner a few weeks before the event. If you would like more information regarding this colorful driving event please call LAURIE or STEVE WAID at (619) 673-4141, or ask anyone who has been to the Madonna Inn.

— STEVE WAID



Antiques and Calliope Music Run

October 24

A beautiful October morning greeted 30 lucky Miatas and their crews. DAN BREE had a special destination in mind when he organized and led this run.

Skirting Bonsall and then heading into Fallbrook, for a rest and regroup, the pack assaulted De Luz Canyon from the south. The air seemed more like



summer than fall as car after car twisted and turned their way along one of the favorite SDMC roads. A spectacular vista

awaited at the top of a hill overlooking Temecula, where Oscars was the EAT part in this Drive-Eat-Drive.



PHOTO: DIANE LONG

After a sumptuous repast, Dan led the troops onward to the Dutch Mill Antique Shop in French Valley. The last bit was on a well maintained dirt road, so everyone kept a good distance between cars.

A windmill marked the spot where a little oasis sprang from the surrounding scrub brush. A pond with swans, large oak trees and several buildings greeted the colorful Miata parade. People who were already at the site came out to admire the cars as the owners went inside to peruse the oddities for sale. The highlight of the trip was in the building that housed several calliopes of various sizes. The music produced by these mechanical marvels is unique. Just watching the contraptions going through their paces was worth the drive.

Slowly, Miata owners began to depart, heading off to enjoy the day or perform menial chores. A small group headed back to San Diego along Highway 79 and through Warner Springs, and of course stopped at Dudley's.

—ANTHONY WILDE



PHOTO: SAL CAUSARANO



PHOTO: DIANE LONG



PHOTO: DIANE LONG





PHOTO: ED LANGMAID

Kooky, Spooky, Trick or Treat Car Rally

November 1, 1998

It was a dark and stormy night when 98 attendees in 55 Miatas met in the parking lot of the North County Fair for the "Kooky, Spooky, Trick or Treat Car Rally"—okay, so it was a bright and sunny day, I'm trying to create a setting



here! We were greeted by several cute trolls (one with rainbow hair!), and were assigned to a team (Jon and I were in Team

Great Eight) and given instructions for the rally. An evil witch doctor (STEVE WAID) was seen putting hexes on all the teams but his own. Some people will try anything to win!

A few more members came in costume: SUE and JACK HINKLE dressed up in matching Halloween outfits, complete with black tights. They even decorated their Miata with ghosts and cobwebs! Cute legs, Jack! Our fearless run leaders, SAL and GERI CAUSARANO, and ED and MICHELLE LANGMAID, gave us a quick lesson in citrus identification so that we could understand the subtle hints that were hidden in the run instructions. For instance, if you were given an orange,

you had to make a U-turn! Kinda kooky, isn't it?

At three-minute intervals, the ten teams took off. Our first stop involved a game in which team members answered questions about ourselves. Like:

"What is your favorite Miata color (besides your own color and Red)?" The most popular answer was BRG followed in a close 2nd and 3rd by Merlot and Yellow. Another question was, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The most popular answer—"retired."

The rally continued on through beautiful rural streets of San Diego County to a cemetery! We had to get out of our safe cars and wander through the tombstones to find the answers to several questions. The sun disappeared and a mysterious fog appeared. Kinda spooky, isn't it?

Our next stop was at Bell Gardens, a teaching farm owned by the founder of Taco Bell. As we drove in, we were greeted by a troll that looked like a cross between *A Nightmare On Elm Street* and



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH



PHOTO: ED LANGMAID

a dirty old man! The group was treated to a hayride, pulled by a tractor past beautiful flower gardens and a vegetable farm to a model train set—big enough for grown-ups to ride in! "All Aboard!" And off we went, looking for more clues and answering more questions along the way. The train stopped at a graveyard and we tiptoed among the tombstones again! *M.T. Head* and *Here Lies Lester Moore*—*No Less No More*, were two of the favorites. We played more games, including a pumpkin toss and wandering through a "Maize Maze." Each Miata driver was asked to purchase a pound of vegetables to take home with them. Each team posed for a photo and a much sweeter troll met us on the way out with candy. Must be the "treat" part of "Trick or Treat!"

We had a few check point stops, where more trolls with oranges greeted us, and we continued driving, looking for clues and answering more questions. Some were quite tricky! Must be the "trick" part of "Trick or Treat!"

We had to count the number of orange trees along the highway without slowing down—some of us did not know the difference between grapefruit trees and orange trees! Come on, all the fruit was green! We also had to count the number of mailboxes out in front of



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH



a mobile home park. Some lady looked out the window of the “Mobile Home Cafe” with a “Good Eatin’” sign, and screamed at us, “You were only supposed to take 30 seconds— you are blocking my customers!” Customers? Anyway, off we ran— or drove off in a hurry! Was she a witch, do you suppose?

We stopped at the San Pasqual Battlefield and toured the museum. We also had our “passport” stamped and took a break watching a demonstration of cannon loading and firing by period-costumed museum volunteers.

This 100-mile rally ended at the parking lot of the View Cafe (future site of the SDMC Holiday Party). We had a final test that involved measuring our Miatas with a banana and then we turned in our finished clue sheets. More candy and cookies were dished out and a few drivers burned rubber on an obstacle dotted with “ghost cones.” As predicted, Team Lucky Seven, led by MARK and CATHY BOOTH, won the rally competition! The evil black-hatted witch doctor’s team was defeated!

For those readers who have never participated in a rally, remember this



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH



PHOTO: STEVE CUSHMAN



PHOTO: BRAD BROWN

advice: always read run instructions thoroughly. Our group missed a clue because we did not pay attention to the subtle hints!

The last part of this

fun day was completed at the Souplantation for dinner, where we devoured more vegetables and citrus.

I haven't had this much fun since I dressed up as a belly dancer in junior high school.

—JUDY POWELL



PHOTOS: ED LANGMAID



PHOTO: BRAD BROWN



Puerto Nuevo Lobster Lunch Run Redux

November 7, 1998

JACK MONACO and his co-pilot Nancy led a small group of SDMC members south for a lunch of succulent, fresh lobsters and hand-made tortillas slathered with hot sauce and lime juice.



After lunch, half of the group opted to drive further south and stay overnight in Ensenada. The other half of us discussed Mexico: it is so close to us, but so different, even the architectural styles of the cliffside and



PHOTOS: JACK MONACO

seaside homes vary from one country to another. We enjoyed the cool, clear day, the fresh sea air and each other's company as we strolled the streets of tiny Puerto Nuevo shopping for trinkets and Christmas gifts.

—STEF GOULD



Aftermarket Goodies VOODOO SHIFT KNOB, Generation 2

Despite all the purported advantages of the VOODOO KNOB, ranging from the mundane to the supernatural, I stuck with the stock knob because I shift with a "pistol-grip" style. I learned to shift this way on an MG over 30 years ago and I'm not about to change my shifting style to accommodate a spherical shift knob. I have tried a couple of wood knobs that weren't spherical. The original MIATA CLUB OF AMERICA cherry-wood knob was very thin, but I got used to it and liked it OK until the threads stripped out. I tried another wood one patterned after the MG stock knob but didn't really like the shape. Well, Voodoo Bob has finally come out with a proper-shaped knob for



those of us who know how to shift! Made from the same material as the original VOODOO SHIFT KNOB [machined aluminum in several finishes from powder coated to polished and, most recently, polished titanium], it has a shape that fits extremely well into the palm of the hand, following the natural curve of the palm, allowing comfortable "thumbs-up" shifting. The top is rounder than the stock Miata knob, which also gives it a more natural feel. I doubt it has the mass of the original OEM knob but it has a better feel than the stock knob and shifts seem much more positive. I've had no problem with heat (except when it's baked in the sun in a parking lot for a few hours) or cold, and there's no vibration from the transmission. I can't compare it to the original spherical VOODOO KNOB because I've never used one, but there's no going back to the stock knob for me. However—I'm still waiting to see if it improves my life in all the ways the original's supposed to.

—MIKE SIMMONS

Have you got a new item or idea to share with the club? This space is your forum. Just write it up and submit it to the editor, Anthony "NevadaBob," (619) 693-8095 or Nevadabob@miata.net.



Intrepid Racing's Ferraris have one of the more elaborate truck/tent/grandstand combos.

PHOTO: STEVE CUSHMAN



San Diego Miata Club At the Vintage Races



PHOTO: WOODY WOODHOUSE

Members of the San Diego Miata Club outnumbered the racing fans of every other marque's clubs at the CHRYSLER CLASSIC SPEED FESTIVAL, CORONADO— every grandstand had a contingent of SDMC. Miatas came and went from the Car Club Corral all day long on Sunday. At one point we counted 45 Miatas in a long, long row! Some Miatas came for a few hours, some spent two and a half days at the track.

Eighteen members helped to kick off the racing weekend on Friday with a twilight parade sponsored by the City of Coronado. Select car clubs were represented by ten cars each. The parade route wound through Coronado and North Island Naval Air Station before ending with a dinner by the bay.



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH



PHOTO: MARK BOOTH

Saturday morning started off for SDMC with the now-traditional breakfast at the Original Pancake House. At the track, over 60 members enjoyed the day—talking to the drivers and mechanics while exploring the paddock, visiting the vendors, watching practice and racing from the grandstands, and finishing the day at dinner with fellow club members in the Gaslamp Quarter.

On Sunday MIKE and DIANA PAGE coordinated the SDMC breakfast and led a caravan to North Island. The general public's most popular day found the Car Club Corral drawing nearly as much attention as the race cars on the track.

Our thanks go to Bob Smith of the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SHELBY CLUB who undertook the monumental task of putting the Car Club Corral together. Last year nearly a hundred cars participated (Miata was the most represented marque then, too). The estimate for this year's attendance— over 300 cars.

And a special round of applause to Carole Orlen for her help in buying tickets for club members.

—STEF GOULD

Directly above: A Monster Miata draws attention.

Right: On Saturday there were few cars in the Corral; compare this photo of a Cobra and Panthera with the long-shot of the Miata row on Sunday above!



PHOTO: STEVE CUSHMAN





PHOTOS: WOODY WOODHOUSE

SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB members have a real soft spot for vintage sports cars. Our little roadsters are the spiritual descendants of the British ragtops of the early postwar era and many of us approaching geezerhood look back fondly on the MGs, Triumphs, or Healeys that introduced us to the joys of topless motoring. For the hard core, August means Monterey and the grand-daddy of all vintage races, the Monterey Historics. Monterey has the finest vintage racing on the planet, but the major commitment in terms of time and money means that many in our club haven't been able to make the trip. San Diego enthusiasts got lucky last year when Steve Earle and the Monterey organization brought top-level vintage racing to the runways of Naval Air Station North Island and the SDMC contingent that attended were in unanimous



agreement that this event was a "must" for the 1998 calendar.

The weather was warm and clear for the second annual Chrysler Classic Speed Festival on November 14th and 15th. Traffic in and out of North Island

was a breeze and the Naval personnel made us feel welcome during a period of heightened security due to the international situation. STEF GOULD had arranged corral parking for our cars and 45 Miatas— the largest single marque showing— got the VIP treatment, directly behind the main grandstand and adjacent to the vendor row and food court area. The track and spectator facilities were much improved over last year as everything was on pavement and the grandstands provided unobstructed views of the entire 1.6 mile course.

A major attraction of vintage events is



the open paddock where spectators can get up close and personal with the drivers and crews, all of whom seemed friendly and eager to share the history of their particular cars. The nearly two hundred entries ranged from a prewar-WWI that is— Franklin all the way up to the thundering Trans-Am cars of the early 1970s. Looking at the course reminded me of the races held at Strategic Air Command bases in the early 1950s when public roads had been outgrown and the purpose-built road courses were still in the future. V-8 powered Allards and airport circuits go together so it was personally gratifying to see no fewer than seven Allards on hand to do battle with the C-Type Jaguars, Kurtis, and big bore specials that were the mainstay of what passed for road racing during that period. VOODOO BOB, JTHOLLAND, and ANTHONY WILDE were equally enthused about the entry for group three. How often do we see even one Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa on a race track anymore? With asking prices well into seven figures the





PHOTOS: WOODY WOODHOUSE

owners choose their outings carefully, yet here were three gorgeous TRs running hard enough that one spun directly in front of me, plus Listers, D-Jags, 4-Cam Porsches, and a Max Balchowsky built Ol' Yaller. The less exotic machinery had its own appeal and the loudest cheers from the crowd were claimed by Richard DeLuna's 1912 Franklin that looked ready to start in that year's Los Angeles to Phoenix "Cactus Derby." Other favorites included an elephantine Hudson Hornet and a swarm of tiny



fortune. The Chrysler Classic Speed Festival is the best bargain I've found for the racing enthusiast. My guess is that everyone who went this year will be back at North Island next year and it wouldn't surprise me to see a hundred Miatas in the corral.

— WOODY WOODHOUSE

Panhard and Crosley specials having engines less than half the size of a first generation Miata.

Historic racing is not about finishing first, although there were several very close finishes with victory in doubt until the final turn. These events offer a look at how things were before television and advertising budgets turned racing cars into rolling billboards and drivers into millionaire athletes inaccessible to the average fan. At Coronado we were able to talk to the drivers, photograph great cars close up, perhaps get an autograph from Grand Prix Champion Phil Hill—all without leaving town or spending a





Member Profile

BONNIE NICHOLLS AND KEVIN ROONEY

Sports cars don't run in my family, nor in Kevin's. We come from practical folk with practical cars.

I first got an inkling about how much fun roadsters could be when I worked for Moss Motors up in Goleta as a data entry clerk. I worked in the show room where a light blue Austin-Healy was on display. And quite a few salespeople owned British cars. The president had a new Jaguar.

I worked there during the summers while I was completing my master's.

One summer I inherited \$500 from my grandmother who passed away, and almost put it toward an MGB. A colleague at work had taken a piece of junk and turned it into a beautiful little car. All it needed was a paint job. But the joke around the office was that anyone who had a British car had two: one to drive, and one in the shop. So I passed and got a Honda scooter.

My first car was a practical 1989 Nissan Sentra, but it wasn't long before I started noticing Miatas on the road. Whenever my husband and I would see them, I'd say, "That's my car, somebody's driving my car."

Finally, in 1995, we bought a 1992 white Miata, A package. Kevin now drives the Nissan, poor guy.

My family was surprised. I'm such a practical, conservative person. Was I really some wild chick? But hey, I live

in Southern California. They live either in Northern California or back east. The Miata was made for San Diego.

I loved my car, but within a month, my back was killing me. I thought, this is the punishment I get for buying a snazzy little sports car. But I went to the Relax the Back store in Encinitas, got a special back support for my car seat, and within two days, the pain was gone. I hadn't sinned after all.

I do have a confession to make. When we first started looking at Miatas, I wanted a red one. The Nissan was red, and I thought red was sportier. But the best deal, out of the *Auto Trader*, came from a very motivated seller of a white Miata. I thought, she looks great in a white Miata, so can I. And the fake cow seat covers were the perfect touch.

By the way, I just tagged my first Miata in Hillcrest. It was a white one. We can always use another one in the club!
— BONNIE

New Members!

The following are the new members since the last newsletter:

Paul Buchsbaum

San Diego
1996 White

Keith & Jean Collins

Valley Center
1991 Silver

Anne C. Henry

San Diego
1990 Mariner Blue Base

Rick Keach & Maiga Berzins

San Diego
1991 Red

Gary Morrison & Lynley Hill

New Zealand
1991 Red A

Richard Ransburg & Elizabeth Douglass

Encinitas
1995 M (Merlot)

Melissa & Trevor Rogers

San Diego
1995 Red

Bengt Spetsmark

San Diego
1995 Montego Blue

Patrick & Viona Van Hoose

Carlsbad
1992 White A

Michael & Bonnie Verne

Vista
1990 Mariner Blue

Marcia Webster & Charles Baldwin

San Diego
1999 Black R

Brian Wendel

San Diego
1999 Black Touring

The following members have renewed since the last newsletter:

Richard E. Ackermann & Catherine R. Talley

Michael & Arlene Adcock

Dan & Jackie Bree

K. Zack Broadbent

Ron & Nancy Gelinas

G.B. Heinemann & C.E. Wengenroth

Steve & Gayle Hirschhorn

Shelley & Bruce Hotz

Bill & Karen Huss

Diane Johnson

Kevin Lakkis

David & Leanne Lynn

Nina Lyon

Sandra K. McNulty

Jack Monaco

Dave Okamoto

Carole A. Orlen

Jay Ramowski

Michael Simmons

O.D. Smith & Sheila Cannon

Dale L. Thompson

There are now 286 memberships consisting of 431 members.

Memberships by Miata color:

97	Red
63	White
35	Black
15	Montego Blue
15	Silver
12	Mariner Blue
11	Laguna Blue
8	BRG
8	Merlot
6	Twilight Blue
5	Starlight Blue
5	Emerald Green
5	Marina Green
2	Yellow
1	Cranberry Mica
1	Hunter Green
3	Unreported



Rainer's Ramblings

I am writing this at 35,000 feet, cramped in a jet headed to yet another destination as part of my job. I just realized that I'm gone more than I'm home. There's a baby screaming two rows ahead of me and my CD player batteries just died so there is no way I can block out the shrill cries. — Ah, at least my new notebook computer is keeping me somewhat sane. But even this is a chore— have you ever attempted to open up a notebook computer on the little table that folds out from the seat in front of you? Heck, there's no room— half of this computer is embedded in my belly button just so I can open the screen to see what I'm typing.

And then try typing with your elbows stuck in your sides— not a pretty picture, and extremely taxing as well!

Last night MARIANNE and I were invited to GERI and SAL CAUSARANO'S home for a dinner party for the folks working on this month's Holiday Party. After a great dinner there was a meeting to iron out the details. As I write this, over 100 people have reserved a place at the catered affair to be held at The View CAFÉ in Rancho Bernardo.

In less than three years our club has grown so big that this annual affair can no longer be held at any member's home. Our first holiday party was held at RICHARD SCHERSCHEL'S home in the college area of San Diego, and last year's was held at BOB and DEBBIE LLEWELLYN'S San Marcos home. DIANE LONG had volunteered to host the party in her Scripps Ranch home this year, but when the board realized just how big we've grown, it was determined that it would be impossible to burden anyone with such an adventure followed by such a monumental clean-up chore.

So this year we're having the event catered in a private restaurant. We're still having our traditional gift exchange for Miata-related gifts. As a bonus, several members have indicated that they will be bringing videos of events filmed during the year. This should be one helluva party!

Which brings me to another point— this year is almost over— can you believe it? Next year will be the last year in the millennium and then we'll all have to get used to writing dates with a two thousand instead of a nineteen hundred. It usually take me six months just to get

the last two digits of the year right when I'm writing checks...I've been having my own version of the Y2K problem every year since I can remember!

As this year draws to a close our club is approaching 300 cars in size— and we won't be officially three years old until March. Pretty impressive! Our club's excellent reputation is a direct reflection of the quality of our members. This holiday season go buy yourself a special gift; you deserve it. If anyone asks, tell them I told you to do it.

One of the fastest growing areas of our club is the number of members who have taken up autocrossing. The Miata has long been regarded as one of the finest autocrossing cars out there, and it does very well in the stock (BS) division. In fact the BS division has become known as the Miata Marque division, since no other car in that class (BMW Z3's, 318's, and 325's, as well as some Porsches among others) ever shows up in the winner's circle. And this is only two years after the Miata was moved up from CS to BS. Although George Doganis is not one of our club members (I've been trying to recruit him for quite some time, but he works and lives in Big Bear, so he feels he lives too far away to take part in club activities), he does claim San Diego as his home and races his Miata as a member of the San Diego Region SCCA Solo II contingent. (Solo II is the SCCA's name for autocrossing.) George won first place in the Solo II Nationals in Topeka, Kansas, in September, becoming a back-to-back winner, since he won last year as well. This means that George is undoubtedly the best Miata autocrosser in the country— and he's a great guy, too, since he is very friendly and willing to help up-and-coming autocrossers who meet him at events. One of his best pupils is our own JOHN GODDEN.

John and I started autocrossing about the same time in 1996, and during those early months I was consistently beating him. But not anymore. John has come a long way and is currently in first place in championship points in the BS class in the San Diego region. And it doesn't look like anyone can surpass him with only one championship left this year (December 13). So I want to be the first to congratulate John on an outstanding season. Plus John now has his own apt pupil, his wife CATHERINE— look out BSL

(ladies' class)!

Moreover, in the past months several more SDMC members have tried the sport: JACK and SUE HINKLE, ELLIOT and BARB SHEV, PHIL DAOUST, and DAN and JACKIE BREE have joined regulars JOHN and CATHERINE GODDEN, NEAL HOWLAND, JTBOB HOLLAND, BRIAN GOODWIN, DAVE MOORE, and me, plus occasional racer MIKE CHIAPETTA. Coming up this month is a McKamey autocrossing school, sponsored in part by our club, and among the pupils will be club members VOODOO BOB KRUEGER and DIANE LONG.

The SAN DIEGO MIATA CLUB also has a large crew which cheers our racers on. Not only do we end up having a "Miata Corral," which has the largest group of single-marque cars at the event, but our cheering section has been drawing a share of attention. At a recent event, folks were yelling and applauding Miata drivers, waving checkered flags as well as the nearly-legendary Voodoo Chicken.

And maybe it's grown big enough so that SDMC can become a member of SCCA (the Sports Car Club of America) and join the existing four racing clubs in San Diego which put on the autocrossing events in town on a rotational basis. Not only would we be covered by the insurance umbrella of the SCCA, but every time we hold an autocrossing event, our club stands to make a profit in the neighborhood of two thousand dollars— something to think about, eh? Let me know what you think of this idea.

Until next time...have a happy holiday season, keep your top down, and keep smilin'.

— Rainer Mueller, *El Presidente*



PHOTO: KEN EVORY

El Presidente's formal portrait was taken this past August during the Tour of Evans Garage.

