



Open Road



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The Official Newsletter of the Indy Miata Club

June 2001

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Slower Traffic, Keep Right!

Steve Jacobson, President, Indy Miata

Recently, club member Beth McCoy notified many of us via email about a dear friend of hers that is in need. I think this situation presents the perfect opportunity for the Indy Miata Club to show one of the true reasons for the existence of our club. Sure, we are all bound by one common love, but I believe that our club's bond goes far deeper than sheet metal. It is the friendships that have formed over the past 10 plus years in the Indy Miata Club that go on even after you've sold your Miata. But, if you ever think of selling your Miata, please, call me first. I'll do my best to talk you out of it.

I have witnessed this kindheartedness first hand over the past several months. Many of you have inquired about Angela's condition even before asking about that day's event. It is from those instances that I base my statements. She is doing wonderful, by the way. It seems that our little buddle of joy is already trying to perfect the heel-and-toe technique.

Beth's very good friend and ice-skating coach has recently been diagnosed with MS. She has had to quit her teaching and coaching job at the Fishers Forum where she has worked for several years. Her medical bills are far greater than she can handle. A trust fund has been set up in her behalf to help her with these costs. Beth is the administrator of the trust fund.

And this where the club comes in. We have an event coming up in August that will bring three area Miata clubs together for a pitch-in picnic. We have decided to use this event as a fund raising event for the trust and perhaps for the national MS Foundation. We have received the backing of Barbara Beach and *Miata Magazine* and are looking to get the local Mazda dealerships involved. (Hopefully for some door prizes!) I also want to petition the Lake Effect Miata Club and the Lake Dunes Miata Club to join us in this great endeavor. Stay tuned for more details on this fun fund raising event as we iron out all of the details.

I'd really like to see our entire club show up for this one. If you have any questions or concerns, please give Beth a call or drop her an email.

Steve Jacobson



"I made it to the Mingle!"
Jay Hofacker, Shane
Benson and his sister at
the Mug 'n Bun mingle.
Bob McCoy is showing
off his "flaming car" in
the background.



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Mug 'n Bun Mingle

What could be better than Miata's and great drive-in food on a Saturday night? Hosted by Chuck and Teresa Wills, over a dozen cars showed up and burgers, chili dogs, onion rings, fries, and root beer were consumed on a beautiful evening in Speedway.

The McCoys showed up in flames (their car and attire!), Shane Benson and Jay Hofacker shared their exploits of autocrossing earlier in the day, and new member Chris Poglitch was introduced to club members and their cars.

New member Chris Poglitch attended his first event with the club. His checkered flag custom dash of got lots of looks (as well as the rest of the car). Chris shares a driving school experience with us on Page 7.



Fourth of July Parades!

We have two opportunities to have Miatas in parades for the Independence Day holiday.

July 3rd is the Decatur Township Lions Parade. Meet at the Decatur Township Fire Station on High School Road (one mile south of Kentucky Avenue at 4:30. This is a rain or shine event! Questions? Contact Jim or Martha Nutt at 255-1874 or IndyNutts@aol.com.

July 4th is the date for the Sheridan Patriotic Parade. Meet in the Sheridan High School parking lot at 9:00am. Head to downtown Sheridan and from the intersection of IN 47 and 38, take 38 north. Continue straight when 38 makes a left and at the church, angle right (north). The high school is about 2 blocks north on the right. Confused? Please contact Bob Dix for more help at farmerbob6@juno.com.



Comments, conversation, and after dinner laughs over by the smoking porch.

Please send all articles, pictures or information for publication in the Open Road to:

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Please submit all articles, photos or news items by the 25th of each month. We encourage your participation in making your newsletter the best it can be!

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Teaching an Old Dog New Driving Tricks- Zendog Goes to Autocross School

by Millard Johnson

It is 4:30 a.m. My alarm wakes me to cold drizzle outside. My day at the Evolution Drivers School will start at 9:00 in Alexandria, Kentucky – just east of Cincinnati. I tank up on gas and black coffee and head off through light rain with squalls and freeway construction on I 74. I pull in at the school right at 9:00 am – just in time for the drivers meeting. We have two instructors – both hold national autocross titles: one in a S2000 (formerly a Miata driver), the other in a Corvette. We all introduce ourselves. Three people have trailered their cars to the event. These, and a couple of others, are serious autocrossers. We are told that more than fifty percent of recent national autocross champions have taken the Evolution class. There are two other novices here: an Indian fellow driving a new Golf and a girl (young enough to be my daughter) who had the only other Miata at the school – a new, silver MX-5. The rain is now down to a mist and it is still cold.

I am in the third pair. I am pretty nervous when put the top down, strap myself in, and put on a racing helmet for the first time. I have never done this. I don't want to embarrass myself and I can't get my glasses inside this snowmobile helmet I have borrowed. The instructor puts me at ease and tells me he will watch as I go as fast as I can around the course. Sounds easy enough. I avoid any obvious blunders like missing a shift or spinning out through a wall of cones. After the first run, the instructor tells me what I have done wrong. Quite a bit. I have 45 years of bad habits to correct. All of the runs of the morning are devoted to correcting mechanical problems of hand placement, steering, shifting, breaking and acceleration. After I drive the course three times, we switch places and the instructor drives, showing me how to do it right. (I thought he would be impressed with my supercharged Miata – then I remember he has just exited an autocross tuned Corvette and he is a national champion in an S2000.) We switch places and I drive the course six more times before the next pair takes over again.

After lunch we pile into a door passenger car four at a time (the Subaru is the biggest rig this morning) and an instructor teaches us about "looking ahead". We drive slowly looking not at the obstacle we are negotiating but the one ahead of it. The rain has been gone for a while, but a chilly wind has dried the course. Not that everyone needed dry pavement as much as I did. Some of these people have been driving autocross for a while. A Corvette and a Pontiac are strong among the high horsepower cars and a VW Rabbit has been trailered to this school — complete with race only tires. The best thing about the dry afternoon for me is that there is not enough room inside the Miata for me and my helmet with the top up. The afternoon is a repeat of the morning session but we have switched instructors and we are concentrating on looking ahead. This sounds obvious, but it is harder than you would think. The course is a 4 cone slalom, two 270 degree circles, a sharp dogleg left, a long downhill sweeper and a Chicago box. From start to finish the course is less than 45 seconds. I am faster after lunch in the dry, but my runs with the instructor driving show me I still have plenty to learn.

The last part of the day, we each take three runs without the instructor. I am beginning to feel confident when I lose my concentration and run the course in third gear. Throughout the day, I have splattered my share of cones, but even the best drivers seem to have respect for a novice com-

petitor. Does it work? My first run was 51.82 seconds. My 27th, and best clean run, was 36.368 seconds — two and a half seconds slower than the fastest lap my instructor was able to clock in my car.

Most of my increase in skill is due to what I learned today but part of it is purely from experience. Because the usual autocross event gives a person 6 runs, the 28 runs of this course is the equivalent a 5 months of events without the "forgetting" that takes place between events – or even runs. Well, it may have taken more than 40 years but I now KNOW what it feels like to take a hot car, put the peddle to the floor, and take it to the limit of both my car and my own ability. It is one HELL of a kick. If you ever get the chance to take this school – go for it!

Read the complete article and view a clip of one of his runs on the internet at Millard's web page: <http://members.telocity.com/~zendog/autox.htm>

(No cones were hurt the filming of **this** run.)

Factory Turbo for MX-5

Forced induction lovers from Down Under have something to celebrate! Mazda is doing a factory turbocharged MX-5 for release in the Australian market later this year. What about North America? Unlikely. Between emissions controls and safety issues, we'd be surprised if it were to happen.

Classifieds

Hard Dog Hard Bar roll bar with vinyl cover and padding. No problem with clearance when top is up. Fits all models (M1's and M2's). View it down at AIM or at Hard Dog's web site. \$150.00. Call Roxanne McCombs at 317-842-0686.

Tonneau Cover - Mazda OEM cover (no headrest pockets). In excellent condition and includes **all** hardware and storage case. Only \$130.00. Call Rick Morris at 317-291-8993 or e-mail him at rick@dustbunny.com

Attention Autocrossers!

The Buckeye Miata Club is hosting the Midwest Miata Club Autocross Challenge IV this year the weekend of June 8th, 9, and 10th. This promises to be the biggest and best event to date for the Challenge. If you have not been involved with the other three events, you are in for some fun. The weekend will start on Friday night with a welcome party at Speeds Indoor Karting Center in Whitehall on East Main St. (You can check out Speeds at their web site at www.speeds.cc.) Saturday's events will start with the main event, the autocross where clubs will race against each other for points and an over all club trophy. Saturday evening we will all meet at J.P.s Ribs at Bolton Air Field for a buffet diner and trophy presentation and more festive activities. Sunday, The Ohio Valley Region of the S.C.C.A. will be having their regular autocross where all of the racers from our event will be invited to race at a discounted price. This is a great way to see how our little Miatas run against some of the powerful V-8s and other types of sport cars. Whether you want to autocross your Miata or just meet other Miata owners from all over (this for everyone in our club, yes, you!). Please plan to attend one or all the events of the weekend. If you have any questions, contact Bob Hengen at bhengen@iwaynet.net or 751-0334, Matt Collins at miatafy@ameritech.net, or Steve Johnson at 1-740-927-6622. Pre registration is necessary.

Mingle at Mel's Drive-in

Double Feature at Dusk

June 30 (Saturday) 8:30 PM

Arrive early at this Back to the 50's style drive-in movie theater for a mingle with Miata folks and have a Mel's famous burger and other goodies from the Concession stand prior to the double feature. We try to park near the Concession stand if spaces are available. Movie titles for the evening can be heard by telephoning (765/325-2230). Mel's husband, Mike Roth, will collect a per car entrance fee at the gate, which is usually a discount rate for Indy Miata Club cars (because he knows we can not hide anyone in the trunk).

If you would like to caravan with some of us from the north side of Indianapolis, leave a message for Gary & Kathy Collings (317/873-4224) so we will know to wait for you at the Lions Club Park in Zionsville. We will meet at the Zionsville Park at 6:30 PM on June 30.

Directions to meet for the Caravan: Travel around I-465 on the north side of Indy and exit #27 at State Road 431 (Michigan Road); go north for a couple of miles pass the Ford dealership to the traffic light at State Road 334 (same as 116th Street). Turn west (left) and travel one (1) mile to the edge of Zionsville and look to your right and you will see the Miatas in the parking lot at the Lions Club Park. The caravan should arrive at the theater by 7:30 PM.

Directions to the theatre: Mel's Drive-in Theater is between Lebanon and Frankfurt on State Road 39 in Mechanicsburg. Travel I-65 to State Road 47 and exit eastbound. Drive a couple of miles to State Road 39 and turn north. You will pass through the giant erector set iron bridge at Mechanicsburg and then you will see the theater.



Surf City!

Do you have a favorite Miata page (perhaps your own web page showing your beautiful car?). Send us your favorite URL to share with readers of the Open Road.

Here's a listing URL's of some Miata sites starting with area clubs:

<http://members.aol.com/indymiata/>
The home page of IndyMiata, this page has tons of information, members listing, an events listing, picture gallery and more.

<http://home.att.net/~judy.serwatka/index.html>
Home page Lake Effect, for Miata Owners in northwest Indiana and northeast Illinois.

<http://my.ohio.voyager.net/~tkpennin/mvmc.html>
Miami Valley Miata club for Miata owners in the Dayton, OH area.

<http://windycitymiataclub.com/>
The Windy City club for Chicago area Miata folk.

<http://www.miata.net>
One of the most visited Miata sites on the internet. It has everything from maintained tips, a mailing list, product reviews, even a Q & A area from Bob Hall (referred to as "The Father of the Miata"). Voted as the best internet car site by the readers of Road and Track magazine!

<http://www.teamseg.net/>
"Dedicated to Keeping that Silly Egregious Grin on the faces of Miata Owners". TeamSEG offers resources for individual MX5 / Miata owners such as recommended service and body shops across the country, a list of gatherings across the country, a book list and more.

<http://www.miatadrives.com/>
This site bills itself as a listing of "Great sports car and motorcycle roads". Drives from all 50 states and provinces in Canada have been submitted with maps and a description of the drive.

La Crosse, Wisconsin is located on a scenic stretch of the Mississippi River in some of the hilliest country in the Midwest. There are many, many Miata roads in the area, as well as opportunities for biking, canoeing, and track events. The city is large enough to host 100 cars, yet small enough to care. The Windy City Miata Club is making plans for a gathering there during the Labor Day weekend, August 31 - September 3, 2001. They have 100 hotel rooms set aside for this event. All the Midwest Miata clubs are invited, so now is the time to lock in your room and event reservations.

LaCrosse 2001 Midwest Miata Magic: On the Mississippi

The headquarters hotel is the Radisson LaCrosse, located on the banks of the Mississippi. The Miata Club rate is \$99 per night (plus tax) for 1 to 4 people in a room. You should contact the hotel NOW to lock in your reservation. The address is 200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI 54601. Telephone: **608-784-6680** Fax: 608-784-6694. The hotel has a generous cancellation policy, so consider reserving your room even if you are not 100% sure you will be able to go.

Event registration fee will be \$85.00. This fee will include:

- All caravans, tours, photo rally *(bike/canoe rental and the fairgrounds events will be extra)*
- Friday evening reception
- Sunday evening pig roast and awards ceremony
- Souvenir T-shirts
- Insurance and participant ID
- Continental Breakfast Saturday through Monday mornings. Lunches will be at your expense.

A Dinner Cruise on the Mississippi is **optional** for Saturday evening. Due to the size of the boat, it will be limited to 120 people. The cost will be \$35 per person. Otherwise, dinner on Saturday evening will be on your own.

Please contact Gary Collings if interested in caravanning to the Chicago area the evening of August 30th (Thursday).

Please print all information on the form. Mail your registration form and check (made payable to WCMC) to:
Cyndee Boyvey, 2518 Looking Glass Ct., Aurora, IL 60504-7301.

Participant Name: _____ Participant Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Registration Fee \$85.00 X _____ (No. Participants) = \$ _____ T-shirt size _____ T-shirt size _____

Dinner Cruise \$35.00 X _____ (No. Participants) = \$ _____

(Cruise attendance limited to first 120 people)

AutoCross Competition \$25.00 X _____ (No. Participants) = \$ _____

Driving School Lessons \$ N/C X _____ (No. Participants) = \$ _____

Total Registraion Expenses \$ _____

**Refund Policy:
\$60.00 refund
prior to 8/15**

Please circle any of the optional fun events in which you would be interested:

Biking Canoeing Day Tours Funkahana Photo Rally Moonlight Tour Shopping

I Love the Smell of Boiled Rubber in the Morning!

by Chris Poglitsch (originally published in the Peachtree Miata Club newsletter)

The day before Mother's Day, I participated in an event that would make Mom proud. White Lightnin' and 30 other cars from the Peachtree Miata Club had a day of racing (er...driving school) at the Talladega Gran Prix (Little Talladega to those who know) in Talladega, Alabama.

It all started at 4:30 am, with very little sleep due to my excitement over the pending activities. At 5:30 I picked up my partner for the day, "Track Babe Debby", who played Cameraman/Pit Crew for me. Against my advice, she had spent the prior evening at a birthday party. Come to find out, she'd gotten in at 3:30 am, and totally reeked of Maker's Mark bourbon. Sport she was, and we made our way to the 6:30am meeting place.

The trip to the track was short - about an hour, and we gained an hour getting there, so at 8am we were all in pit lane, ready to do our last Tech and get some instruction on coming into the pits and passing. We were split into two groups of 10, and one of 11. Each group was on the track for 3 twenty-minute heats. After your group ran, each driver rotated through the tasks of corner worker and timer. For the first heat I was a timer on the front straight. From this vantage point, I got to see the first two off-track experiences of the day. The first car was a red Sebring equipped car which came out of a decreasing radius turn too hot, and spun a 360, ending up pointed perfectly, albeit off course, down the back straight. The car behind may have freaked out over watching this and went sideways, doing if I recall correctly, a 180. The beautiful aspect of this particular track is that you have to really, REALLY try to hurt your car. There is only one bank, and plenty of grass to skid off into. In the course of the many times Peachtree has done this event, no car has ever been wrecked, or nearly wrecked.

Keep in mind that the best times tended to lean towards the best drivers, but one particular car, Barney's, made me stop and look. Barney has installed a Stage 3 Flying Miata turbocharger, which pushes 12psi of boost into his engine. This is one BAD machine, folks. When he would come through the front straight where I was standing, and get on the clutch and brakes (about halfway down, well before anyone else), his car would emanate the most wonderful sound. I think it was the surge gate, or waste gate opening, and it sounded like an F-14 taking off from an aircraft carrier as it passed. Need a dribble cup over here, please!

Second group out was mine, and I did the prudent thing by taking a more experienced driver with me. Bill had driven Little Talladega before, and gave me some serious wisdom, one piece was "Chris, don't try to catch him, he's got racing compound tires on, and you don't want to spin out on your first couple of laps out". Good advise. The course laid out essentially like this: Coming out of pit lane, you drive straight for about 30 yards before entering a constant radius right-hand turn. The way to do this is set the wheel, and throttle steer. Throttle steer, almost as cool a descriptor as torque wrench, impact ratchet, and channel lock. Anyway, if you can stay on camber through it, and let the car 4 wheel drift to the outside right at the end, you will be perfectly set up for some sharp left turns. These turns are two "L's" facing one another, three sided. The key to this is aim for the rumble strips, which unlike Road Atlanta, are nice and easy on the car's suspension. If this is done correctly, one portion of hard braking at the beginning and a smooth transition to the gas will easily allow you to accelerate through. After the two "L's" comes a decreasing radius right hand turn which was one of the trickier turns to master for me. A decreasing radius looks somewhat like seashell, if you cut a cross section of it. The further

you get into it, the tighter it gets, what I should have done, but didn't do, was start wider on the turn, and, like the lay of the road itself, come in tighter as the turn increased. This turn dumps the car into the back straight, where unlike the front straight, you can pass cars if they wave you on. At the end of the back straight is the only banked turn of the course, known as the "Nascar Sweeper", the only trick to this is get towards the apex at the apex, and stand on the gas!! Another short straight and the final turn of the course, it looks like a backward "G" and takes the car onto the front straight.

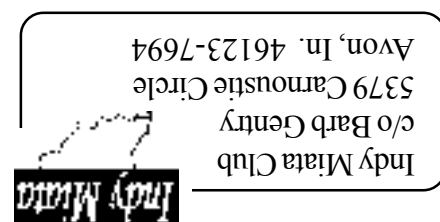
Each heat was 20 minutes, or about 14-15 laps, and it was HOT! Each car had one heat prior to lunch, which was catered in by a local BBQ place. It was around lunchtime when Track Babe's hang-over wore off, and she was ready to ride! Her first trip on the track was with Glen Stephens, who happened to be Top Gun the last time the club went to this track. Most enjoyable for Debby weren't the fast speeds or the sharp turns, but the John Deer effect. The JD effect occurred when Glen would cut corners to get around the track faster. Not just cut corners, but drive THROUGH the infield, leaving a John Deer size swath of mowed grass in his wake. This was an extremely forgiving track, and Debby really liked the ride until Glen blew out an expensive racing tire he had flat-spotted earlier in the day.

Once we'd gotten Glen's car off the track, it was time to pack up and eat dinner. Throughout the meal I was a zombie, racing (uh....learning how to drive better) takes the steam right out of me. Nevertheless, I had heard a very intriguing story about the use of clothes dryer exhaust tubing in an air induction system. This was so interesting; I often sit and ponder the possibilities. While I can't go into much detail here, I highly recommend you call me and ask, I'm sure you'll be equally intrigued.

The day finished, I sat back and pondered the experience, at this point, I'll apologize to "The Big Show", but I wanted to take a moment to interview myself and get some relative bearing grease on where my racing career was at:

"Well Chris, I looked like I had a great day at the track, why don't I tell myself about it?"

"Yeah, Chris, it was really a gas, during the sixty minutes on the track, I know I burned ten gallons of Amoco 93 Octane fuel in old 'White Lightnin' and 10k of rubber off my new Yokohamas, but I can tell me that I really improved on my driving skill today!"



Indy Miata Club
 c/o Barb Gentry
 5379 Carnoustie Circle
 Avon, In. 46123-7694

June 16th - It's the Batesville-Metamora Run!

2001 Club Event Schedule

June 16 - Batesville-Metamora Rally with several other clubs. (see page 4)
 Rally Masters: Jinks & Nutts

June 30th - Mel's Drive-In! (see page 5)
 Event Masters: The Collings

July 3rd - Decatur Township Lions Patriotic Parade. (See Page 2)
 Event Masters: The Nutts

July 4th - It's the Sheridan Patriotic Parade! (See Page 2)
 Event Masters: Bob & Diane Dix

July 21 - It's the annual Fussin' and Cussin' Rally!
 Rally Master: Eric Knight

July 29 - Ice Cream Store Cruise and Mingle!
 Event Master: Bob Wiley

August Mingle - Open

August 18 - Road Run / Potluck Picnic With Lake Dunes and Lake Effect
 Event Master: Many People

September 2 - Cruise to Kruse (Classic Auction in Auburn, Indiana)

September 22 - "Just Shoot Me! Again!" Photo Rally
 Rally Master: Beth McCoy

October 6 - Spooky Evening with the Dixs!
 Costumes Required!

November 3 - MDC Driver's Training Day @ Putnam Park

November 11 - Open rally date