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# Four Wheel Drift... *by Chuck Wills, President*

As many of you read last month, the crew from AIM Tuning and the Indy Miata Club headed to Monterey, California to compete in the Pro Spec Miata race at Laguna Seca. With 74 cars entered, this was the largest field ever at Laguna Seca, and the largest Spec Miata race to date as well.

The trip out for the driving crew was largely uneventful. We found that the only difference between Iowa, Nebraska and Wyoming are different sets of lousy radio stations. We left on Sunday at 2:00 pm and drove all night plus all the next day with only a three hour "cat nap" break. This was hard core road-tripping, to say the least. By the time we got to western Wyoming, the scenery became more interesting with mountains, streams, and antelope - we counted over 200 antelope in all. There were so few vehicles on the road, we couldn't play any license plate games to pass the time, so we resorted to monitoring wildlife.

The part of the team that flew out, didn't have smooth sailing. Due to several weather related flight delays, they were stuck in the Atlanta airport overnight and arrived in Monterey a day late. (If you've got time to spare, go by air!)

Once we all were in California things became quite busy. On Friday and Saturday, there were practice sessions each morning at 8:00 and qualifications at 4:45 in the afternoon. Between those sessions we were busy tweaking the car to try and get the last ounce of speed out of it. You can't imagine what it's like to be in a paddock with 73 other Spec Miatas. Laguna Seca had set up three huge circus tents for us to park under during the weekend, each holding more than 25 cars. Most of the competitors were quite friendly and were always willing to lend a tool or give advice. It really felt like a regular Miata Club get-together, but about three times bigger. One other interesting point is that we were sharing the paddock area with three other racing series: CART, Formula Dodge and Formula Atlantic. All three are open-wheel cars similar looking to the cars that race in the Indy 500. It was very exciting to share the same pavement with folks like Walker Racing and Team Green. I even saw Mario Andretti!

Qualifications went as well as can be expected, considering there were 74 cars on the track. It was difficult to get any open track to wind the car out. Shane qualified 36th out of the 74 cars. Most of the other teams were from California and the bordering states. The only people that had come from further away than our team were from Georgia and Virginia.

On race day we tried to stay relaxed by walking around the vendor booths and looking at other cars. It was tough to control the excitement though. The race started at 4:30, so we had virtually all day to kill. We watched the other races and tried to study the lines taken by the open wheel cars.

Considering the size of the field and high adrenaline level of the drivers, most people expected a huge wreck going into the Andretti Hairpin (turn 2). Much to everyone's surprise, the first lap came off with few problems. There was quite a bit of contact between the cars throughout the race. You could hear them bumping all the way down the straight. Shane's car got a few battle scars, but nothing serious. There were a number of cars that had to be taken away on a wrecker. There was only one full-course yellow in the race, which took nearly 5 minutes to resolve.

Shane had a fierce battle with a few cars and made some brilliant passes to end up 29th overall. It was a proud moment for all of us when he rolled into the paddock after the race. We were so excited you would have thought that we had won.

Things spooled down from there, as everyone started to pack up and head for home. Rather than fight the chaos in the paddock, we went to visit our friends at Walker Racing and unwind with them as everyone else hurried around. After an hour or two things settled down and we loaded the car onto the trailer as the sun was setting on Laguna Seca. Time to head for home.

The trip back was uneventful, save for one moment in the mountains where the trailer brakes went out. That was exciting, but we were able to stop and cool the breaks at Donner Pass. The good news is that we didn't have to eat any of our crew.

*Zoom-Zoom to page 2*

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Going to Laguna Seca was an amazing experience. It was more than just a road trip, it was a great team experience where six people could make something happen. I think we all came away from this with pride in what we accomplished. There was no way that one person could have done it on their own - it took all of us pulling together. Like I said last month, it's not how we finish, it's getting there that is the real experience.

So guys, are you ready for next year?

## It's A Parade! It's A Parade!

At this Tuesday parade, to kick off their 4-H fair, we haul dignitaries in our Miatas. We need and want drivers. Pre-parade meets at the Decatur Township fire station on High School Road at 4:30pm. Afterwards, we park at the fair and enjoy tenderloins, brats, etc. etc.

Take I-465 to southwest part of interstate loop and get off at Kentucky Avenue. Go one mile southwest on Kentucky Avenue to High School Road. At that light, turn south on High School Road and proceed one mile to fire station parking lot. PLEASE RSVP TO IndyNutts@aol.com or call 255-1874 and leave a message. Please help us out.

## Miata Mingle at Mel's Drive-In

Gary and Kathy Collings look forward to meeting you at Mel's Drive-in for their annual open air movie under the stars on July 13. The movie will begin at dusk so try to arrive by 7:30 PM for some good food from Mel's concession stand. If you wish to know what movies are playing, telephone the theater (765/325-2230).

Here are the directions to the passion pit: Take I-65 north past Lebanon to S.R. 47 before the Frankfort exit. Take S.R. 47 exit east a couple of miles to the stop light flasher at S.R. 39. Take S.R. 39 North a few miles through a small burg and across the old iron bridge. You will see Mel's "Back to the 50s" Drive-in on your right. Look for Miatas parked near the concession stand. You can reach Gary or Kathy on their mobile phone (317/502-1233) if you have trouble finding the theater.

## Fussin' & Cussin' IX - The Nightmare Continues

This rally is the most talked about, rehashed, hated, loved, discussed, complained about rally that the club puts on. Bring your binoculars, cell phones, dictionaries, whatever you think you will need. But what ever you bring, it won't help. Except a sense of humor. Need we say more? Join us on July 20th for your chance to gain immortality by having your name engraved on the fabulous President's Cup as winner of the Ninth Annual Fussin' and Cussin' rally. Sign up sheet in this issue.

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## *The Open Road*

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

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Please submit articles, photos or news items at any time. To be in the next edition, no later than the 25th of that month. We encourage your participation in making your newsletter the best it can be!

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# Sun Shines on Fun Run to French Lick

by Gary Collings

Under threatening skies Indy Miata club members gathered in the back parking lot at the Adams Mark Airport on the morning of June 1 (Saturday) for a caravan tour to French Lick. Thirteen cars dropped their tops and headed south. We picked up the 14th Miata at Martinsville where the Barrick's joined the caravan at the first pit stop.

Our purpose was to join nine cars from the Windy City Miata Club that left Chicago on Thursday evening; they had arrived at French Lick on Friday for an extended weekend of touring and relaxing. We planned to arrive at the majestic, old hotel by 12:30 for lunch. Sheryl and Mark Sackett had made overnight reservations and had scheduled golf and spa times.

Gary and Kathy Collings, our tour masters for this event, reviewed the route sheets, which included a copy of the map section and alternate routes home. The caravan left the Adams Mark with tops down at the appointed time of 9:30 for a scenic but boring drive down S.R. 37. Half way to the first pit stop at Martinsville, the sky opened up and the rain poured as the drivers made a quick stop along the berm to put the tops up. Those who had painstakingly snapped their boots over the folded tops seemed to get a little wetter than others who had driven under threatening skies before (and had already learned the lesson to leave off the boot at least if the sky is dark during the middle of the day). At the pit stop, a group decision was made to put the tops back down and the skies cleared for the remainder of our journey. What a pleasure to ride with the top down and the air conditioner blasting away to cool our feet!

After the first pit stop, the caravan continued on the first leg of the journey to the next pit stop at Bedford. The tour masters led the caravan and had walk-about radios with which they talked to Sheryl and Mark Sackett, who were bringing up the rear (a.k.a. the "sweep" car). The radios worked well on the straight line of S.R. 37 but were useless when we hit the hills of Lawrence County. Each Miata in the Windy City Club uses a CB radio on weekend tours as a great source of communication on a long trip. The hills of southern Indiana also interrupt a CB radio and, as we later learned, there are few telephone relay towers in this region so that our mobile telephones were usually out of service in the Lawrence-Martin-Orange counties of our route.

Sheryl and Mark Sackett took over as lead car after the second pit stop at Bedford for our second leg of the 117 miles journey on those curvy roads less traveled (S.R. 450). Actually, Jim and Georgia Barrick became the "rabbit" car with Sheryl and Mark and a few others in pursuit. That's the last we saw of these four or five cars for the next couple of hours.

Kathy and Gary were in the sweep car and had just pulled onto the S.R. 450 curvy route when a state trooper slipped in behind them. Needless to say, we begrudgingly complied with the 40 mph posted limits. The trooper got bored and passed us only to tail Jim Jones for a few miles. Fortunately, Jim spotted the trooper in time to crank it down to the speed limit. All we could think of was that the trooper had seen all of us leave the parking lot in Bedford and had radioed ahead to other troopers to start picking off those shiny, little foreign cars. This would allow the troopers to get their day's quota in less than hour. As it turned out, after a few miles, the trooper pulled into a driveway where he apparently lived and all of our imagined scenarios were for naught. But the day was far from over...

It seemed the route instructions had a critical typo where S.R. 450 ended at U.S. 50/150. The instructions said turn right (but we needed

to go left to get to French Lick). By the time the tour masters, who were now the last car, arrived at the junction and discovered the error, the second group of eight or nine cars was waiting patiently along the side of the road near Loogootee. Keep in mind the "rabbit" cars were long gone and this group had also not seen them since we left Bedford. At this point, we assumed they had caught the mistake and were already having lunch at the hotel.

We back tracked to the junction and continued on our route. Our group arrived at the French Lick Hotel a half hour behind schedule but the "rabbit" group was no where in sight. I told everyone not to worry about the lost group of "rabbit" cars as Jim Barrick knew this countryside and would not travel far before discovering the error. We visited with members of the Windy City club and were half way through lunch, when in walk the members of the "rabbit" group. When asked where they had been? Jim Barrick quipped "they drove to Illinois". Actually, after 30 some miles, they turned around in Washington, Indiana when it occurred to them that they may have made a wrong turn. Anyhow, they discovered another great route on S.R. 550 as they back tracked to French Lick. Reminds me of a story about the tortoise and the hare....

Look for an article in the September issue of Miata Magazine about the French Lick area and Windy City's tour.

*(More photos on page 5)*



Miatas lined up in front of the French Lick Hotel.

# Peachy Day for a Peachy Rally

It was a 'peachy' day for a rally, and Rick Morris's Peach Cobbler event filled the bill. The morning was cool, but the sun was out and 14 Miatas showed up to roam the hills of Morgan county and finish up at Gray Brothers cafeteria in Mooresville.

The drivers and navigators had a fairly easy time for this rally as there were no clues to worry about, only making sure the next turn was found. The one thing that they had to figure out was "How long did it take the Rally Master to run the route that morning?" With that in mind, the cars took off and headed for the hills.

Our Rally Master found us some great roads, with minimal straight stretches. Unfortunately, the county had decided to cold patch some of the roads and had used a toothpick to tamp down some of the patches. Overall though, the roads were fine and the curves were good. Wildlife was spotted, a pair of fawns were seen by a couple cars, and another car reported seeing a 6 point buck wander across Indian 39 as if he owned the road.

A 'rest stop' was planned in Wilbur, and several people reported that it was the cleanest outhouse they had ever used.

All the cars found Gray Brothers without any difficulties (kudos to the Rally Master for the flawless directions!), trays were filled and people ate, talked and relaxed.

As for the "How fast did our Rally Master drive?" question, Jim and Georgia Barrick took the first place prize of a gift certificate for any of the Simon Malls, guessing Rick took one hour and 35 minutes to drive the route. (Actual time? 1 hour 33 minutes and five seconds.) Dennis Moore scored second place and Melissa Forbes placed third. As for the guesses of two hours plus, Rick's only comment was they must have seen his driving style during the go-karting event at Johannson's!

And for those of you that missed the Peach Cobbler rally.....oh, yeah....the peach cobbler was excellent!



Ken and Sarah Koehler's new (to them) 10AE heads into the woods.



Ralliers hear the news of no clues!



Top: Cars arrive, and all the cars get the once over.

Bottom: The drivers meeting, and what's the first rule?



We came, we saw, we rallied and we ate!

# Photos from the French Lick Run and Peach Cobbler Rally

Photos courtesy of Gary Marconi and Sara J McBride



Left: When Miatas owners get together, there's always something to talk about.



Right: Jim Jones puts the boot on his car, not knowing rain is in his future as he heads to French Lick.



Chatting on the front lawn at French Lick.



Miatas in the front drive at the French Lick Hotel.



Listening to the Peach Cobbler Rally Master's advice



Tops down, hoods up and jackets on at the start.



With the sun shining brightly, cars begin to fall into line at the start of the Peach Cobbler Rally.

# Dr. Detail Polishes A Rally Route

## There's supposed to be a @!#&\*%! road here!

by Dr. Detail

We're going to take a little detour this month. Those of you who attended the Peach Cobbler Run in June were apparently happy with the route and the instructions. For this I am really grateful. I did spend a lot of time laying out and driving the route trying to make sure that nobody would get lost and everybody would have a good time. It probably looked like the route had been meticulously planned and then just driven. Another example of how things are hardly ever how they appear on the surface. I learned a lot of fairly painful lessons making up the event and I thought I would pass along what I learned so that future rallymasters wouldn't have to go through as much grief as I did.

There are a couple of simple, inexpensive tools that will make your job as rallymaster much easier. The first of the tools is a detailed map of the county or counties that your event will go through. I have one of the DeLorme atlases for Indiana and it is really nice, but there are times when it shows roads that aren't there, or doesn't show roads that are. It's a good start, but what you really need is a county highway map. You can get them from any county highway department for cheap. Just call the highway department for the appropriate county and tell them you want one of the big county maps. This would have saved me a lot of time and aggravation.

Another tool that would have helped immensely was one of those simple stick-on compasses that you buy at Wal-Mart. Get one and stick it on your steering column right behind the wheel. I've got a pretty good sense of direction, but when you're driving roads that you aren't really familiar with, and the sun is directly overhead for several hours like it is during the summer, it is very easy to lose your bearings and spend time driving around in circles. In addition to wasting time, it's pretty embarrassing to keep driving by the same people who are sitting on the porch commenting about how lost you are.

Once you think you have the route laid out and have a good set of instructions, the most important tool comes into play: another pair of eyes. There is no substitute for having someone else try to follow your instructions, even if they are the same person that has been helping you out during the entire process. It's even better if they haven't seen the route before. Have a volunteer (or draftee) ride along as navigator and be brutal about pointing out the tiniest little improvement that can be made in your instructions. The people driving the route haven't been there before and they will need all the help they can get.

Finally, once you have the route completed, give yourself a treat (and a good test) and drive it from memory. If you have laid out a good route, it will be fun and interesting to drive, even if you have to look for clues as you go along. While you are making this final run-through, keep your eyes open for any potentially dangerous, or interesting features along the way. If you find something especially noteworthy, include it in the instructions as a special treat or warning, whichever is appropriate.

Remember, the most important part of any driving event is fun. If you're lost, you aren't having any fun.



Rick explains to John why he'll see Miatas coming at him during part of the route.

## Going to the Gap!

by Chuck Willis

It's happening again this year and Ol' Blue with Chuck and Teresa Turbo are going to the biggest non-event in the Miata community. Every year hundreds of Miatas descend on south eastern Tennessee to drive Route 129 through the mountains. This road is also known as "The Dragon" since it contains over 300 corners packed into a short 11 mile run. Nestled into the Smoky Mountains, the road runs along mountain ridges and streams, making for some beautiful scenery and breathtaking drop-offs from the narrow shoulder of the road. This event is never officially organized, but seems to draw hundreds of people from all over the country.

As usual, the gathering will take place on the last weekend in July — the 26th through the 28th. The main meeting place will be the Topoco Lodge, but I know many people are staying as far away as Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.

I know that a few club members plan on heading down, so please contact me if you are interested in caravanning down together. I know there are other groups leaving from Cincinnati and Chicago as well.

If you are going, please let me know at [chuckwillis@comcast.net](mailto:chuckwillis@comcast.net) or call at 317-697-7192. Hope to see you there!

# Indy Miata Club is now on Yahoo! Groups

by Chuck Wills

In an effort to provide ever-better communication among our membership, we have recently started a new e-mail group at Yahoo.com [indymiataclub@yahoo.com](mailto:indymiataclub@yahoo.com). It is my hope that this will become the club's standard for electronic communications. All we need is for everyone to sign up, but more on that in a moment.

Currently, if an e-mail needs to be sent to the group, we must try to compile a current e-mail address list and try to forward messages to each person. From my experience, this only works about 60% of the time due to bad e-mail addresses or missing e-mail addresses altogether. The beauty of the Yahoo group is that you sign up to the list with your own e-mail address and Yahoo takes care of everything from there. The club won't need to do any e-mail administration – that means you will get messages in a timely and accurate fashion.

Here's how it works: You sign up on Yahoo Groups and join the Indy Miata Club Group. This allows you to send AND receive messages from the group. You can manage your own membership to determine how you want to receive messages. The options are:

1. Receive all messages as soon as Yahoo gets them
2. Receive messages only once per day, in a digest format
3. Receive messages ONLY from the group moderator (that's me)
4. NEVER receive messages

You always have the option of going to the Indy Miata Club Group on Yahoo and reading all of the messages there. So, if you don't like receiving e-mail, then that's the option for you.

Here's what to do: Open up your web browser and go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>. If you have never used Yahoo Groups, click on "new users click here to register" in the upper left corner. Follow the directions to fill out the form and click "submit" at the bottom of the page. When that's done, there should be a space on the screen labeled "getting started", with a membership wizard. Click on the membership wizard and continue on to the page labeled "Step 1".

Step 1: Confirm your e-mail address and continue on. Click "Verify" to confirm your e-mail address again. At this point, you must wait for Yahoo to send you a message with a special confirmation code in it (this may take a while).

Step 2: When you receive your e-mail confirmation, click on "click here to activate" and it will take care of the rest. Next, click "Join a Yahoo Group – search or browse". Once on the search page, type "indymiataclub" into the search window and hit return. Once the search is done, click on Indymiataclub to go to that page. Click

"join this group" from the [indymiataclub.com](http://indymiataclub.com) page and you are done!

It sounds more difficult than it is, and you can always e-mail me for help in signing up. There hasn't been much activity on the list, so you shouldn't have any fear of overflowing in boxes or tons of e-mail spam. Also, Yahoo doesn't use the e-mail list for anything else, so they won't spam you with messages or sell you address to anyone else.

I hope to see more people on the list!!!

## Classifieds

**For Sale** - 1995 Merlot M-Edition with hardtop. Excellent condition, BBS wheels, tan leather etc. Just turned 48,000 miles. Never sees snow, hardly ever rain (unless we're caught in it). \$11,500 obo. Ken and Sara Koehler 317-253-4494. (Picture at [www.miata.net](http://www.miata.net) classifieds)

**For Sale** - 1990 Mariner Blue A package. Drives great, runs strong, 94,500 miles. A/C, new tires, new rear window, and new oem floor mats. Replaced clutch, timing belt & water pump two years ago at approx. 75,000 miles. \$4,800.00 obo. Call John - 317-849-4233 (days) or 317-841-7671 (nights).



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# July - Join us for Movies and Fussin'!

## 2002 Club Event Schedule

**July 9th** - Decatur Township Parade - Event Master: Jim Nutt

**July 13th** - Movies, Miata's and Moonlight! Event Masters: Gary and Kathy Collings

**July 20th** - It's the 9th Annual Fussin' and Cussin' Rally! Rally Masters: Bob Wiley and Steve Jacobson

**August 17th** - World Series Parade and Rally - Rally Master - Claude Counciller

**August 25th** - Ice Cream Cruise & Mingle. Event Master: Bob Wiley. It's on a ~~Sundae~~ Sunday!

**September 7th** - GCMC Miata Gathering in Cincy  
**September Mingle** - Open

**October 19th** - Huber Wine Tour  
Event Masters: Chuck & Turbo Teresa Wills

**October Mingle** - Open

**November** - Open Event Date  
**November Mingle** - Open

**December** - Annual Holiday Party



John Blaylock checks his directions during the Peach cobbler rally.



Miata's zooming down Observatory Road during the Peach Cobbler Rally.



Guys and cars... 'nuff said!

