



Volume 13
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Four Wheel Drift... by *Chuck Wills, President*

So much has gone on in the last month, it almost seems like we've packed two months worth of stuff into August. Between Miata Club events and other motorsport activities I've begun to wonder if sleep is really necessary.

First of all, kudos to Bob Wiley for his fantastic Sundae Mingle on August 25. We had a record participation of 30 cars, many of them new members. Bob's route took us through Morgan county on some beautiful back roads, ending up at Ritters in Plainfield. The evening was the perfect weather for top-down motoring. Thanks for ordering the blue skies and mild temps, Bob!

If you have Speed Channel, the Mazda Cup Spec Miata Challenge race will be broadcast in September. This was the event at Laguna Seca, California that member Shane Benson raced in (with the help of Mike Selvy, Chris Poglitsch and me!). Tune in and watch as Shane carves up the competition on national TV. The dates are 9/9 at 4pm and 2am or 9/20 and 4pm. (check local listings).

A big thanks also goes to Claude and Shirley Counciller for organizing the parade and rally in Connersville. We had 12 cars in the Babe Ruth League World Series parade to represent our club. The parade lasted about 45 minutes as we coasted through downtown Connersville. There were lots of kids lined up along the street to catch a glimpse of Sparky Anderson and get the candy that we were throwing to them. It was great fun, with one exception.... next time we need to line up **BEHIND** the fire engine, not in front of it. Does anyone know that there is a little known state law that requires all emergency equipment to blare their sirens during a parade? Not only that, there must be another local statute that requires extreme horn blowing at the same time. My ears are still ringing. A special thanks also goes out to Tom Bates, Indy Miata club member that happens to be the assistant chief of police in Connersville. He arranged a special police escort for us to and from the parade. Thanks, Tom!

Another victory for Claude was arranging for all of us Deals' Gap goers to meet with the Cincinnati Miata Club to caravan down to Tennessee. For those that don't know, Deal's Gap is automotive nirvana with 318 curves in 11 miles, just repaved a few months ago. It's on the edge of the Smoky Mountains, nestled between dams and reservoirs of the Tennessee Valley Authority. There were seven cars from Indiana that met up with cars from Ohio and Illinois. I don't think there's any way to be inconspicuous when you are in a pack of 27 Miatas rolling down the highway. We made it down to the Gap in about eight hours. The first thing we did upon arrival was, of course, drive the Gap! We didn't even stop to unpack the cars - we just hit the curves.

The Gap can be a bit intimidating to newcomers. Tall trees all around, blind corners and sharp drop-offs with no guard rails. This is one place where a mistake can mean bent sheet metal. The road is also frequented by motorcycles, motor homes, SUV's and campers. Even the occasional semi truck can be seen trying to thread its way down the mountain. To tell you more about the trip, I'll share with you the following excerpt from my forthcoming book "Life's a Race, So Shut Up and Drive!".

Teresa Turbo woke with more excitement than a ten year old on Christmas morning. The adrenaline was already pumping even before her first cup of java. Even though it was decaf, she was wired like a double espresso. On this day, the road would be hers. She had counted every one of the 318 curves like they were sheep as she tossed and turned the night before. Her palms damp with sweat, she knew that this was the day she would slay the Dragon. Most mortal drivers would not go near Deals Gap if they saw it on a map. The road snakes and jags in ways that no sane engineer would ever design. Remember, though, Teresa Turbo is no normal driver.

Just after sun up, she threw me in the navigator seat of "The Blue Beast" and whispered one phrase through her clenched teeth: "Sit down, strap in, shut up, and hang on!". She was Dirty Harry with a five speed and I was the punk that had better feel lucky. She threw the top back, slapped the shifter into first gear and we were gone in a cloud of tire smoke and supercharger whine.

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Four Wheel Drift Continued...

I gripped the seat with one hand and tightened my seat belt with the other. I knew I was in more trouble than I had imagined when the tunes started pumping... Billy Idol... I was a dead man. I looked over and through the flurry of gear shifts and steering, I could see two squinted eyes focused on the horizon. Her gaze intensified as we drew nearer to the Dragon.

The Dragon is unforgiving and will test every ounce of driving metal you have. Its scaly back and whipping tale have already claimed three lives this year. Teresa Turbo didn't care. Body counts and statistics didn't mean any more to her than what was in her rear view mirror - meaningless stuff that just fades into the distance. She was on an eleven mile mission with just one thing on her mind. Slay... The... Dragon!

Everything blended into the background scenery that morning as we broke the speed of sound through the trees and valleys. The Dragon had met its match with Teresa Turbo. Breathlessly drifting through corners, dangling from the road as we rode the ragged edge of disaster down the mountain. The Dragon tried to foil her mission with blind corners and impossibly sharp hair pin curves, but Teresa Turbo anticipated this. With a blast of supercharged power and a turn of the wheel she counter steered around everything the Dragon could throw at her. The tires squealed in pain as she demanded more and more from them, the brakes begging in protest that they just couldn't give anymore, but she was relentless. As we accelerated harder and harder, I looked over at the gauges just in time to see the needles creep off the dials. And then, as quickly as it had started, it was over.

Teresa Turbo piloted us out of the cloud of smoke and dragons breath into the peaceful valleys to Tennessee. She had conquered the Dragon, beating it at its own game. We pulled to the shoulder to give our trusty steed a well deserved rest. With the exhaust popping and sizzling from the heat, she looked over at me and said "Let's do it again!".

Upcoming Events

The Greater Cincinnati Miata Club is hosting a regional nonevent event, the Midwest Miata Gathering 2002 on September 7. The Gathering website has more information, point your browser to: <http://www.cincimiata.com/MMG/index1.htm>. Gary and Kathy Collings will be leading a caravan to Cincinnati. (317/873-4224) or <gcolling@gte.net>.

The 2nd annual USGP Formula 1 mingle is being held at the Sonic Drive-In in the Speedway Shopping Center Saturday, September 28th at 6:30 pm. This event is being posted on Miata.Net in the Event section, so here's your chance to meet other Miata owners from across the country and enjoy the fine cuisine that Sonic offers.

If you're attending the USGP, we've arranged a special Miata parking corral! Go here to sign up: <http://f1miata.dustbunny.com> or call Chuck Wills to reserve your spot! Miatas only, no OTM's!

Corrections

August Open Road

Steve Asay was the proud last place finisher in the Fussin' 'n Cussin' rally. We also apologize to Pat Metheaux, Barb Gentry and Jim Nutt whose pictures were not sized properly. We regret the errors.

The Open Road

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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!

The Open Road is published monthly for the members of the Indy Miata Club. The Indy Miata Club assumes no liability for any information contained herein, or injury or damage resulting from use of this information. The ideas, opinions, maintenance or modification tips expressed are to be used at the reader's discretion. Individual contributors and/or the editors express no approval, authentication, or endorsement.

Add A Light to Your Center Console Storage Box

By Jim Short

Ever want to find something in your Miata's center console storage box at night, but it was just way too dark to see? I found with our '91 that this situation can be remedied by simply rearranging the location of a relatively useless ash tray light. This seldom seen feature is activated with the first click stop of your light switch, and thanks to a restricted cut out, only emits a small glow for it's originally designed purpose. Being a non smoker and having added an after market cup holder years ago, this light was virtually lost and forgotten.

Here's what you can do to shed some new light into your storage box. Begin by removing the five screws that secure the rear center console and locate the wires leading to the lamp and housing ahead of the ashtray well. Disconnect the wires from the power source at the fitting provided and lift off the console, maneuvering it around the trunk and gas lid release levers.



Let there be light in your center console storage box.

With the console now free, remove the lone machine screw that attaches the black plastic housing and lamp to the console's underside. There's no need to remove the lamp from the housing. The rectangular O.D. dimension of the housing I found to be approximately 5/8" x 7/8" with one side being a little wider than the other. Be sure of your units precise dimensions because the objective is to cut a new rectangular opening in the storage box in which to snug your lamp and housing. The next trick is to transfer the exact rectangular shape dimension to the dark recess of the storage box.

Start by making a paper template cutout of your measured lamp housing using a sheet of paper and a single edged razor blade. After discarding the cutout, does your lamp unit closely fit through the template? Next, reduce the size of the template so it can be held flush to the inside front and towards the top of the storage box. This will accommodate the housing's integral screw flange located on the reverse side of the box. There's no need to cut and remove this flange or the wider length portion of the housing. In fact, this wider lip serves as an ideal protective lamp hood.

With the template held in place, simply dab (not draw) white out around the perimeter of the cutout which, when removed, should reveal a perfect outside white line. Carefully and slowly score the sharp guide lines with your single edge razor blade. Repeat the scoring several times before making your final insertion cuts using a narrow blade razor knife, the plastic is tougher than you think. With the plastic coupon finally removed, press the lamp and housing from the back of the console (wider length hood side up) in an angular fashion to allow for the housing's front hook like tab. You may choose to remove this appendage altogether. If your initial cutout is too small carefully shave off additional plastic. Once your lamp housing is projecting through the console wall sufficiently enough, it can be secured further in the back by either adding a small strip of duct tape or glue to insure it doesn't come loose. Finally, click the electrical connectors back together, adjust the surplus wire and reattach the console and you're finished.



We came! We saw! We Sundaed! These club members had a good time at the August 'Sundae' mingle. Some 'ran for the cold', some just showed up for the treats. And you know what we always say... "You should have been there!"

Parade and Rally Were A World Series Event

By Claude Counciller

When the World Series comes to Indiana, look to the Indy Miata Club to get involved. With aspiring baseball stars in Connersville participating in the Babe Ruth 15 year old World Series, club member Tom Bates wrangled an invitation for the Indy Miata Club to participate in the parade the town was staging. Claude Counciller designed a rally for the afternoon, so it was a full day of "Miataitude"!

We left the assembly point with a police escort to the parade starting point. There were twelve cars participating and we lined up with no to same colors side by side, it sure was "purty". The parade lasted just over an hour and was a blast as we handed out candy to the little ones on the route.

One block prior to the ending point, we again had our police escort. We were led to a Village Pantry, the starting point for our rally. The rally started at 11:00 (sorry to those who missed us due to the mixup of time). The rally was officially 69.8 miles long and took approximately two hours to finish. The road had hundreds of curves, with a dry ford over a creek and a covered bridge. We ended up at the Bay Shores Inn at Lake Santee near Greensburg.

There were a few easy questions for ralliers to answer, such as "How do you spell water in German?". Steve Chase won \$1.00 for his answer of "Budweiser". First place winners were Tom and Cindy Bates, second place went to Sue and Larry Jinks, and Roxanne McCombs snagged third.

By the way, congratulations to Steve Chase who announced his engagement at the event. Who knows, the happy couple may get married while on the Huber Winery Tour in October!

Thanks to all who helped by coming to the parade and a special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Bates for all their hard work on the parade.

All World Series photos by Gary Marconi



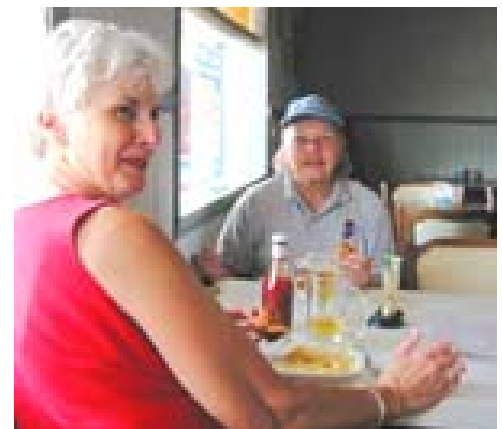
World Series rally winners Cindy and Tom Bates with their trophy.

October Huber Winery Tour

Mark your calendar for the Huber Winery Tour on October 19th. Hosted by Chuck and Teresa Wills, this tour starts with brunch at the Season's Inn in Nashville and then heads south through the rolling hills of southern Indiana to the winery. Chuck promises a new vintage of roads for those who have done the tour before. For those who haven't, the winery is a wonderful destination, with a cheese shop, a farmer's market, and, of course, the winery!



Taking home the second place rally trophy were Sue and Larry Jinks



Katherine Miller and Roxanne McCombs were the third place rally winners.



Great roads, great scenery, a great rally!

Time to Get Involved With Your Club

As hard as it is to believe, officer elections will be coming up in a few months. This is your club, and it takes people like you that want to get involved that will help the club get better. If you have given casual thought to getting more involved in the club, now is the time to shift out of neutral into first gear. Please contact Chuck Wills or Rick Morris for more information.

Topping Off Your Car

Bring Those Black Vinyl Tops Back To Life

By Dr. Detail

After many years of faithful service, or a few years of daily driving, that black or tan top that looked so good when the car was new will start showing some signs of aging. While most of this can be prevented with regular application of a good protectant like Lexol's Vinylex, eventually you will have to take more serious steps to restore your top's original appearance. This topic came up during our car care discussion at AIM's Tech Day and Doc Reynolds and one of the other club members mentioned a product from Mother's called "Back to Black". Doc and the other club member (sorry for my terrible memory) both said it worked wonders, so I thought I would give it a try on Sara's car top, which definitely needed a little help.

As always, whether you're getting ready to wax your car, apply Rain-X to the windshield or restoring your top, the first step is a thorough cleaning. If you wash your car regularly (you do, don't you?) the top should be in fairly good shape. A good wash with any of the name brand car washes and a scrub mitt should be sufficient. If your top looks like you have been participating the off road racing series, you might want to use a soft brush to get all the dirt out of the cracks and crevices. Rinse the soap off completely and dry completely with a couple of towels and then make sure the top is cool and dry before moving on to the next step.

Even though most of you have heard me harp on using less of everything, Back To Black is the exception to this rule. You need to apply it generously to the entire top and the massage it in evenly and thoroughly over the entire top. I found that working with a two square foot area seemed to be just about right. A washcloth turned out to be the ideal application tool, as the nap on the cloth enabled me to get the liquid into all the dimples in the top texture as well into the seams. The key seems to be to getting it applied evenly, so make sure you take your time and do it right.

After you have covered the entire top, let it set for half an hour or so and then buff the top using a couple of fresh terry cloth towels. You will be very pleasantly surprised at how good the top looks with surprisingly little work. It took me about half an hour to get the Back To Black applied and then about fifteen minutes to buff it out. It isn't a whole lot of work and the top will look great when you're done.

Now that you have the top looking good, you have a couple options to keep it looking great. First, you can give it a quick wipe down with Vinylex every other time you wash the car. If that seems like a lot of extra work, you can also reapply the Back To Black about once a month. It holds up pretty well, even after repeated washings.

If your car is a daily driver like mine, there is something else you can do that will help even more to keep the top looking good. If you are lucky enough to have a safe parking lot at work, get a cockpit cover and use it instead of putting the top up when you get to the office. This accomplishes a number of things. First, it's a little more convenient to put on a cockpit cover than to raise the top. Second, during the really hot days of summer a cockpit cover will let what fresh air there is circulate through the interior. This is much easier on the interior than having it just sit and bake in the parking lot all day long. Finally, if you are using a cockpit cover, the top is not out in the sun, so it isn't getting beaten up by the hot sun, so the top will naturally last a whole lot longer. Cockpit covers are about forty dollars from Moss Motors and other places, and I highly recommend their use.

"Sundae" Mingle Photos



Are John, Marge, and Sara talking about their Miatas or their caloric intake?



Jim Klein and Rally Master Bob Wiley look over a parking lot full of Miatas.

Drivers Education - Learning about You and Your Car

By Chris J. Poglitsch

Read the following quotes, see what sort of conclusion you draw:

“.....So do I. Longer than you, and I’ve never had to take my gun out of its holster. I’m proud of that.” Harry: Well, you’re a good man, Lieutenant. Good man always knows his limitations.” -Magnum Force, 1973.

“VSC - Vehicle Skid Control: Vehicle Skid Control (VSC) senses the onset of loss of lateral traction and helps the driver stay on track. Input from four wheel-speed sensors, a yaw-rate (directional) sensor, a deceleration sensor and a steering-wheel-angle sensor is communicated to the VSC system’s computer. The system has the ability to reduce power and to control the brake actuator. Working with both ABS and TRAC, the VSC system helps the driver to compensate for loss of lateral traction, which can cause skids and loss of vehicle control.” -Website www.Lexusafety.com

O.K., What happened between 1973 and 2002? At one point in time, it was up to a driver to understand the limitations of an automobile. If it rained, you watched your line, maybe slowed down, and by all means, checked your tread depth to make sure your chances of aquaplaning were minimal. Now, if a Lexus driver wrecks, they’re a victim of a terrible computer system that didn’t take into account they were talking on the cell phone to their Shaman, who’s reciting their Mantra back to them (no offense intended to any religious affiliations here folks, really).

What I appreciate about a Miata, or, for that matter, an F150 pickup, and any auto I’ll ever own, is that the avoidance of accidents is purely up to me. I’m the driver; I take responsibility for my actions. Period, end of discussion. One way that I’ve taken responsibility is by attending driver education courses. Actually, I’ve attended five driver education events and two auto crosses, hosted by the North Carolina region of SCCA (Sports Car Club of America), Porsche, Miata, and Datsun clubs.

The beauty of these events, and I recommend them fully to “Anyone Who Gets Behind The Wheel”, is that you understand your limits, and the limits of your vehicle in a safe environment, very forgiving to the beginner.

This last weekend I joined the Michigan Miata Club at Waterford Hills road course just north of Detroit for a Driver Ed (DE). This was NOT a race in any sense of the word. Though there were two Spec Miatas there, they both had to cover their markings so that, to the casual observer, they just had terrible paint jobs.

I ran in the “White group”, the most experienced class. We could take instructors along if we chose, but it wasn’t mandatory. I did, and my instructor was a pleasant gent from England, who, like I, had lived in South Africa for some time. Nigel “This one goes to eleven” Fox drove his 2002 Porsche Carrera to the event, and trust me folks, it went to eleven, in about three seconds. He was quite experienced at the course and showed me the proper line. Plus, he talked to me a great deal, which I like in instructors.

Here’s where the education comes in...I didn’t always take the proper line, but I always (except for once when I spun off course), could atone for my sins with the proper opposite steering, release of throttle and maybe, but not likely, braking.

If you’ve never done a DE, go for an Autocross. They are less expensive and slower, but slow is good, remember, you really want to understand what happens when you’re turning 180 degrees around a bend in your car, as fast as you can, and you mash the brakes.

Here is a checklist I’ve used for the past five years of things to bring

and do at both Autocross and DE’s:

Before the event:

1. Especially before a DE, take your car to Shane at AIM Tuning (dingding) on Gasoline Alley for a tech inspection. The organizers of the DE will send you a sheet of what to check for. Shane is not only the owner, but also having raced Pro Spec Miatas; he knows what to look for in your car, to make sure your ride is up for the event.

2. Change your oil. Throw out your idea of value, it doesn’t matter if you changed it only 2000 miles ago, high revs burn much fuel and carbon blows out tailpipes, and into oil, which, if mixed with condensation, creates caustic sulfuric acid. Engines don’t like acid much.

3. Bleed or have bled your brake system.

4. Check thickness of brake pads 50% is a good rule of thumb for autocross.

5. Check tread on tires. At least 3/32. At Waterford, I had two week old tires, and scrubbed off 50% of their life. Waterford is EXTREMELY gritty, and eats tires for breakfast.

6. Go to an empty parking lot, put your car in reverse, and idle backwards. As you idle backwards, very gently depress the brake pedal, so that you car doesn’t stall, but keeps rolling, with the brakes on. This will take off some, if not all, of the “brake glaze” that builds up on the pads. You’ll feel the difference in the pedal if your pads were glazed, much grippier.

Take with you to the course:

1. Extra brake fluid. When pads wear down, sometimes adding a little fluid is necessary.

2. Torque wrench and 21mm socket. People love those bring torque wrenches, we make friends quickly. DO NOT torque lugs that are on hot wheels, just after a run, aluminum is malleable, and 86ft/lbs can become 150 if you hot torque.

3. Water - gallon jugs of it. Maybe some Gatorade. Under our helmets, we perspire considerably. I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve dehydrated myself. NO BEER HERE, or soda for that matter.

4. Chocks for rear tires (see below).

5. A friend. It’s always nice to have a buddy with you.

6. A wide brimmed hat. I have to disagree with the Miata Owners Club on the sun block at the track statement in a recent magazine. Anything that makes my steering wheel slippery or sweats down into my eyes and burns is a big no-no in my book. Let your buddy use the sun block. You wear wide brimmed hat.

Continued Page 7

Driver's Education, Continued

At the course:

1. Find the flattest area to park your car as you can and empty the entire contents of your interior, including floor mats. Anything not bolted down is a potential Sidewinder missile when you're doing 70mph into a turn.
2. Let your car warm up. Look at your oil and water gauges. Oil pressure - 30psi or just under at idle. Water to normal mark.
3. Practice deep breathing with your helmet on. When I put one on, I still get really excited, which translates into gorilla moves on course. I'm working on it, which is why I like DE's.
4. After you get off the course, go back to this flat area you found in #1, and leave your car idling, with the parking brake OFF (some folks actually put a piece of tape on the handle that says "NO!" to remind them). If you pull the brake, you risk fusing the rear pads to the rotor, which is really hot. Put your wheel chocks under your back tires, lift your hood, and let your car run at idle for 3-4 minutes. Engines are like our hearts. If we go out and sprint before warming up our tickers, that's bad. Once we've warmed up, and sprinted, we should cool down, too. Engines like to warm gradually, and cool gradually also. Look at your brake and clutch fluids. Are they at normal levels? How about any oil drips? Radiator reservoir, where's it at?

That's about it for me I guess. I'm sure I've left some stuff out, but ask around the club. I know Jay Hofacker digs autocross and some others too. Columbus, Indiana has a big autocross community, and Putnam Park is a GREAT local course for learning (lots of run off in most places) and has a schedule of schools on their website at <http://www.putnampark.com>. I want to give many thanks to Don Woods and all the folks too numerous to mention who brought off the MiMiata 3rd annual Waterford day without a hitch. Good people one and all. Take responsibility for your Zoom Zoomin' y'all, you don't need no stinkin' onboard computer to tell you when you're behaving badly. Enjoy your ride!

F1 Grand Car Cruise Sept. 28

The Grand Car Cruise is sponsored by the Indianapolis Visitor and Convention Bureau's U.S. Grand Prix Hospitality Committee. There will be three car clubs participating (Porsche, Ferrari and Jaguar) each at a different time.

The Ferraris will kickoff the weekend with their cruise through downtown at 3:45pm Friday afternoon. Their cruise will terminate at Monument Circle where they will have a car show and a dinner at the Columbia Club. The Porsche Club cruise will take place on Saturday, September 28th, at 6:00pm.

Classifieds

For Sale: 94 Miata, Black on Black. 105,000 Miles. A/C, Cruise, Power Windows. New Clutch, Water Pump, Timing belt, July 2001. New Front Rotors, pads, rear pads, August 2001. New top, May 2002. Serviced at AIM. Asking \$6,000 OBO. Call 317-722-1838 or matt@cleary.net Matt Cleary.

For Sale: Miata hardtop with electric defrost system. New condition from 1994 Red Miata. Always garaged and stored winters. Not a scratch. \$900 OBO. Contact Kurt Anderson at 219-462-3283 or Kvand@netnitco.net.

For Sale: Black cargo rack. Fits 1 1/4" hitch receiver. \$55. Black custom bicycle rack. Fits 1 1/4" hitch receiver. \$85. Black Robbins 1999 + tonneau cover. This tonneau has been modified to be used with a Hard Dog sport roll bar. \$120. New, black 1999 - 2000 OEM Mazda center console. \$150. New, black 1999 + OEM Mazda M2 soft top with glass window and defogger. \$350. Two brand new black 1999+ OEM doorsills. \$25. Aluminum slat grill for 1999 + Miata. \$35. Please e-mail John Boles at jtboles@comcast.net for digital pictures of any of these items You may also call (317) 241-6570 with any questions.

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September 28th - USGP Formula 1 Mingle

2002 Club Event Schedule

September 7th - GCMC Miata Gathering in Cincy

September 28th - USGP Formula 1 Mingle

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



New members who attended the "Sundae" mingle: Standing L-R: Jim Klein, Matt Reeck, Judy Klein, Mike Head, Christian Kramer, Bruce Durell, Dick Snyder, Don Hill, Cindy Snyder, Marge Skreko and John Martin. Kneeling: Mary Head, Shelley Durrell and Becky Hill.



Sally Wills and Linda Amos finally made it to Ritter's!



There's one in every group, right Jim?

Oh, You should have been there!



Oh, yeah! We're having a real good time!



A used Miata car lot? Nope! These cars were in the World Series parade!