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## *In The Marbles...*

*by Rick Morris, President*

### **September Was Another Great Month for the Club!**

Our club had another really active month during September. Starting with the Highway to Hill mingle on the 7<sup>th</sup>, continuing with a track day at Putnam park, the Cinco de Wino rally, and ending with a great mingle and special parking for the F1 race, this is the kind of month that we like to have. We had something for everybody to do, regardless what kind of driving they wanted to do. It's the kind of month we can have most of the time, and the best part is that a lot of different members contributed by organizing and hosting the events. It really makes me feel great to see everybody pitching in to help make our club so much fun!

The Highway to Hill mingle had an excellent turnout on the weekend after Labor Day. Over twenty cars took part in this Sunday evening drive. Sunday evening mingles are turning out to be rally popular with club members, and I think it's because they are a good way to have one last fling before the work week starts over on the following morning.

Tom Carnegie wasn't there to announce a new track record, but he should have been. We had forty-four Miatas participate in the fifth annual tour to the Huber winery in Starlight, Indiana. In addition to a great turnout of people from our club, we had a number of people from the Cincinnati Miata club as well as a smattering of people from Indiana and Kentucky. The weather couldn't have been any better and Chuck and Teresa Wills did a fabulous job putting on this annual favorite.

The Formula One weekend turned out to be one of the best weekends we have had all year. The weather, which looked threatening during Saturday afternoon, changed into a beautiful later summer evening. We had over twenty-five cars show up for the mingle at the Sonic Drive-In in Speedway and then we all drove down to the Zoo to assemble for a police escorted tour of downtown Indianapolis. It was a beautiful sight to see that many Miatas cruising through downtown. One of my favorite parts of the tour was all the astonished looks we got from the people on the sidewalks as we cruised through the really nice parts of downtown. The route included a loop around the Circle and ended up at Victory Field. It was a great time for all and everybody drove responsibly, which apparently wasn't true of some of the other car clubs that got a tour.

Since we just got done talking about a great month for the club, now is as good a time as any to talk about events for next year. One of the best things about the club this year has been the number of people that have taken the time to host an event. If you've never organized and hosted an event, I know that it can look real intimidating. It really isn't all that hard, as long as you start planning well in advance. We always have a sign up sheet for events at the annual holiday party, so now is the time to think about hosting an event for next year. We all have drives that we like to go on, and it's a lot of fun to share our favorite drives with other club members. Think of your favorite drive and how to plan a club event around it. Whether it's a long tour or an all day event or a short one for an evening mingle, we'd like to go on it. Pick an open date on the event calendar at the holiday party and sign up for it. Other club members will be glad to give you a hand.

One of the great things about owning a Miata is that you plan special trips just to drive the car. We have all been on special vacations or trips that we took that were made even more special by the fact that we took them in our cars. Sometime after the first of the year, we will be adding a "Member Trips" section to the club web site. We will be looking for articles and pictures about your special Miata trip. I'm still working out the details about how to get your pictures and descriptions, but start gathering up your pictures when I'm ready for them. Look for an announcement in the Open Road at the first of the year. I think this will be a very interesting part of the site and I'm looking forward to putting it together.

In closing, I'd like to remind people that we also have elections for club officers at the holiday party, so it's time to think about becoming a club officer. It's people like our great club members that keep things going, to give it some thought.

Until next time, keep those cards and letters coming!

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## Events In October and Beyond

After the busy time we had last month, this month's event schedule is a bit lighter. On October 18th, Jay Hofaker will send us out into the wilds of Boone County on his Historical Markers Tour. See page 5 for more details. As this will probably be the last driving event of the season, don't miss it!

The November event date is still open, but we're working on filling that with an indoor event. Look for an announcement in next month's Open Road and of course, on the club web site.

The SCCA season has come to a close and the autocrossers and racers are probably thinking about next year!

## Midwest Miata Gathering Report

Every year, the Greater Cincinnati Miata Club hosts the Midwest Gathering and attracts Miata owners from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and other states. Several Indy club members attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Along with a radar detector presentation from Escort, there was a clue rally (won by Ken and Sara Koehler), a scenic tour of Cincy, an aggressive driving tour over great roads from cincy to Oxford and back, and a Sunday morning drive that included a ferry trip across the Ohio.

If you're interested in a weekend Miata gathering, be sure to put this great event on your calendar next year! Here's a link to some photos taken at this year's event: <http://groups.msn.com/GCMC/saturdaymmg2003.msnw>.



Ken and Sara show off the shirts they won for winning the Clue Rally at the Midwest Miata Gathering held in September by the Greater Cincinnati Miata Club.

## New Members

Please welcome and give a wave to our new members:

Bill and Vicky Gergely	Wes and Kay Baldwin
Matt and Heather Lawson	Libby Boles
Jerry and Sharon Oberle	Bob and Cheryl Inskeep

Steve and Angela Jacobsen follow other Miatas as they make their way towards ice cream and the finish of Bob Wiley's "fun run" in his mingle while the LaFollettes slow down while taking a curve to wave at the camera!



*Member Profile*

# A Talk And Drink With Shane Benson

by Melissa Forbes

I was fortunate enough to sit down and have a beer (okay, several...) recently with Shane Benson, owner of AIM Tuning (local Mazda/Porsche specialty shop and Miata Club hangout). I was interested in hearing about how he got into Miatas, how he got his shop started, and how he got into Spec Miata racing. This is what I found out.

Shane has always loved cars, and when he got a chance to test a Miata shortly after they first came out, it was love at first drive. "I've owned a wide variety of sports cars, and have been an RX-7 guy for a long time. However, I had never owned a car that handles like a Miata, or responds like a Miata does." He started working at Duke Gold's Speedway Mazda in the service department as a Service Advisor in 1996. He bought his first Miata, a 1991 red, in the same year. Since then, he has owned seven Miatas!

In 1999, Shane decided to break away from Speedway Mazda to open a Mazda specialty shop with his friend Paul. The original shop was located in an old gas station at 30<sup>th</sup> & Georgetown and opened in June. Their main focus was RX-7s, but they would work on anything they could get their hands on. By December, Shane was working full time at the shop, and the shop was moved to its current location on Gasoline Alley.

The shop has grown in the past four years and now supports two full-time technicians, as well as several part-time mechanics that help out here and there with special projects. They specialize in Miata and RX-7, and have recently added Porsche to the lineup of cars they cater to. We'll do just about anything but body work," says Shane.

For the Miata, AIM offers a full range of services including scheduled maintenance and oil changes, power enhancements, roll bars and suspension upgrades, wheel alignment and balancing, and tire mounting, to name a few. The specialized nature of the shop has also led to some other interesting projects as well, including an Aston Martin DB7, a Ferrari F355, and a Dodge Viper.

Not all of the jobs have been pretty, though, and there are tough lessons to be learned. "Part of my job is trying to help the customer clearly define what they are wanting out of their car, and the best way to go about accomplishing their objectives. I recall we had a customer with a Mitsubishi that wanted some crazy fast car for his daily driver."

"He came to me with a bunch of mis-matched parts that I knew wouldn't work well together, and yet he insisted that we install them. Well, he was a good customer, so we decided to go ahead and do it for him. To make a long story short, the job ended up being a disaster, nothing worked as intended and he spent a lot of time and money trying to make everything work together. It was very frustrating."

"That taught me a valuable business lesson. I let him down because I didn't stick to my guns and decline the job, even though we went into it with the best intentions. It really reinforced to me how important it is for us to help our customers make the right decisions, and recognize these potentially problematic scenarios before they have a chance to develop."

When I asked Shane what his real passion in life is, he didn't say it was working on cars. He enjoys this, but it is a means to allow him to do what he *is* really passionate about: racing. He added, "many times I've found myself stuck in a job that I didn't like, which makes it difficult to



Shane and the two loves of his life, wife Sara and a Miata.

be enthusiastic about it. If you can do something you truly enjoy, it makes it easy to really pour yourself into it and give it 100%."

Four years ago a national racing league of "Spec Miatas" was started. This group spread to the Midwest two years ago. Shane got involved, and got his Miata, lovingly named "Frances" all decked out to race. Shane did well in his first year of Spec racing, finishing first place in the CenDiv Championship. Here are several modifications that are made to a Miata to get it ready to race. A racing suspension is added, much of the interior (including the air conditioner) is taken out to rid of excess weight, power steering is removed, a full roll cage is put in, racing tires and a hard top are put on, and a few other minor changes. It is also possible to rent a Spec Miata, and AIM can provide track side assistance for those interested in racing or running a lapping event. For more information on what AIM can do for your Miata, see their website at <http://www.aimtuning.com>.

"I consider myself fortunate to be doing something I really love and actually make an honest living at it. The work is hard; running a business is actually the most difficult thing I've done because you have to wear so many different hats. At the same time, it's also the most gratifying thing I've done. Cars and people are two things that I've always been good with, so I'm doubly blessed to be working with an outstanding car in the Miata and the great people who share my passion for them."

# Three Events Make For A Busy Month!

Club members turned out in force for a Sunday drive and a treat at Ritters afterwards. Bob Wiley once again found some great roads in Hendricks county for our Miatas to test.

Next up was the now annual tour to the Huber Winery in southern Indiana. The most heard comment was probably how much better the weather was this year! Forty-four cars were parked by the pond in the afternoon, which was obviously a beautiful sight. Our hosts, Chuck and Teresa Wills, held a drawing for participants, and Jay Hofacker, John and Sue Reba, John Martin, and Ben Hermann all won sandstone drink coasters emblazoned with the club logo. Denny and Darlene Pittman won the grand prize consisting of a set of coasters plus a torque wrench from "Tool time Chuck".



New members attending the "Hill" mingle were (L-R standing): Jerry and Sharon Oberle, Tom Lewis, Jeannie Spellman, Barb and Jim Quearry, Susan Earls. (kneeling) Bruce Heddon.

New members who enjoyed the Huber Tour were: (L-R) Martha and Doug Barlow, Jo Curtiss and John Lyghtel.

The month finished up with the Formula One mingle held at the Sonic Drive In. A shower passed through early, but the sun was shining on all 26 Miatas in their lineup. A motor home pulled up near us and racing challenges were thrown down to the driver in good humor. Steve Jacobson's new to him, 1995 Merlot was given the once over and visitors from Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia were welcomed by club members. Colin Fielder from Wisconsin made his third F1 mingle and Tracy and Graham Allen from Maryland joined us for the second time. A few people went across the street to Starbucks for hot coffee as the temperature was a bit chilly. Just before seven, the cars headed down to the Zoo to line up for a police escorted tour through downtown Indianapolis.

The tour through downtown may be the most talked about event of the season. Escorted by Indianapolis and Marion County motorcycle officers, President Rick Morris lead the Indy Miata Club through town. There's just something extra special about driving through what seemed to be fifty red lights! Everyone had USA and checkered flags waving on their cars and people on the sidewalks were waving at us and commenting on our cars. "Look! That one has a rollbar!" and "Cool cars!"

The tour ended at Victory Field where the police were thanked for their tour and everyone gave Chuck Wills and Steve Jacobson a round of applause for their work in getting included with the F1 car club tour.

Chuck hinted at big things for next year's F1 event, so stay tuned!

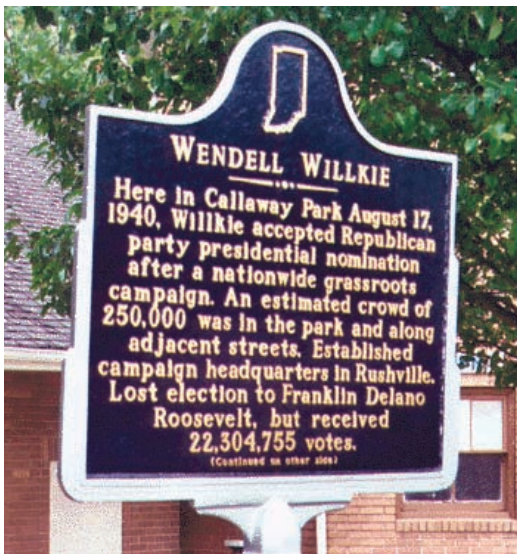


A sign to warm any Miata owner's heart. Curves ahead!

Bruce peruses the varied selection of the menu.



# A Historical Tour Of Boone County



You've seen the markers on the side of the road, but have you ever stopped to read them? Here's your chance to learn more about Boone County as we take a historical tour.

We will meet Saturday, October 18th, 9:00 AM at the Marsh at the corner of 106th Street and Michigan Road. Driver's meeting will start at 9:30 with the first car off into the history of Boone County after the meeting has finished.

The rally will end at Friendly's Tavern in Zionsville for lunch and conversation.

Rally cost if \$5.00 for those who pre-register and \$10.00 day of rally. You can register on the event page of the club website and pay the day of the event.

Don't miss what will probably be the last driving event of the year! We'll enjoy the fall foliage as we drive on the roads throughout Boone County and learn a little history along the way!

Questions? Contact Rally Master Jay Hoffacker at [jay@hofacker.us](mailto:jay@hofacker.us) or through the officer page on the club website.

*Note: You won't see the marker pictured here!*

----- Cut here and bring signed form with \$5.00 payment -----

Driver \_\_\_\_\_ Passenger \_\_\_\_\_  
*please print* *please print*

By signing this document, we affirm our understanding that this is not a speed event and will obey all laws and rules of the road. We will not hold the Indy Miata Club, its officers, members and the rally organizers harmless of any damages incurred while participating in the event or in transit to and from the event.

Driver \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

# Our 8,000 Mile Great Northwest Miata Tour

By Norm Arbuckle

Susie and I both had a dream to go out west and see Montana and Idaho. Neither one of us had ever been there, so we started planing this trip three years ago. We had some great roads outlined and toured a minimum of 1000 miles in each of South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Alberta, Canada in our 1999 white Miata.

We got underway at 3:30 Friday afternoon and about two hours and 140 miles away from home my good neighbor across the street called us and wished us a happy trip. He then asked "By the way, would you like me to close your garage door?" Well, Yeah.

We started with resolution to stay on our diet and a butt rest plan of stopping at least every 120 miles, or longer if our butts could take it. Our first goal was to get to the Badlands National Park in South Dakota as quickly as possible via Interstate roads so we would have more valuable touring time in the mountains. We toured the Badlands via route 240 and then onto the Black Hills of South Dakota. Temperatures reached 107 our first day and 95 the next two days. We had an unusual problem at altitude and with that 95 degree-plus heat which made gas vapors back up into the cock pit. I had to stop several times to let excess pressure and vapors out of the gas tank. Only those three days that the heat was high did we have this problem.

We visited the Crazy Horse Memorial, Mount Rushmore, and drove the famous Needles Highway (89). What a drive! We toured routes 16A and 87 and toured Custer State Park where we saw pronghorn antelope, buffalo and deer with wild burros and big horn sheep right next to us on the road. This is beautiful country and be sure to drive all the roads you can when you're in the area.

Then we were off to Devil's Tower in Wyoming. What a sight. From there into Buffalo where we caught Route 16 to 20N to 14E (Greybull to Burgess Jct.) It's a great Miata road. Then onto 14W into Cody, Wyoming where we visited the incredible Buffalo Bill museum. Don't miss this if you are in the area. Onto the famous Bear Tooth highway via route 120 to Belfry and then we went west on 30 to Red Lodge where the beautiful highway 212 begins.

We took that fabulous road to Mammoth Springs, the North entrance to Yellowstone Park. We toured the whole area and made most all of the sightseeing stops. Yellowstone with its beauty is a must see adventure. We saw moose in two different spots along our route. There were fires often and lots of acres were burnt, but there was still an abundant supply of beautiful sights. We ate at the cafeteria that overlooked the Old Faithful site and finished just in time to see it erupt. We then left the park and headed down to visit the Grand Teton Mountains. A lot of smoke from fires was in that area and it was the only day we had with light rain, but luckily for our top down driving, it was just in the morning.

We left Jackson Hole to tour all the scenic roads we could in Idaho. It's hats off to Route 89 from Garden City, Idaho to Logan, Utah. What a good Miata road! We toured through the famous Ketchum and Sun Valley areas and stayed overnight in Stanley, Idaho. We washed clothes and stayed in a great little cabin for only \$59 and took a white water rafting trip the following day. Idaho had a lot of beautiful scenery including the Craters of the Moon and its cone lava domes on Routes 26 and 93.



Norm and Susie in the path of a glacier.

We drove Route 13 from Grangeville to Kooskia, Idaho which was fun. I was never passed on any mountain road and ran the roads hard till about five miles out of Grangeville when a state trooper corrected my touring ways. Onward to Montana while being passed several times due to my slower driving speeds! We headed to Glacier National Park and its famous Highway to the Sun Road. Here we were met with smoke so thick the first 20 miles into the park we could only see about 60 feet in front of the car. Massive forest fires were burning all over Montana. Within a half-mile of the top (Logan Pass), we could see mountain tops and breathe again. Still, the mountains were hazy from the smoke. We are sure it must be beautiful but did not see as much as we wanted. The locals said this was the fifth straight week with that amount of smoke. Fire camps were everywhere. We then went around to the Canadian side of Glacier Park and stayed at a quaint little tourist town called Waterton Park, Alberta. There, the smoke was not as thick, but still hid a lot of the great views.

While polishing our Miata and waiting for Susie to get ready, (a routine done every morning) a Kentucky man noticed my Indiana license plate and told me how beautiful it was four hours north in Banff National Park, the start of the Canadian Rockies. So we headed that way on the spur of the moment, and WOW is all we can say! While gassing up in Banff, another Kentucky man visited with us and said what a great drive it was to

# Tripping in a Miata *continued from page 6*

National Park. Another four hours up. We looked at each other and said, "Why not?" Driving on Highways 1A and 93 North is another 200 solid miles of seeing huge mountains and ice fields on each side of us and of saying "wow" at every turn or peeking over a hill. There were many glaciers and one that you could drive up to and walk on. We also took in Lake Louise while in the area and it was a beautiful emerald color. This entire area is in the heart of the Canadian Rockies. Another must see if you are even near this part of the country.

While in Jasper, we remembered what one of the Kentucky men had said. "If you want to see wild life, get up early and on the road before day break." Taking his advice, we were on the road at 5:35 the next morning and it paid off. We immediately saw three elk, one was a big bull with a beautiful rack right along side the road. Within two miles of that, a pack of three wolves were at the edge of the road, one was the largest wolf I had ever seen. From 60 yards, I first thought he was a small pony. Also, we saw other wildlife including big horn sheep, mountain goats and pronghorn antelope. We spent two days touring Alberta, Canada and headed back through Montana trying to avoid all the smoke there. It was not pleasant nor scenic with the top down.

We then headed towards the Little Big Horn Battlefield to see the site of Custer's Last Stand and learn its history. Another good stop with lots of detail and information. Over 5,000 books have been written on the subject by no one who was there at the time. We then headed to Watertown, SD to visit our favorite artist's museum and his collections, Terry Redlin. It was worth the long drive just to see all his original paintings. He was voted America's favorite artist the last eight years running by a poll of national art galleries.

Then on toward home with a stop at Wisconsin's number one attraction, House on the Rock, just north of Dodgeville. This is a must see if you ever do a three day weekend tour to the Wisconsin area. You just can't believe what is there and how it was accomplished.

Finally, it was back home to Indiana. Ten states, two countries and 8,000 miles culminating in one of the best vacations we have ever taken. We found that by staying away from the bigger towns and finding quaint little places, we were able to get nice rooms from \$45 to \$65 per night. We found that little mom and pop eating places had the best food and lowest prices. We stayed on our diet, never got hungry and lost eight pounds between us. What a vacation.



Norm and Susie set up their GPS on a recent tour,

In our entire 15 day trip we saw only five Miatas and only one of the two traveling had its top down. Our Miata performed perfectly except for the gas fumes problem and we averaged just a little better than 30mpg. The GPS Pilot III was a wonderful gadget to have on the trip. Several times we were on empty and programmed it to find gas. It kept us on the right roads and was also great to locate lodging, food and rest stops, as many times we had to travel 40 to 60 miles to find services. I soon learned that a half a tank of fuel meant it was time to fill up. Susie kept a daily detailed log on the roads and happenings during our trip. She is deeply involved with scrap booking and "Stampin Up" and will have a beautiful scrapbook soon with detailed accountings of the entire trip, which I hope many of you may see one day.

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**TUNING**

**Are you ready for winter yet?**

Whether you are storing your car for the winter or you drive it every day, it is important to make sure you have:

- All fluids are fresh and topped off (radiator, washer, oil, brakes)
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- New wiper blades

**Let AIM give your car a Pre-Winter Checkup!**  
For \$49.95 we will give your car a thorough checkup,  
top off any fluids and rotate your tires.  
(fluid changes and additional parts not included)

# October 18 - Historical Marker Tour

**October 18** - Historical Markers of Boone County - Rally Master: Jay Hofacker.

**November** - Open dates

**December** - Holiday Party



Don and Becky Hill say  
"Here's to the good times!"



Tereas "Turbo" Wills and Officer Friendly.



Personalized plates seen at the Huber tour!  
who do they belong to? Top to Bottom:  
John and Sue Reba, Don and Dee French,  
and Walter and Pamela Kienzynski.

