



Volume 15  
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## What's Inside

### Page 2

A-C-D Tour.  
Other Events.

### Page 3

January Dinner.  
Membership  
Renewal Form.

### Page 4

Dyno Testing.  
Biltmore Tour.  
Putnam Track Day.

### Page 5

Rev It Up.  
Drifting Away.  
Classifieds.

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## *Around The Bend...*

*by Jay Hofaker, President*

Winter has finally arrived here in Indiana. After a mild December and January, there's now snow on the ground and on the roads, justifying my purchase of snow tires for my car. Driving my Miata is fun no matter what season it is. Curves on the commute to work that I downshift and stick through in the summer, I now get to gently slide through at low speeds. There's something very satisfying about applying just a little more gas to coax the car from plowing straight ahead in a corner to bringing the rear end around just enough to end up pointed exactly the direction I need to go.

Of course sliding around on icy roads can be dangerous, so lets hope the streets are clear for our February event where Rick Morris will lead us to the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg museum in Auburn, IN. The museum is filled with wonderful classic cars, I had a great time looking at all of them last year.

December marked our annual holiday party and election of officers. The traditional gift giving/stealing took place at the Old Spaghetti Factory, which provided good food and great service. Since I was vice president last year, I'll be your president for the coming year. Ben Herman is our new vice president, and Chuck Wills is our new treasurer. Melissa Forbes will continue as membership director. I'd like to thank Bob Wiley for his service as treasurer of the club for the past year. I'd also like to thank Rick Morris, now our immediate past president, for presiding over a wonderfully successful 2003.

Thanks to Rick Morris, 2003 saw a terrific redesign of our website. The event calendar and event sign up feature has simplified life for both rally masters and members. The website also has a member discussion forum, classified ads, membership list, and reports from previous events. Jim Nutt continues to be our web master, keeping the calendar up to date and posting news articles. The Open Road, the newsletter you are now reading, is also available electronically on the new website. Many thanks to Sara J McBride for continuing to put together a fantastic newsletter for our club.

If the cold weather has you down, you can think warm thoughts and plan ahead for the club's spring and summer events. We still need a rally masters to step forward and plan events for March and we've got mingle dates that are open. Of course, there's no law that says we can't have more than one rally or mingle a month! Check the calendar on the back page, or online at <http://www.indymiata.org> for a list of events for the year.

A national Mazda event, "Meet Me In St. Louie", to be held from September 30 to October 3, 2004 in St. Louis, Missouri has started taking reservations. A good sized contingent from Indiana has all ready signed up. More information about the national event is available at <http://www.meetmeinstlouie.org>

This club is for you. Your continued support is essential to keeping this club active and fun. If you have any ideas for improving our club, or ideas for future events, please let me, or any of the club officers know. Your words of encouragement to all the volunteers who make this club happen are greatly appreciated.

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# February Tour To Auburn Museum Set

On Saturday, February 21, we're heading north to look at Indiana's automotive past. Auburn, Indiana is the home to the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg museum, located in the original factory showroom of the Auburn Automobile Company. The museum is a unique historical entity, as it presents and preserves its significant historic building, the former headquarters of the Auburn Automobile Company, the automobiles manufactured by the company, and the story of its activities and people, through artifacts and literature.

We'll meet at the McDonalds at I-69 and 96th street at 8:30 and head north to Auburn around 9:00. Due to weather concerns, this is a Miata optional trip!

Admission for adults is \$8.00. Our host, Rick Morris has arranged for a docent to give us a tour of the museum, cost for this (depending on how many sign up) should not be more than \$2.00 per person.

Please RSVP on the event page at the club web site ([www.indymiata.org](http://www.indymiata.org)) or contact Rick so he can have an idea of how many people to expect.

Want to get an idea of what the museum is like? Here's the web site address for the museum: [www.acdmuseum.org/](http://www.acdmuseum.org/).

Don't miss this great tour of Indiana's automotive heritage!



## Lots Of Miata Events Scheduled

Planning your upcoming vacations? Thinking about road tripping when the weather gets warmer? Here's some nearby and not so close events to consider.

April 19th brings the ever popular Post Tax Blues Rally presented by the Indy Miata and Lake Effect Clubs. This is usually our first rally of the season. On April 23-25, the Sahuaro Miata Club of Arizona is hosting their first major regional event - Cactus Cruisin' 2004 in the Phoenix area. More info for this event can be found at <http://www.cactuscruisin.com/>. Baseball fans might want to contact the Cincinnati club (GCMC) about their participating in Cincy's Opening Day parade on Monday, April 5. (<http://www.cincimiata.com/>)

May brings our "Picture This!" rally, the Miatas at the Biltmore (see page 4), our Indy 500 Mingle and if you're really adventurous, join a tour of Southern France that starts in Calais on May 17th! (<http://www.mx5adventure.be>)

In June, we have a "Run to the River" and the USGP Mingle along with special events at the Speedway. Our northern California cousins with the Redwood Coast Miata Club are having a "Cool Weekend On the Coast". There's lots of great Miata roads in their area, through mountain canyons, river valleys and along the coast.

On the July schedule, there's "Chuck's Unnamed Rally" Is this the Fussin' n' Cussin' in disguise? Of course, many Miatas will be heading towards Deal's Gap for the largest "unofficial" national meet, Miatas at the Gap 2004.

And of course, there's always the spur of the moment "Let's go for a drive". With a Miata, even a drive to the store can be a great event.

# Good Conversation, Good Food At Dinner

A small but feisty group gathered at the Steak and Ale on the south side of Indy for the annual January dinner. Thirteen members braved the cold rain to talk about Miatas (of course), other cars, life and good times.

Due to a scheduling mix up, more time than was planned was spent in the bar, but conversation flowed (as well as the spirits) and then we sat down to a good meal and even more conversation.



## Renewal Reminder For Your IMC Membership

Have you renewed yet? Check your mailing label and if it says 2003, stomp on the gas and get it done! We will end our grace period on March 31. Note: If you have recently renewed, the database may not have been updated before the mailing labels were printed. You may renew online at the club web site using

PayPal or send the renewal form and a \$20 check made out to Indy Miata Club c/o Melissa Forbes, PO Box 40561, Indianapolis, IN 46240+0561. Don't want to cut up your Open Road? This form is available for download in an Adobe Acrobat file from <http://www.2cat.com/renewal.html>.

.....>  
Check your newsletter label for renewal information and if you haven't renewed, now's the time! Please send this form and your check for \$20.00 to : Indy Miata Club, PO Box 40561, Indianapolis, IN 46240-0561.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Place email address on club web site? Yes No

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

List info on club roster? Yes No

Car Year and Color: \_\_\_\_\_

# Double the Speed Limit With No Seat Belts!

by Chuck Wills

I've been known to do some crazy things in my life, most of them automotive in nature. This time was no exception. Imagine 115mph in a Miata, top down, with no seat belt and the hoop propped open. Sound crazy? After driving like this for a while, I switched to the passenger seat to ride shotgun while Shane piloted the car. Am I nuts?! Yup, but not for the reasons you are thinking. There was actually very little drama in this exercise. No cops, no traffic, and we didn't even get cold, all thanks to the warm comfort of the dynamometer facility at a company called Race2Win on the west side of Indy.

A dynamometer (known as a "dyno") is a device that measures the power a car produces. The machine consists of a large drum, about 6' in diameter weighing 2550 lbs, which is mounted horizontally in a large platform. The car is lifted onto this platform, then rolled back so the rear wheels are resting on this giant drum. The drum acts like a rolling road so that the car may be operated at speed in a stationary position. Just strap the car on, fire it up and run it through the gears at full throttle. There are electric motors that provide resistance on the drum to simulate actual driving conditions. A variety of sensors are provided to monitor the car and its torque output, including rpm, fuel mixture, exhaust temperature, even friction and wind resistance are taken into consideration. In short, all of these factors are used along with the acceleration rate of the drum to determine how much torque and horse power your car puts down to the pavement. A dyno gives power "at the wheels", not "at the engine".

So what's the difference between "wheel" and "engine" measurements? Big difference. It takes power to spin your flywheel, the gears in the transmission, the driveshaft, differential and wheels. These rotating components "soak up" some of the power generated by the engine. Even though our little cars are quite efficient, it has been documented that it takes 26hp to spin our drive train at maximum speed (7000 engine rpm). So, if your engine makes 140hp, your rear wheel power will be shown as 114hp. The rest of the power is soaked up by those spinning components. Some people worry that dyno tuning is hard on the car. It's no more stressful than opening the car up when pulling on to the highway. The Miata could happily sit and do this all day long!

The dyno is an excellent tool for tuning Miatas for peak power and efficiency. Because it's a controlled environment, we can make small changes to the fuel mixture or ignition timing and instantly see the results in the power output and fuel consumption. While the average driver may have little need for this information, racers and modified street cars require this information to make sure their car is operating within its most efficient range and not too close to the ragged edge of disaster. With just a few small adjustments, we have been able to gain small increments like 5hp on stock cars and up to 50hp on modified cars. It may sound like magic, because it is! It's the magic of science!

Our last turbo car project started with 135hp, which is fairly weak for a big turbo installation. After a few hours of dyno tuning, we recorded an all time record of 313hp at the wheels (339hp at the engine). That's not bad for a days work. With the dyno tuning the car runs at its peak efficiency and fuel economy, yet produces massive power when the throttle is cracked open. Without proper tools for tuning, we would be guessing at the car setup, leaving us with poor power, high fuel consumption and bad driveability. The other perk is that we get to drive the car at triple digit speeds and not get in trouble with local law enforcement!



A Miata gets ready to make a run on the dyno.

## Miatas At The Biltmore

The Ridgerunner Miata Club, based in Asheville, North Carolina, invites all Miata lovers to join them for three fun-filled days in their Miata playground. Some of the best Miata roads in the country are in their backyard, from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Deals Gap. Tours of the famous Biltmore Estate plus self guided tours of the area will be available. Registration closes February 9, so if you're interested, you had better act fast!

For more information about this event, visit <http://www.ridgerunnermiata.com/Biltmore.htm>.

## Lotus Club Schedules Track Day At Putnam

The second annual St. Louis Area Lotus Lovers and Lotus Ltd. track day at Putnam Park Raceway ([www.PutnamPark.com](http://www.PutnamPark.com)) in Mt. Meridian, IN has been scheduled for Monday, June 21st. (The day after the US Grand Prix in Indy.) This track day is open to all cars which pass tech inspection.

The price is \$225 for Lotus Ltd. members and \$235 for non-members.

If you have questions or would like a registration form, contact Mark Pfeffer at (314) 889-0572 or email Mark at [Feffman@Yahoo.com](mailto:Feffman@Yahoo.com).

# Mazda's "Rev It Up" Returns

Mazda is bringing its "Rev It Up" program to St. Louis and Chicago this spring. What is "Rev It Up?" It's a chance for you to test your driving skills against others in a Mazda provided Mazda 3 and Mazda 6. The performance driving school and national competition is just \$40. There are two competitor classes for drivers with on-track experience and there are two competitor classes for novices – those with no competition experience or skills. As a competitor, you'll be asked specific questions in your online registration regarding your past performance driving experience in order to place you in the appropriate competition group.



Don't want to compete? General admission is free (can't beat that) and Mazda is offering a lot for that price! The Mazda Drive Center offers a chance to experience a variety of Mazda vehicles on a separate, long and challenging track. Drive a sporty Miata, a hot new rotary-powered RX-8, an exhilarating MAZDA6 sports sedan, and others. (Passengers are welcome, of course, but you must be 18 with a valid U.S. driver's license to drive.)

At the center of this event is the Information Tower. It's the place to go to have questions answered, find directions, and win prizes. Daily drawings will be held for prizes including items from Falken Tire, Eibach, and other sponsors. MazdaSpeed will also have a display of aftermarket parts and accessories.

The Chicago date is 4/17-18 and St Louis is the next weekend, 4/24-25. For more information go to: <http://www.mazdarevitup.com>.

# Drifting Arrives In US, Go, Skid Racer, Go!

We've all done it, usually in the snow, oversteered our car into an intentional skid. Oversteering is a great way to crash and burn, as this means the car is cornering too fast to keep traction. The rear end slides out sideways and the front repoints toward the inside of the turn, forcing the driver to wheel the other way to avoid spinning out. Most single-car wrecks are oversteering accidents. It's also the key to the fishtailing ballet of burning rubber called "drifting". Drifting is the art of controlling a car while it's going sideways. In Japan, where the sport was born, drifting has evolved from a late-night teen scene to a multimillion-dollar, multimedia phenomenon. And now it's starting to become big time in America.

There is a NASA-sanctioned series, formed to legitimize this fledgling sport. It will host eight events during 2004, with competitions on both coasts and in the Midwest. A National Championship event, scheduled to be held at Las Vegas Motor Speedway the weekend following November's SEMA Show, will cap off the year. There is a "Drift 101" school, teaching basic skills and car set up.

Want to see it in action? On July 24-25 at the Tire Rack Test Facility in South Bend, IN, there will be a regional event. Go here for more information: <http://www.usdrift.com/>.

The downside of this sport? You'll rip through engines and tires like butter!

# Classifieds

**For Sale:** Plastic door sill plates for 89-97 Miatas. These help prevent scuffs and scratches. \$15.00. Call Rick at 317-291-8993 or email [rick@dustbunny.com](mailto:rick@dustbunny.com)

**Wanted:** Open Road Articles! Share how you acquired your car, a favorite road trip, a modification you made, etc. Send your article to [saraj@dustbunny.com](mailto:saraj@dustbunny.com).

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 298F Gasoline Alley  
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## Tour to A-C-D Museum - February 21

**February 21** - A-C-D Tour

**March** - Open Dates

**April 17** - Post Tax Blues

**April** - Mingle at the Vic?

**May 16** - Picture This III

**May 29** - 500 Mingle

**June 12** - Run to the River

**June 19** - USGP Mingle

**July 24** - Chuck's Unnamed Rally

**July Mingle** - Open

**August 7** - Brickyard Mingle

**August 14** - B + B Rally

**September** - Huber Winery Tour

**September** - Open Mingle

**October 9** - Leaf Peeper Tour

**October 23-24** - Madison Madness

**November** - Open dates

**December** - Holiday Party



Are you attending?