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Insert. Please read
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On The Fence...

by Ben Hermann, President

Another year is in the books and that means there's a new guy on the pulpit you have to listen to each month. Who knew I'd have all this power just two years after joining the club? I'll try to show some restraint and be responsible with it. It shouldn't be too much of a problem since my wife Nancy usually keeps me in check. Although we've recently cut our Miata corral in half, we're going to try to attend twice the events this year and invite you to do the same. We didn't make as many as we would have like last year, it just seemed like there was always something else going on. We've got some great events coming that I'm looking forward to, but first I need to look back.

We had a good year last year and I hope to make this one even better. Thanks to Jay for answering the call to serve as President. I especially need to thank Sara. She works her butt off to put this newsletter together every month and keep open this important line of communication for the membership. Of course, Chuck, Jim, Melissa, Rick, etc. did a great job behind the scenes as well. Stepping up this year are Rick Booe as Vice-President and Craig Johnson as the new membership director. Of course, one of the most important people in the club is you. The club is here for you to use and enjoy as you see fit. Hopefully you'll come out to the mingles and rallies to make some friends, have fun, and enjoy your car. But if you want to just pay your money so you get to read this every month, you're free to do that too, but as you'll soon realize, I ain't a good writer.

As you'll see, we're doing a survey. We've made it really easy to show us what you think of the club and the direction you think it should go. All you have to do is check the boxes you feel are appropriate, fold it, tape it shut and stick it in the mail. How easy is that? It's already got a stamp on it, so don't let it go to waste. You can also use it to renew your membership for this year and not cut up your newsletter to do it. I really want all of these back. I want everyone to be involved and everyone's opinion counts. If you choose to sign the bottom of it you can or you can leave it anonymous. I won't hold anything you say against you or take it personally. I just want to see what is on everyone's minds and get ideas to make the club better for everyone. If you use it to renew your membership on the back, I promise not to turn it over and connect your name with your answers unless there is some sort of assassination threat on it.

The calendar is starting to fill up nicely for the coming year. A big thanks goes out to those who have stepped up and volunteered to host events. But we still need more people to take charge to round out the year. Remember that we can have more than one event in a month. Heck, I wouldn't mind having one every weekend. If you have the desire or an idea but aren't quite sure how to make it come to life, you can either get a hold of me through email or a telephone call, or ask anybody who has hosted an event and I'm sure they'll be glad to help.

Speaking of the calendar of events, our first one is going to be our January dinner. This year we're going to get together at Sir Walter's on the south side of town on Saturday the 15th at 7 o'clock. There are more details inside. I'm looking for ideas for a place to hold a dinner in February in place of the traditional trip to a museum, preferably on the north side to make it a little more convenient for everybody. If you can think of someplace, let me know and I'll try to set it up. Of course, I just heard a rumor of a different type of museum trip in February, so we may have a busy February. Check the website or next month's newsletter. For March, I'm working on a tour of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We're not just going to the Speedway museum, but also taking a behind the scenes tour of the grounds, including the Pagoda, suites, and standing on the yard of bricks. Follow that up with John and Marsh Schaub's Cabin Fever Rally a couple weeks later and we're ready to start top down weather.

So, to end my first column and start the year... *The Fun Starts Here!*

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January Club Dinner

Our president has scheduled the club's annual winter dinner for January 15th at 7 o'clock. This is a "talk about cars" event as the weather is usually not conducive for driving our cars. If the weather is bad or roadster is in storage, Miata Support Vehicles are allowed to be driven to this meeting!

We're getting together at Sir Walters on the south side. Best known for their steaks, sandwiches, "tea-cup" bread, and gigantic baked potatoes, this is a bar and grille. The restaurant offers a traditional American menu with a menu based largely on sandwiches and steaks. Expect the average entrée to cost roughly \$12 to \$20, and dress is casual.

Located near the intersection of Thompson and Emerson (5209 East Thompson Road), it's easy to find. Take 465 to the Emerson Avenue exit and go south to the Kmart shopping center at Emerson and Thompson Road. It's easier to turn left at the Thompson Road stoplight and take an immediate right into the parking lot, but you can also go straight through the light and turn left directly into Kmart. Sir Walters is in the strip center right behind the Dairy Queen.

Register on the website, send Ben an email at president@indymiata.org, or call 317-727-1401 to let him know you are attending. Please register early so he can let them know how many people to expect.



Holiday Party Was Fun For All

There's something about hearing, "Miata Club, party of 60, your table is ready"! Once again, the old Spaghetti Factory was the setting for the annual Indy Miata Club Holiday Party. Early arrivals gathered in the upstairs bar area, greeted new and old friends and started chatting about cars, Colts and other topics.

The call came and we were escorted to our dining area. Once again, the service and food were both excellent.

After dinner, outgoing President Jay Hofacker performed his last official acts for 2004, holding elections and presiding over the gift exchange. Ben Hermann automatically moved into the President's slot and Rick Booe was elected as our new Vice President. Craig Johnson was elected to fill the vacant Membership Director's position with the other positions remaining the same (Chuck Wills - Treasurer, Jim Nutt - Webmaster, Sara J McBride- Open Road Editor).

The gift exchange proved to be the usual lively affair with "oohs and ahhs" as gifts were opened and "steals" happened at a fast pace.

After the gift exchange, Jay was presented with a collage of photos from all the 2004 events and Ben Hermann spoke to the group about the upcoming year.

Thank you to Jay for arranging the dinner and to all who attended.

More photos can be found at the News section at <http://indymiata.org>.



So many gifts to open, so many gifts to steal!

(L) Susan looks for a gift to open, while (R) Mike seems to be thinking about a steal!



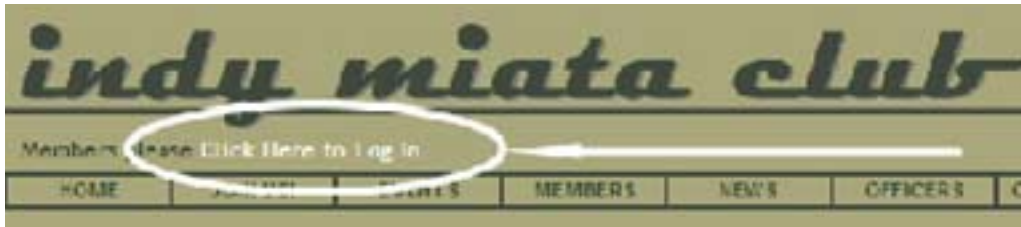
Use The Site, Luke!

Where To Get Latest Club Info? Our Website!

by Rick Morris

I thought that now would be a good time to have a quick refresher course on using the club web site. Our web site is the place to get the most current information about upcoming club events as well as see pictures and reports from past club events. In addition, once you have logged in to the site as a member, you can register on-line for upcoming events. All in all, it is a useful tool, but only if you are familiar with its use.

When you first visit the club site at "http://www.indymiata.org/" at the top left of the page, as well as all the other pages on the site, there is a "Member Login" link.



When you click on the link, you will go to the member login page where you will be asked for your user name and password. You should have received your user name and password when you joined the club. Enter your user name and password in the appropriate boxes and click the "Login" button. You can also tell the site to remember you on future visits. If you do this, you won't have to log in every time you visit the site.

After you have entered your user name and password, you should get a message welcoming you back to the site. If you get a message saying that your login was incorrect, try entering your user name and password again. If that doesn't work, either, you can go back to the main login page and click on the red link under the login button that tells you to click if you have forgotten your password (It's circled in the screenshot). On the next page, you will get a place to enter your email address. Enter your email address and click the "Find Password" button. If we have your email address on file, you will receive an email telling you what your user name and password are. If we can't find your email address, send me a note from the officers page and I will send you your user name and password.

After you have successfully logged in to the site, please take a minute to check and update your member information. We would like to know how to get in touch with you. We use your address information from the site to send your copy of the Open Road. Also, we send out email reminders a few days before each event, and we can't send you a reminder if we don't have your correct email address. If you

haven't been getting these reminders, chances are that we got your reminder back indicating that your email address was no longer valid. When this happens, we remove your email address from the system.

As always, if you have problems with the site, we want to know about them. The site is a good thing only if you are able to use it.

Forget your password? Click on the red link and help will soon arrive.

<http://indymiata.org>

Enter your email and a message with your password should appear in your mailbox!

Happy New Year!

It's time to take a peek at your mailing label and look at the expiration date of your club membership! If it says 2004, it's time to renew! Use the pre-stamped survey included in this edition to mail your \$20 club dues or go online and use Paypal! Don't miss out on all the exciting events your club is offering this year!

Snow Tire Test Results

by Chuck Wills

I had promised several people an update once I got a few miles on my winter tires... so here it is.

The tires that were tested are the Winterforce M+S studdable in 185/60/14. I bought them because they were cheap, about \$44 each from Tire Rack. I figured that even if they didn't work very well at least I wasn't out a lot of my hard earned cash.

On dry pavement they are fine as long as you are just driving around town and at low speed. Once up at highway speed (65+) they tend to wander a bit. Noise isn't bad and the ride is fairly cushy. Compared to my Kumho MX's, they are like marshmallows. Non-snow performance is significantly lower than my previous winter favorites, the Michelin Arctic Alpin. Once you throw the Winterforce's into a corner, things gets interesting. Like most winter tires, they don't have a great deal of dry grip. The funny thing is, after turning the wheel about 90 degrees, all steering feel goes away. You can keep turning the wheel, but not much else happens until sometime later when the rubber starts to howl. That's really not too much of a problem as long as you remember that they are winter tires. After all, you aren't supposed to be autocrossing on them, are you?

The real test came the morning we got over seven inches of fresh powder overnight. (Can I actually say "fresh powder" since I live in Indy?) Wanting to put the tires to the test, I headed out for an unplowed parking lot. The snow was up to the bottom of the doors and the car just kept on going. The Rat Back Racing spoiler on my car plowed through the parking lot, pushing snow up as high as the middle of the bumper. The snow was cresting and blowing up over the hood at one point. Even stopping and starting in deep snow wasn't much of a problem. I had to rock the car once, but with a little momentum, it rolled on through.

[Http://www.photochuck.com/snowmiata/index.html](http://www.photochuck.com/snowmiata/index.html) is where I have more pictures of my adventure in the snow.

In summary, even though they aren't so hot in the dry, the Winterforce are fairly unstoppable in Indiana snow. Definitely high bang for the buck. The only thing lacking is more ground clearance on the car.

Photo by Emily Walker



It looks like Chuck and his Miata are earning extra money plowing a parking lot.

IMC Member Is Prize Winner

The biggest Miata website on the internet, miata.net, holds drawings for Miata add-ons and accessories. The last drawing was for a Racing Beat Header and Exhaust and Indy club member John Schaub was the lucky winner!

As John said, "Santa came through with a great surprise. I found out on Christmas Eve, so it made for a very Merry Christmas!"

So, John, which Miata gets the goodies, the LE or the Sunburst Yellow?

Miata Events Planned Across The US In '05

Looking to hit the road for a Miata vacation this year? Here's a short list of events other clubs are planning that might interest you. Look for more events as other clubs get their 2005 calendars updated.

On May 13-15, it's the "Miatas in Moab" sequel. Moab, Utah is the gateway to Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park. Beautiful country and of course, great Miata roads! You can find more information here: <http://teamzoom.net/miatasinmoab/index.htm>

The Kansas City Miata Club has partnered with the Arkansas Miata Club for a trip to Eureka Springs on June 10th - 12th. Last year they were joined by members of the WI-EN (Western Iowa/Eastern Nebraska) Miata club, and a post on the Miata.net forums seems to invite anyone else who wishes to go along! More information about this event can be found at <http://kcmiata.homestead.com/Eureka05.html>

July 29-31 is the famous non-event "Miatas at the Gap". I'm sure some Indy club members will be going, but even if you go by yourself, you'll meet a lot of friendly Miata folks.

The "Miata Ozark Playtime" a informal, unstructured gathering of Miatas and is set for September 16-18. Maps, road trip suggestions, information on local restaurants, shopping and points of interest will be supplied. The rest is up to you. Contact Jack and Carol Muirhead at mjack4619@sbcglobal.net for more info.

The Abe Lincoln Club from Illinois has "Monthly Meeting and Nude Bowling" listed on their calendar. We'll see if we can't get a little more information on that event!

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Club Classifieds

For Sale: 10th AE - We're are selling our Miata. Car is in excellent condition with approx. 41300 miles, new Falken radials and all the standard equipment of the 10th AE. Second owners, car is always garaged and never sees bad weather unless we accidentally get caught in it. Asking \$12,500 or OBO. Call Ken Koehler at 317-253-4494 or email from club website classified section.

For Sale: 95 Ford F-150 - Eddie Bauer edition, 4X4, shift on the fly. 155K, Alpine CD/Stereo, Pneumatic lumbar supports, Cruise, Towing package and Truck Cap. Asking \$5600. Call Chris Poglitsch at 812-232-7146 or email africaneggs@yahoo.com

For Sale: 99 Chevy Blazer - 99 4 door, 2WD with only 50K miles. \$6500. Call Sara J 317-291-8993 or miata@2cat.com.

For Sale: 2001 Miata - 2001 Miata \$13,900. 41K miles, garaged. Crystal Blue with tan top and leather interior. 4 new Toyo tires. 6-speed, sport suspension, Bose CD/cassette. For more details contact: PatCoyle@aol.com or 513-236-1433.

For Sale: 99 Mazda Miata Sport, with turbocharger - Black Exterior/Interior (Cloth Seats); PS; AC; AM/FM Radio w/CD Player; 5 speed manual; 48K miles. See ad on club website for more details. \$16,000 or best offer. Call Chris Bennett at 317-781-9556 or email him at Chris@corporatesystems.com.

Don't Forget the Winter Dinner on January 15

January 15 - Winter Dinner

August 20 - Rags To Riches Rally

February - Northside Dinner

September 24 - Owen County Tour

February - Air Force Museum Tour

October 22-23 - Madison Madness II Tour

March - Speedway Museum Tour

March 23 - Cabin Fever Rally

November - Hidden Drives III

April 16 - Post Tax Blues Rally

December - Holiday Party

May 6 - Bruce Heddon's Rally

May 28 - Indy 500 Mingle

June 3-5 - Southern Indiana Tour

June 18 - USGP Mingle

Why is this man smiling?

See page 4!

July 9 - Frantic Funkanna

August 6 - Brickyard Mingle

