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On The Fence...

by Ben Hermann, President

And just like that, here it is March. It won't be long until those of us daily drivers take off the snow tires and the rest of you take off the car covers and start shaking loose the cobwebs. Mother Nature has already given us a few days of good weather and soon those days will start being the rule instead of the exception.

We have a couple things planned to for you to enjoy the hopefully impending nice weather. Saturday, March 12th we are taking a behind the scenes tour of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. (Details inside.) Two weeks later, on March 26th, John and Marsha Schaub are throwing their second annual Cabin Fever Rally. (Details inside.) I'm trying to work out details for a monthly dinner, but things haven't come together yet. We'll probably start it up next month, but you might want to check the club's website or sign up to receive email from the club in your online profile. If you've misplaced or never received your log-in and password, use the link on the club web site or you can email me. The emails are a great way to get reminders of upcoming events.

Thanks again to everyone who took the time to return the survey that was in the January newsletter. We're still compiling the results, so look for them next moth. It was great to see everyone's opinion and now we all can use this information to help plan upcoming events. There wasn't anything terribly surprising in the results, but I feel there is definitely a need for more Sunday events. We have very few right now and need for some of you to step up and host a couple. As you'll see, it doesn't really matter what kind of event it is as most people like the events we have. Don't forget, we're always open for new types of events, too.

As far as merchandise goes, we're working on that, so please be patient. Before we move forward with merchandise, we'd like to come up a new logo. This issue has been brought up before but has never really gone anywhere. We've begun the process to actually do something about it this time and I'd like any opinions and thought you may have. Our current logo has served us well, but it's getting a little long in the tooth. Plus, what better time for a new look for the club than to coincide with the new look of the Miata? You can email me with any thoughts or suggestions you have.

Now, I don't really want this column to get too overly political, but there are two bills in the legislature that concern the use of our cars. One is raising the speed limit to 70mph and that will probably pass and become reality, the other is still up in the air. It involves the use of red-light cameras. I don't really think it's my place to tell you what to think about them, so I'll just give out some information. I'd encourage you to contact your congress person and let them know how you feel. After all, they are supposed to represent you.

The argument for the cameras use is safety. Studies have shown red light violations drop 40-50% after the installation of cameras, and injury crashes decrease 25-30%. Side impact collisions decrease with the installation of the cameras and when you reduce side impacts, the seriousness of injuries is decreased and there is also a drop in the number of fatalities. The cameras can also help cash-strapped communities by increasing revenue without increasing taxes.

There are several problems that come along with the use of the cameras. While side impacts are reduced, rear-end collisions increase as people are more prone to slam on their brakes. Most systems only take a photo of the back of the car and the owner is then liable for the ticket, even if they weren't driving. Then there is the same argument for having them as there is for not having them - money. Studies have shown that with proper engineering, generally the lengthening of the yellow light, you can reduce the number of violators by a greater number than with the use of cameras. Also lending evidence that they are just a revenue booster is a study by Rep. Dick Army (R-TX) that concluded that communities that installed cameras reduced the amount of time the yellow was on from five seconds to three seconds. That reduction increased the number of violators, therefore increasing money brought in from the cameras.

There is a ton of information out there for you to read and form your own opinion. These are just little snippets. After you've done your research, head over to <http://www.in.gov/legislative/> or write a letter and tell your representatives what you think.

Now, get ready to pop that top open and enjoy the fresh air again! Remember, *The Fun Starts Here!*

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Join Us For Special Tour of IMS

On Saturday, March 12, President Ben Hermann has set up a behind the scenes tour of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We will meet at Union Jacks at 6225 West 25th Street for lunch, then head over to IMS to go through the Speedway Museum. At 2:00, our 90 minute behind the scenes tour will begin.

The narrated tour takes us around the famed 2.5 mile oval plus we visit the media center, Pagoda, garage area and a Gasoline Alley suite. We'll also stand on the victory platform and possibly the yard of bricks. Bring your camera! Winter weather has delayed the re-installation of the bricks, so if they are not laid at the time of our tour, we will travel around the F-1 track instead.

Tickets for this tour are \$25 for adults, \$10 for youth 6-15, and children under 6 are free. This fee includes admission into the Museum. Credit cards will NOT be accepted as payment for the tour, cash or check only.

At this time, this event is open to everybody, club member or not, and your Miata is not required. If response is too great and we need to limit participation, club members and their families will get priority, but it shouldn't be an issue.

As we must let the restaurant and Speedway officials know how many people will be attending, please sign up on the club web site or RSVP with Ben Herman (call 317-727-1401 or email him at: president@indymiata.org). The cutoff date for signing up for the tour is March 6th!

Joining us for this tour will be members of the Greater Cincinnati Miata Club.

Here's A Cure For Cabin Fever!

With spring rapidly approaching, it's time to start thinking about the 2005 rally season! Marsha and John Schaub are once again hosting the Cabin Fever Rally.

If you're as sick of winter as they are, and ready to get out of town and carve up some great country roads, then meet them down in Martinsville, IN on March 26th. Our meeting place is the Starbucks Coffee Shop located at the S.W. corner of S.R. 37 and Burton Lane. Look for the Starbucks on your right hand side as your going south on S.R.37. We will meet at 10:00am and have the first car off around 10:30. Our route will take us down into Brown County and end up for lunch at The Ordinary restaurant in Nashville, IN.

For those of you who ran this rally last year, they will be doing the same split format. There will be a short route for those of you who would like to do a little shopping in Nashville before lunch and a longer route for those who would rather do more driving. It's up to you to decide how to have fun.

The weather in March can be a little iffy, this will be a rain or shine event. Should there be snow or ice, it will be postponed to the following Saturday of April 2nd.

Dancing In The Streets In July

West Lafayette is the site for fun and entertainment with Dancing in the Streets. Norm and Susie Arbuckle and Gary and Kathy Collings have arranged an event with the Windy City Miata Club in Lafayette the weekend of July 30-31.

They are planning a tour through Indiana's Tippecanoe County Saturday morning with a stop at an oldies car show, which normally features over 400 cars. After the car show and more touring of Tippecanoe County on several scenic roads, it's back to Lafayette for the Dancing in the Streets party. Make a weekend of it with discounted reservations at The Hilton Garden Inn in West Lafayette.

Go to: <http://www.windycitymiataclub.com/2005/lafayette.htm> for all the details. Also the IMC events page at <http://indymiata.dustbunny.com/events/> and <http://www.dancinginthestreets.net/>.

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February Dinner Draws Topless Diners

Some club members arrived at Cafe Nora with their car tops down and their owners enjoying the fresh, somewhat warm air on February 12th. Hosted by Beth and John Vernon Oaks, nineteen members enjoyed good food and conversation.

Members in attendance included the Oaks, Steve and Cathy Randall, Jay Hofaker, Rick Morris, Craig Johnson with Valeri and his daughter Skye, Bern Baca, John and Marsha Schaub, Mark and Elaine Smith, Eric Drumwright and Ann Cole, Al Jennings and Susan Koerner, and Sara J McBride.

Amazingly, Miatas were discussed along with other topics. Thanks to the Oaks for organizing this event!

Photos by John Vernon Oaks



June "Tour de Boondocks" Is Set

Set your calendar for the June 4th weekend for a great Miata outing. Norm and Susie Arbuckle and Gary and Kathy Collings have planned a great overnight tour in southern Indiana. They have discovered several great new scenic and twisty roads with three beautiful vistas on this tour. Don't forget to bring your camera.

There are several options for this tour. Drive down on Friday for some fun and games at the B&B with dinner and breakfast at Indiana's most famous scenic restaurant, The Overlook (<http://www.theoverlook.com/>). Start Saturday morning in Corydon with your Tour Masters on a half-day run and then after lunch continue the tour into deep southern Indiana. In hopes that folks will make it a full weekend, they have reserved 16 rooms at our favorite romantic Bed and Breakfast, The Leavenworth Inn (<http://www.bbonline.com/in/leavenworth/index.html>) for Friday and Saturday nights (June 3-4). Call the Leavenworth Inn at 888-739-2120 to reserve your rooms for both nights. Rooms are on a first come, first served basis. Ask for the Indy Miata Club rate of \$92.65 plus tax. Those of you who can only stay one evening or two, can also call the Baymont Inn in Corydon 812-738-1500. The standard rate is \$66 plus tax.

Sunday morning there will have a truly great driving tour back towards Nashville where you then can make your way home on your own. You will travel a five-hump roller coaster road and if your speed is over 60 mph, you

must have a pilot's license or side wings on your Miata!

Those of you who cannot make the full overnight tour can meet at 10:01 AM in Corydon (rendezvous details later) for the start of the "Tour De Boon Docks". You can break off and leave anytime during the two parts of Saturdays tour if all the scenery is just too much.

The Arbuckles and Collings have booked the first two rooms for both nights. Please notify them by email (Normarby@aol.com) or call Norm at 765-426-5994 and let him where you've booked your rooms. Also, please register on the club website.

Set your expectations high for a great Miata weekend. Our Tour Masters have promised that you will have a wonderful experience, rain or shine.

Have You Filed Your Taxes Yet? The 15th Is Getting Closer!

More importantly, have you marked April 16th on your calendar for one of the club's most popular rallies? Yes, it's another Post Tax Blues Rally.

We're setting up another Poker Run in the northern part of the state with our

friends to the north, the Lake Effect Club.

Look for details in the April Open Road or on the events page of indymiata.org.

A continuing series of caring for your car

Where The Rubber Meets The Road

by Chuck Wills

A tire's job is not very glamorous. It rolls around in dirt and muck, through temperatures ranging from well below zero to far over 140 F. Snow, rain, sand, gravel... not a job for the faint of heart. Through it all our beloved tires may occasionally get hosed off at the car wash and air pressure checked every few months. Wheels don't have life much better. While they don't go down the road face first like our poor tires, they do take serious abuse from road impacts like pot holes. And don't even mention curb damage! I remember the time in the Taco Bell drive through when I cut the corner a little too hard and GRUNCH!! One rim with a bad case of curb rash.

Together our wheels and tires shoulder the responsibility of keeping our cars rolling, turning and braking, and without them we wouldn't be going much of anywhere. Because of this, it pays to have good rubber on your car. While grippy, high performance tires may not last as long as the latest 50k mile tire from the local discounter, it will give you a great deal more traction and safety in nearly every situation. Your tires are your first line of defense for safety, so don't skimp on them.

Depending on what year your car was built, it may have 14, 15, 16 or even 17 inch wheels. The cool thing is that the overall height of the tires is the same for all of them. This means that you can interchange any stock size wheel and tire on any year Miata. Typically, when using a larger diameter wheel, the tire sidewall is shorter, which is better for performance. An added benefit to larger diameter wheels is that wheels are normally wider too. A wide wheel with a low profile tire is a good recipe for good grip and lightening fast reactions. You think about turning the wheel and the car is already cornering. Telepathic, that's what you want, right? The bad news is that larger wheel and tire packages are normally heavier, which can degrade ride quality and slow the cars reaction. The factory has been obsessive about light weight wheels and tires from the very beginning for a reason, so putting heavy boat-anchors on your roadster is only undoing some of the goodness that the factory built in to it.

There are two ways to upgrade your roadsters rolling stock. You can put high performance tires on your stock wheels, or you can upgrade to a larger size. Now, understand that I'm writing from the perspective of street performance. If you want to autocross or race, it's a whole different ball game!

The factory 14" wheels are super light weight and a perfect compliment to the chassis. The bad news is that there are fewer and fewer good performance tires available in the proper sizes. A very popular upgrade for the early cars is to 15", and there are plenty of good tires available for those wheels. The 15" combo is a great compromise between light weight and low profile. Later Miatas came with 16" wheels, which are heavier yet, and have even lower profile tires for good performance. There is no real reason to upgrade from the 16" wheels on those later cars, that's as big as you need to go.

Some people ask about upgrading to 17" or larger wheels. While the Mazdaspeed Miata came with 17's, most of the available 17" wheels are too heavy and too big for your Miata. Unless you are prepared to spend a fortune for ultra light weight wheels, don't even consider going that big. Other than the trendy look, there are no reasons to put them on your car.

Let's get down to the recommendations for street performance:

Yokohama ES-100 – These are currently my favorite street performance tire. They are light weight yet has firm sidewalls for quick response. The grip is good in dry and wet weather and they are fairly quiet for a performance tire. I've driven on them at the Gap and through torrential downpours and couldn't be happier. There may be slightly stickier tires on the market, but not at this

price point and with street manners this good. Available in a range of 14, 15, 16 and 17" sizes, prices range from \$68 to \$90 each, making this a real steal.

Toyo T1-S – A perennial favorite for Miatas, the T1-S is a great tire. They are another light weight option with good grip both wet and dry. The sidewalls on the T1 are a little soft, giving a great ride but hurting turn-in response when compared to other tires. Fortunately, a few extra pounds of air will get back any of the response lost to the soft sidewall. These tires shine in real-world road holding and are quiet with good road manners. I've put more than a few miles on these too, and I highly recommend them, especially if you want a good ride with your high performance. Note: these tires are being replaced by the T1-R this year, which will provide better performance but at a higher price. If you like the T1-S, buy 'em now! Available in 14, 15, 16 and 17" sizes ranging from \$72 to \$114 each.

Falken Azinis RS – An autocross winner for the street. Don't expect much tread life, but they will grip like a cat to your curtains. They are heavy, loud, noisy, harsh and so-so in rain. I don't suggest them for lapping days at the race track because their grip falls off as they heat up, but for autocross and street they are fine. They grip like mad and are CHEAP! 14", 15" and 16" range in price from \$45. What a deal!

Kumho MX – make no mistake, this is the grippiest, stickiest tire for the street, period. It's a race tire in sheeps clothing with big tread blocks and soft rubber compound. These are suitable for street or even light track use and you will find nothing that grips like this unless you are buying a true R compound race tire. They are very light weight, yet have super stiff sidewalls and lightening fast turn-in. They are noisy on the street unless you rotate them often, but man, are they sticky! This is the newest street-tire class autocross favorite, and if you can accept a little extra road noise, this is the ultimate performance

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Rick And Susie Went To The Gap!

by Rick Booe

For two years we have been wanting to go "Do the Dragon". Finally, last September, with both kids gone, Lisa off to college at the University of Southern Indiana and Andy now a new Lt. in the Air Force in Florida, we decided to drop everything and go to Deal's Gap. We packed up the Miata for our trip and headed down the highway.

We got a set of nice maps from AAA with three variations, the shortest route, the quickest route, and the scenic route. We ended up using different parts for the trip. We traveled some Interstate to save time and some scenic routes to relax and enjoy the trip. We like to stop and look at the sights of the small towns we go through, smell the roses style of traveling, and try their food. We've found that you meet the nicest people in the little towns of Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. As we were going south out of Knoxville, it was getting late, but we wanted to make it to Fontana that first night. We had reserved a cabin at Fontana Village, which is only eight miles past the Gap. It was almost dark when we headed out of Maryville on Highway 411 and then we



turned on to US 129 south. It was soon very dark and the farther we went, the curvier the road got. I was driving as

fast as I could without Susie saying "Slow down! It's dark!".

We started to wonder if we would ever get there and then Susie yelled, "Look! A bear!". A small black bear ran across the road right in front of us and jumped into the woods and out of sight. I didn't get as good a look at it as Susie did, as I was concentrating on staying on the road, not what was right in front of me in the road! We had been talking about what a fun road this was and how could the Dragon be any better than this? We didn't know we were already on the Dragon!

Fontana Village Resort is east of Deal's Gap on Highway 28. We rented a two bedroom cabin that was wonderful for \$99 a day. Full kitchen, with dishes, living room, cable TV, two bedrooms, a very nice large bathroom, and no phone. Two couples could easily share a cabin. There was a wonderful front porch with two old time rocking chairs. The Village also has indoor and outdoor pools, an exercise room, video store, country store, and very nice restaurant. There are trails to walk through the woods and I was stung by bees three times, so next time, no walking the trails for me. Also, no phone and that includes cell phones. No coverage there!

The driving was the best part and we drove the Dragon at least six times. It's hard to take turns driving, we both had so much fun. Well, except when you come up on the occasional minivan or SUV looking at the sights at 10mph. We also drove on the Cherokee Skyway and parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Even Highway 28 from the Dragon to Fontana Village was a fun road. I don't think that part of the country has any straight roads, it's kinda like Miata heaven.

We decided to head for home a day early to get away from some bad weather that was on the way and to give us time to drive through Smokey Mountain National Park. The views there are wonderful, too. We spent a little time in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. It was tough to get on the Interstate after all that driving fun, but we wanted to visit some friends in Nashville, TN and be back home by Sunday.

If you haven't been there, don't put it off, it's the best driving you can imagine. The Tail of the Dragon is the road that Miatas were made for. If you really want to jump in, check out <http://www.miata.net> under events for "Miatas at the Gap" in July. It's the unofficial annual Miata gathering that attracts anywhere from 200 to 400 cars every year. I bet Susie and I will be there. It should be great.

AF Museum Tour A High Flying Event

IMC members braved the cold and dark and headed over to Dayton to visit the world's largest Military Aviation Museum on February 19th. Unfortunately, tour leaders Rick and Sara became navigational impaired and were driving in circles until Mike Selvy and Bern Baca, zoomed to the front of the pack, and led us to Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

Once we arrived, members fanned out to inspect the flying machines up close. Some signed up for the tour over to the R & D and Air Force One hangers, some went to the IMAX theatre and viewed a great movie on fighter pilot training, and everyone saw planes, lots of planes.

Rick Booe, our VP and former Air Force crew chief, showed some of us how to arm nuclear bombs (always handy information) and which planes that he worked on and was a crew chief for (SR-71 and F-111).

Inside a B-29, Todd Johnson and Membership Director Craig Johnson are the "Brothers in Arms"!



Photo by John Schaub

Dr. Detail is here to help

Time For Spring Cleaning!

by Rick Morris

It's time for that of year again, when we might get lucky enough to have a couple of top down days! I, for one, have had more than enough of winter (which, for me, is about two days). At any rate, it's time to start planning for the first good cleaning that we will give our cars to get ready for the summer driving season. If you get your car prepped right, keeping it looking great for the rest of the summer will be easy, so you can spend your time driving your car instead of waxing it.

Before you go out and buy a lot of stuff, you may want to reread an article I wrote last year about how the process is more important than the product. What I mean by that is how you get your clean and shiny is at least as important as what products you use. Fortunately, we have past issues of the Open Road online, so you can read the article again by going to archive site for the Open Road: <http://www.wcat.com/openroad/2004/may/page5.pdf>.

The "Rule of Five P's" (Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance) applies to getting your car looking great as well as most other things. The first step is to get your clean as possible as you can with a very good wash job. For the first wash job of the season, I recommend a solution made with Dawn dish washing detergent and water. Dawn is a very good grease cutter and fairly strong cleaner and it will do a good job getting the surface dirt and grime off your car. Do not use it for everyday car washing!

After you have the car as clean as you can get it by washing, it's time to invoke the magic known as the clay bar. A clay bar will get things off your car's surface that almost won't come off any other way. Last year I wrote a pretty complete article about using a clay bar. You can read it online here: <http://www.2cat.com/openroad/2004/apr/page6.pdf>. It doesn't take all that long and the results you get are pretty amazing.

The next step should be to use a good pre-wax cleaner. I am currently using Klasse All-In-One, which you can get from most online stores, especially the ones that are referenced in my "Process" article. In any event, a good pre-wax cleaner will get the surface prepped so that whatever wax you choose will look great and bond to the car's surface much better.

You are now ready to apply whatever wax you have decided to use. Use a good quality wax. Don't start skimping now. If I'm using a polymer wax, I use Meguiar's Tech Wax, which gives excellent results and isn't terribly expensive. If I'm using a carnuba wax, I use Pinnacle Souveran, which gives incredible results and is real expensive. Which ever wax you use, be sure to follow the strong hints in the "Process" article.

You're in the home stretch now! After you have the wax applied and the car is looking great, top off the wax with a detailing spray made by the people who make your wax. The detail spray will give the last little "pop" to the finish.

After you have all this done, keep your car looking great by washing it regularly with a high quality was (NOT the Dawn we used in the first step) and follow every washing with a quick application of the detail spray. Your car will look great all summer with just a little effort.

If all of this sounds like a lot of work and you'd like to have someone else do it, you can take it to Jim Schliebner's shop on Michigan Road (514-2659). He can take care of any major defects and show you how to keep your car looking great. You can visit Jim's website at <http://www.jimmybuffit.com>. AIM Tuning also offers detailing services. Call AIM at 381-0898 or visit them online at <http://www.aimtuning.com>.

Tires And Wheels... *Continued*

tire for you. Available in 15" and 17" sizes, from \$78 to \$83. If you like going fast, go buy this tire today.

The thing about all of these tires is if it starts to snow, you're not going anywhere. They are made for warm weather so when the mercury falls, you need an all season tire or better yet, a winter tire. I'll just hit a few high points for non-performance applications:

Toyo FZ4 is a fine all-season tire for the Miata in 16" and 17" sizes. If you need 4 season drivability, you should also look at the Bridgestone RE950. The 950 is available in 14", 16" and 17" sizes and has good year-round road performance. If you need a 15" size, check out the Dunlop SP Sport 5000. None of these tires will win an autocross, but for year-round street driving, they are all good choices.

If you want winter tires, it's hard to go wrong with Bridgestone Blizzak, Pirelli Winter or Dunlop Graspic. For those on a budget, the Winterforce M+S is a good choice, especially if you encounter more snow than ice.

The final word I'll leave you with is about looking for aftermarket wheels. Size-wise, 15" is the sweet spot for cost vs. performance vs. ride quality. My favorite wheel is the Kosei K1, which is inexpensive and has shown to be very durable in Spec Miata racing. Kazera also makes a great wheel, available from Tire Rack along with the Kosei. Another very popular option are Rota wheels, available from several on-line suppliers. Rota is known for very light weight, yet affordable wheels, most in the \$99 to \$140 range. What ever wheel you choose, make sure it's light weight! As a rule of thumb, if your wheels weigh more than 1 pound per inch of diameter, they are way too heavy for the Miata (15" and 15 pounds). If you look around, you can find plenty of good 13 pound wheels that look good and are budget friendly.

Tires and wheels are such a huge subject, it's impossible to discuss every option in one article. As always, you can shoot us an e-mail or call us over at AIM Tuning to discuss your particular application. To browse online, you should check out www.tirerack.com, www.onlinetires.com and www.good-win-racing.com.

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For Sale: RB Exhaust - Racing Beat dual exhaust, complete with gasket, will fit your 1999 to 2005 five speed transmission Miata. New \$369 but will sell for \$200 to the first buyer! Bernard Baca @ 317-255-5078 bbacaphd@sbcglobal.net

For Sale: Parting out 91 and 94 Miatas - tan leather seats, tan top, big brake kit, and much more. Located in Indy. Email "wants" to miniguru7@yahoo.com

For Sale: Oris WindStop - In new condition, only used a couple months. Mounting hardware, storage case included. Installed style bar, so can't use it. Fits all years, works great. \$150. Contact Roger Burrill from the club website classified section.

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

Speedway Tour - March 12

Cabin Fever Rally - March 26

March 12 - Speedway Tour
March 26 - Cabin Fever Rally

April 16 - Post Tax Blues Rally

May 14 - Bruce Heddon's Rally
May 28 - Indy 500 Mingle

June 3/5 - Tour de Boondocks
June 18 - USGP Mingle

July 9 - Frantic Funkanna
July 29/30 - Dancing In The Streets
July 29/30 - Miatas At The Gap

August 6 - Brickyard Mingle
August 20 - Rags To Riches Rally

September 11 - A "Sundae" Mingle
September 24 - Owen County Tour

October 22-23 - Madison Madness II

November - Hidden Drives

December - Holiday Party



Happy diners at the February Club dinner.

Is This Your Last Issue Of The Open Road?

If the date on your mailing label is 12/31/04, that means it's time to renew! Your letter carrier will not be bringing you any more issues to your mailbox unless you renew. This is your last reminder. No more, nada, zip, nyet, nr, non, nein, não...well, you get the idea. Renew now and don't miss any of the excitement in 2005!