

The Open Road



The Official Newsletter of the Indy Miata Club

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Controlled Over-Steer

or... Steering with Your Right Foot!

by Tom Lewis, President

As I write this, the weather reports are predicting our first real accumulation of snow over the next couple of days. Looking out the window and seeing the first few flakes begin to fall from the sky, I'm filled with feelings of excitement and dread. I suppose it's the kid in me that feels excitement, anticipating the snow. But that excitement is usually fairly short lived as the snow gets plowed and the salt is scattered and all our vehicles become the same nasty gray color. But I must admit that I am one of those who really does enjoy a bit of driving in the snow, particularly with the Miata. Like the title of this column, a little controlled over-steer and using the long, skinny pedal to point the nose of the car in the direction you choose can be quite entertaining.

I learned to drive in the snow when I was sixteen and driving the family's hand-me-down 1971 Ford Maverick with a 200 cubic inch straight six cylinder and an automatic transmission. "Grabber Green" was the color. That car had already seen some pretty hard use by the time I got my hands on it in 1974. It had gone through four of my older sisters, some minor collisions and was even documented to travel in excess of 90 MPH on Interstate 70 by the State Police as my sister drove home from college one weekend. She must have had a tail wind and been going downhill, because I tried my very hardest and I never got that beast over 80.

It was my brother-in-law, Leif, who taught me how to drive in the snow. Leif demonstrated the fine art of hanging the tail of the car out around turns, applying the throttle as necessary to keep the fine balance of the controlled slide. That one afternoon in January of 1974 has served me very well over the years and has provided many thrills for my passengers (just ask Laura!). So, the next couple of days will be fun until the salt trucks clear the roads and the salt and muck begins to accumulate on the car. Then the thrill is over and we'll all go back to counting the days down until the warmth returns and the tops go down. Come on, Spring!

The one Indy Miata Club event held in January saw an impressive turnout of 45 members at Daddy Jack's Restaurant at 96th and Meridian Street on the north side of Indy. Many suggestions were offered and several decisions were made. The thing that really struck me was the fact that so many of you are stepping up and getting involved. Several events were added to the calendar for 2009, including the Post Tax Blues Rally, our annual joint event with the Lake Effect Miata Club on April 18th. Also stepping up to run their very first rallies were Steve Myers and Herman Freeland with their "Putt to Putnam" on June 6th, Steve and Barbara Cole with their "Sock Hop and Shine" rally on June 27th, and Larry and Sabrina Smith's "Shall We Gather at the River" over night rally on July 11th and 12th. The calendar is beginning to fill up and there are still plenty of dates available. Remember, by committing to host an event by March 31st, Indy Miata will provide you with a Gas Card for \$25 on the day of your event! So take a look at your calendar and pick a date. Don't have a route in mind? No problem! Just go to the IMC website and pick an old route and we'll run it again!

We also discussed the delivery of this newsletter and it was decided that we will begin to transition to delivery of the newsletter by email as opposed to the US Mail. This one change will save the club several hundred dollars each year and delay the need to increase membership fees. So, please do make sure that your email is up to date in your profile on the club's website. If you are not sure if we have your correct email, please contact me or any club officer to verify. Also, don't hesitate to contact any of your club officers with your questions or concerns regarding this upcoming change in the delivery of the Open Road newsletter.

Zoom-Zoom to page 2

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Controlled Over-Steer

...continued from Page 1

Additional items discussed include a future Indy Miata Business Networking event, the development of a common on-line Picture Gallery on Google's Picasa website where we can all upload, share and view our Indy Miata event pictures, and a change of venues for the Annual Holiday Party which has traditionally been held at The Old Spaghetti Factory. Stay tuned for details on these and many more events coming in 2009. It's starting to look like a very active year with many new events and activities. And what's most encouraging is the resurgence of energy that seems to be building. Let's keep that momentum and fill the calendar with events for every month of the year.

So, I'll end this again with a challenge to the membership: If you've never attended an Indy Miata Club event, come to just one event this year. I promise you'll have more fun than you could imagine and you will meet some of the nicest people you could ever hope call your friends. And if you have attended an event in the past, make this the year to step up and host an event of your own. There's no shortage of ideas, rally routes or people to assist you in making your first event a success. Besides, you simply can't go wrong when the Number One rule for an event is "The Rally Master is Never Wrong"!

Scheduled IMC Events

The Event calendar for the Indy Miata Club is beginning to fill up (but don't worry, we will always have room for your event!) as thoughts turn to spring and top down drives. New additions include "Putt to Putnam" "Sock Hop and Shine" and "Shall We Gather at the River?". Thanks to all these first time rally masters for giving back to the club by hosting an event.

Your officers are working on an event for February, unfortunately details were not available at press time, so watch the events page at the club web site and look for an email about a possible car museum tour.

Right now March is wide open for an event. April 18th is the date for the annual Post Tax Blues Rally, co-hosted with the Lake Effect Miata Club. Sara J McBride and Greg Waltz from IMC are teaming up with Conrad Serwatka to find the right route to run away from the tax blues. A week later, Steve and Kathy Crouse, Bob Wiley and PK will be leading us down to the Ohio River for a weekend of Miatas at the Leavenworth Inn. Steve has noted that there were still a few rooms left at the Inn that were being held for the club, so if you do want to stay at the Inn, give them a call at 1-888-739-2120. Tell them you are with the Indy Miata Club for our special rates. If you are "locked" out of the Inn, or looking for less expensive lodging, the closest additional lodging is at the Days Inn or Corydon.

Don't forget to register for any event you plan on attending on the event page on the club web site.

Can't Login To The Club Website?

Can't get to the forum on the club website? The "Register" button doesn't appear beneath the event's description? If so, you'll need to log on to the website.

Click on the "Click here to login" link in the upper left corner of the web page. It will take you to the area to enter your User ID and password.

If you've forgotten your ID and Password to log on, then the red "Click here if you have forgotten your password" link. Enter your email address and we'll send the info to you pronto!

Lunch With President Tom

It was cold and the streets weren't very clean, but IMC members and a few of their Miatas showed up at Daddy Jack's for Lunch with the President Elect.

Hosted by President Tom Lewis, a crowd of 45 placed their lunch orders and then listened to Tom's Inaugural speech.

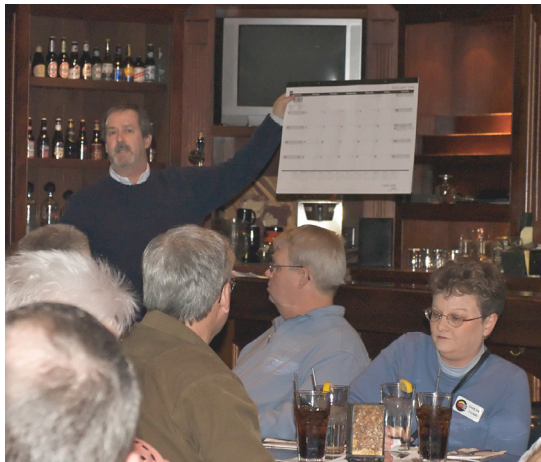
The health of the club was discussed (Strong! A nice steady heart beat!) and event calendar was another topic. Other ideas were discussed, among them a change in how the Open Road is distributed and a photo gallery.

Due to an increase in mailing and production costs, the Open Road will soon be available online only. The issue will be in an Adobe PDF form, which can be read online or downloaded and printed by members. Details are being worked out, but expect the April issue to be the last one in print.

A Picasa web gallery for club photos has been set up so that club photos can be in one place and uploaded by all. The login information will be e-mailed to all members soon.

A tour of a local auto museum was discussed for a February event and details on it should be listed on the club web site soon.

Tom thanked every one for attending his inaugural luncheon and is looking forward to seeing more members at the next event.



"Look at all those empty weekends!" Tom said and several members rose to the occasion and signed up to host rallies!

Who Saw The Ad For A Free Miata?

Is the Classifieds section on the club website a regular stop for you during your internet surfing? Lot's of good items are listed there, including a recent listing for a free Miata! A member posted an ad for a friend who had a 1990 blue Miata that he was willing to give away!

The car was soon claimed by some lucky person and the ad disappeared. E-mails were flying to find out who had procured the Smurf Blue Miata. Bob Wiley was asked if he had gotten it and he replied:

"Not me.. but I had a buddy who was in the club back in mid 90's. He had to sell his Smurfy blue because he and the wife were going to have a kid. Actually three! Always hated that he had to sell, always wanted another. He sees his old one which now lives a couple miles from him. Loves Miatas! I saw that "free" one on the classifieds page, copied and pasted the info to my buddy. He went to look at it, being very skeptical as was I. But it turned out great! The guy wanted 1.00 for it because that's what he paid his sister for it. Needs brakes, had 2 flats, bad rear panel, cracked bumper, a few dents, bad passenger door... dirty inside and out. Just not cared for in general. My buddy had it towed home, got it running, aired up the tires and drove around his hood! Now he's already detailed it, and found 1.67 in change under the seats... so he's ahead .67! Now he's going to look for parts and get it serviced. He'll be rejoining the club soon. His wife is happy, his kids are happy and he is ecstatic!"

We're all looking forward to meeting this lucky guy!

My \$1300.00 (!) Oil Change

by Jim Johnson

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I decided that the time had come to put our beloved Miata in our barn for a five month hibernation. Before putting the car away for the winter, I wanted to get the oil changed, fuel filled and the tires over inflated. I drove to Michigan City to a quick in and out oil change place. While I was there, I thought I might just as well have them change the manual transmission oil.

I paid my \$100 bill and was off. As I sped down the street, I realized I had no fifth gear. I returned to the "quick in and out" oil change place, only to find out that I was also missing reverse! I was able to keep a calm tone in my voice (not my nature) as I inquired as to what may have happened.

The manager was unsuccessful in trying to figure out what the problem was. He told me to take the car to Kennedy Mazda in Valparaiso and have it looked at. I had a vision flash before my eyes, a vision of this fellow and me appearing on TV before Judge Judy, debating who caused my car's problems!

The good doctors at Kennedy found that a bolt that holds the linkage for fifth and reverse had been removed to drain the oil from the 6 speed. They also found a damaged gear, which I had them replace. The bill was \$1200. I took a copy of the bill to the manager at the oil change place and he wrote me a check, in full.

I suppose those quick in and out places are all right for changing your engine oil, but don't let them fool with your transmission.

Tick, Tick, Tick

If your address label doesn't have 12/31/2009 above your name, that means the clock is ticking and it's time to send your renewal check to maintain your active status with the Indy Miata Club and receive a copy of the Open Road!

To download the application on the club website, just click on the "Join Us" link and follow the directions.

Print it, fill it out, then mail it with a check for \$20.00 (made out to the Indy Miata Club) to our Treasurer (the address is on the form) and you're set for another year of fun.

Tag! You're It!

A Tale of Three Miatas.. and Counting?

I am Steve Jacobson, long time member and past president of the club. My wife, Angela (she's a wedding florist if you need her services! <http://www.painteddaisy.com>) and I have been married 12 years in April and we have three children (son Riley, 7, daughter Regan, 5, and daughter Brooklyn, 2) and two very nice cats (Schumi and Mika) that need a new home.) The cats, not the kids!) This is my Miata story.

I was driving a black '89 Acura Integra coupe and was tired of it. It ran great like all Hondas seem to do, but it was not exactly what I wanted. Even when I bought it, I wished I could have afforded a Miata. Finally, in February of 1995, I started to see used ones in my price range.

I can still remember the first test drive of my Miata on that cold Saturday in February. I didn't know how to work the top, but quickly figured it out. I was amazed at how much view the headlights (barn doors) blocked! The back window zipper was broken, but that didn't matter to me. I bought that silver '90 with 55,000 miles and never regretted it.

When I bought it there was a small sticker on the lower passenger side window, Indy Miata Club. I asked the previous owner about it and she knew of the club, but was not a current member. I eventually found more info on the club and joined.

A year or so after Angela and I got married, we drove it out to the east coast for a week visiting family and also stopped by the national Miata gathering in the Poconos. We drove with the top down as much as we could.

Remembering my first Miata makes me also think of when I first met Shane Benson. He was then working at the old Speedway Mazda dealership. I had just had my timing belt replaced (106,000 miles) at a different dealership and the car was just not running right. No one could figure it out, but Shane did. My '90 was in the VIN range of early cars that had the now infamous short-nose crank. So, a large repair bill later, I had a new engine and a car that ran much better. I got the club discount though!

A lot of miles passed by when I finally thought I should look to get something done about the rocker panel rust that had set in. By then the car had 181,000 miles. In April of 2002, a friend of Shane's contacted me and wondered if I would be interested in selling him my car as he wanted a Miata with a hardtop to turn into a Spec Miata. We swung a deal and I started looking around for another Miata to take its place. I found a very nice '95 M Edition in Cincinnati with a hardtop and took my brother to see it one afternoon. I drove it home. It had been on their lot for almost a year and they were ready to unload it.

By this time I had already been president of the club and now we had kid #1. I had a lot of cool mods that I was able to keep and switch over to the '95. I really liked that car and drove it year round also.

Fast forward to October 26, 2006. I had just left my office on the NW side of Indy. As I headed north on Zionsville Road, a semi was crossing on 81st Street from the west. He claimed to not see me coming even though I was about the only car around. He ran a stop sign and we collided. I was unhurt, but the car was not. After much arguing and hassling, the trucking company and I came to an agreement. I bought what was left of my car back from State Farm and proceeded to part it out.

My dad has a '94 Honda Civic that he rarely drives and he was kind enough to loan it to me while I was without a Miata. He's done a few rallies with me over the years, and he's very much a car guy too. He had a 1952 Jaguar XK 120 for a few years. My mom still regrets making him get rid of it. But it took a lot of work to keep it on the road. Dad's car was a blessing to be able to use but it was not a Miata.



"Hi - o Silver" Steve's first Miata.



A sad picture. Semi = 1, 1995 M-Edition = 0.



Steve driving the F1 course with his 1999 Miata.

Winter was coming and I thought Miatas would be hard to find, but a '99 Twilight Blue showed up in our club classified about a month later. I picked it up in early December 2006 and drove it to the club's Holiday Party that evening.

Our schedules are tight but we still try to make it to a couple of events every year. And we will never be without a Miata!

Hey Eric Drumwright! Tag, you're it for March Open Road article!

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Don't forget to visit the club web site for up to date information and more! <http://indymiata.org>

2009 Scheduled Events

March 26-29 - Miatas At Myrtle Beach

More info at: http://www.triadmiatas.com/MAMB_III.html

April 18 - Post Tax Blues

April 24 - Miatas at the Leavenworth Inn

May 16 -Early Days of Bliss

May 22-25 - Miata World II - Gaylord, TX

More info at: www.miataworldii.com/

June 6 - Putt to Putnam

June 27 - Sock Hop & Shine

July 11 - Shall We Gather at the River?

July 23-26 - Miatas At The Gap XIII

September 9 - Midwest Miata Gathering X

More info at: <http://cincimiata.com/news.asp>

Lunch with the President Elect at Daddy Jacks!



This is the Web edition of the Open Road. With some minor modifications, this is how you'll receive the Open Road in the coming months.

If you have any comments or questions, please let us know by e-mailing:
editor@indymiata.org.