

March-April 1999
Volume 5, Issue 2



HORIZONS

The Official Newsletter of the SunRiders Miata Club of Tampa Bay



Greetings, club members, from the nerve center of Sun Riders Central Command (my bedroom). The club is off to a rousing start this year. I've never had so many Miata events to go to! We'd like to thank all the people who have been enthusiastically attending all the monthly meetings, Sunday Runs, Autocrosses, Tech Sessions, and everything else we've had going lately. We've also achieved an excellent level of load-balancing among several people who have been helping carry on the business of the club. When six people show up to help fold, label and stamp club mailings, it means that nobody has to work too hard and it stays fun for everyone.



There are few items of club business to take care of. In the February Update we sent membership cards out to everyone who was paid up to that point. If you were due to renew back in December and still have not paid - then you are not reading this right now. If you are reading this, but did not receive a membership card, let us know and we'll get you one ASAP. Also, a small number of cards (about 10) went out that did not have the club logo printed on them like they should have. Unfortunately, I don't know which ones were affected. If you got a membership card that looks a little bare, let me know and I'll print you out a new one. Those of you expiring in April or May will get a renewal application with this issue.



Another item of note this month is the new club tool library. Using some of the funds we've saved up thanks to our generous sponsors, we have purchased a fairly complete set of mechanic's tools. Steve Swiger has volunteered to be the club tool-meister and librarian. Any and all tools will be available for free loan to club members. Steve is still in the process of engraving all the tools with the Sun Riders name. We'll list all the tools we have in an upcoming issue of Horizons. To check out a tool or tools, contact Steve at 813-239-9224. You will have to make arrangements with Steve to pick up what you need. Almost all the tools are Sears Craftsman, so if you get one bugged up, you just take it to Sears and they will replace it for free. Any non-Craftsman tools that you bugged up have to be replaced at the borrower's expense. We are also going to have regular tech sessions at Steve's house, about once a month or so. If you have something you need help with, there are always several people willing to help. Several club members now have experience with shocks/springs/sway bars, timing belts, clutches, and general maintenance. This is one more benefit that the club is able to offer thanks to our sponsors and your annual dues, and we're really excited about it. Please let us know if you have any other ideas for things the club can do that will benefit you and enhance your Miata-ownership experience.



NEW MEMBERS!!!

DEBORAH WAKEFIELD
STEVE BEACH
LAURA LEGARRETA
MARCOS ESPINOSA
ROBERT GROETZINGER
JULIA & LENWOOD KING
MR. & MRS. WATKINS
STEPHANIE DRUEN
MERRIL SMITH
SUSAN & GARY HUMPHRIES
JEWEL WHITE-COLE
LEONA LITTERAL
BARBARA FERRARO
MARK MANDULA
EDWARD STAMBORSKI
JAN GLOVER
LORRIE DENNY
ERNESTINE SEITZ
ACE SWERLING

**THESE ARE OUR NEW MEMBERS FOR
THE LAST FEW WEEKS. SOME OF THEM
WE HAVE ALREADY MET. THE OTHERS
WE HOPE TO MEET VERY SOON!**

TAG SPOTTER



Paul Shaffer's tag clearly identifies his car as something a little less common.

Sponsors!

A Word for Our Sponsors

This month's Sponsor of the Month is Lakeland Auto Mall. They have added seven new members to the club since the beginning of this year. We're glad to see they are selling a lot of our favorite roadster. Lakeland Auto Mall, along with Lindell Mazda in St. Pete are supporting the club by paying for the first year of club membership for every person that buys a Miata from them. This has been an *enormous* boost to the club, giving us a pretty stable level of income and also giving us a lot of new enthusiastic people who are coming out to participate in lots of club events.

Speaking of sponsors doing nice things for us, Mazda Village in Clearwater offers a discount to all club members on parts and labor. Just present your membership card. They are also running a parts department special for us. If you buy 2 oil filters, you get the third for free!



The History of Vinnie's Mata Adventure

or, What Ever Happened to #000521? - by Vinnie Lucido

It was some time in late 1988 or early 1989. As usual, I was reading the current copy of my automobile mags, car freak that I am. I don't remember now if it was Car and Driver or Road and Track, but I saw an artist's sketch and a short article on a new two seater sports car that Mazda was going to develop. After reading the proposed specs, I knew that this would be my next car. In the following months, I read every word I could get my hands on about the new car. I found out it would be called the Miata. As more and more information became available, I became even more convinced that I would have one. But knowing what happened with the Datsun 240Z and the Mazda RX7 when they were first offered, I was afraid I would have to pay over list price, which I refuse to do.

I remembered that there was a Mazda dealer that my other car buddies had told me about, with a reputation for selling cars at reasonable prices and even sold RX7's when they were first offered, at list price. So I gave them a call. I explained that I wanted to buy a Miata. I knew what the car was, they didn't have to sell me on it. I know they didn't even have a list price for the car as yet, but if they would agree to sell it to me at list price, whatever that was, I would buy one. I lived in New Jersey at the time, and since they were about an hour south of where I lived, they took my deposit over the phone on my VISA card.

The next decision was the color. I was married at the time to my second wife, and she wanted red. I had been lusting after the Toyota 2000GT spider that I had seen in the James Bond movie "You Only Live Twice", so I wanted one in white. So I ordered the blue (ah, the joy of compromise).

At the same time, my now ex-wife and I were also determined to move to Florida, and we both told our companies we were interested in relocating. A Miata in Florida! What could be better!

Well, June 27th rolled around and I received a

call from the dealer. They had two blue Miata's. One a base model and one with the 'A' package. I really didn't want the power steering, trying to keep it a 'simple' sports car, but I loved the alloy wheels that came with the 'A' package and the package gave you a great deal for the money (alloy wheels, leather steering wheel, AM/FM Cassette, power steering - all for \$1200!). I went for the 'A' package and added air conditioning.

I took delivery on June 29, 1989. Two days before the official announcement for the car (July 1, 1989). The car turned out to be #0000521 and the dealer stuck to his promise of charging me only list price. When I picked the car up, even he was charging \$1500 over list and many dealers were charging \$3000 over. And so my love affair with Miata's took shape and continues to this day.

Unfortunately, #521 was actually my wife's car (it was the only way I could talk her into buying it). We did end up moving to Florida, Tampa to be exact. I ended up driving the Miata to Tampa with enough clothe to start working down here until we could sell the house in

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR
LOCAL DEALERSHIPS WHO ARE
SUPPORTING THE SUNRIDERS.**

**Mazda Village
Clearwater, 813-791-8171**

**Lakeland Auto Mall/ Lakeland Mazda
Lakeland, 800-733-3439**

LINDELL mazda

St. Petersburg, 813-344-3344

**Courtesy Mazda
Hillsborough Ave., Tampa
813-261-2350**

The Brewery Tour:

By: Jonathan Skinner

We had 11 cars and 13 people make it to Ybor on February 20! I was very pleased to learn that everyone who was able to make it is subscribed to our new email list!

We had a really nice time in Ybor City. We toured the Brewery, a building that was one of the original Cigar Factories (the building was almost 150 years old!), sampled the four different beers that they make there and learned a little about the history of Ybor City and the brewery from our tour guide Teresa. She had only been with the Ybor City Brewing Company a couple of weeks, but she seemed to be knowledgeable of the process of brewing, and her enthusiasm for her company was apparent.

They are real local company success story, having reached their five year business plan goal in their first year of business! We were surprised to learn that they have managed to land the contract to supply all the Sam's Clubs in the State of Florida. Quite an accomplishment for a small independent brewery!

We then walked around Ybor, and had a late lunch/early dinner at The Spaghetti Warehouse. Afterwards, a few of us headed out to look at a gathering of Muscle Cars. Have you ever seen a 540 cubic inch, custom built, 750 bhp engine up close and personal before? Every Saturday night you can find them at the Burger King in the Northdale area on Dale Mabry highway.

We followed this up by taking another "field trip" to see the '90s equivalent of a late night automotive rumble, a noisy Saturday night congregation of "Rice Boys," people who extensively modify primarily Japanese se-

dans, cosmetically and/or mechanically, into something that is distinctly, ah, different!

It was a very interesting insight into a different automotive subculture! We even ran into a couple of Miata Maniacs and some SCCA racers, so we didn't feel completely out of place!

Hope to see you all at an upcoming Sun Riders event soon!



Here we are at the Ybor City Brewing Co. in February. No- we didn't drink and drive!

Vinnie's Adventure, continued from Page 3

Jersey. She joined me in April, 1990. By September, 1991, we were separated and of course, she would not give up the car. It was better that way though, since she was a smoker. This whole affair left a bad taste in my mouth and I was unable to even sit in a Miata for 4 years. Through it all, I never lost my love for Miata's and continued my subscription to the national magazine. I now own every issue from the first. You'll even find my comments on the Miata in the Autofile article in Autoweek magazine's review of the Miata in 1989.

I owned a 1991 Corvette for a couple of years in-between to quench my desire for a sports car, but in May of 1995, I again purchased a 1990 Miata. This time red...isn't it funny how things work out? I still own this car and am very happy with it.

-Vinnie Lucido

'99 MIATA COIN BUDDY

The '99 Miata is still new enough that there aren't very many tips and tricks around yet. This is one of the best we've seen so far. It won't work with a first-generation Miata - ed.

For those non smokers who travel, a simple coin holder addition to the console can make life a lot easier. Since I had not seen a coin holder for the '99 Miata in the after-market publications, I decided to improvise one. My GM car had a coin holder concealed under its flip-up console, a lift-out design that is the basis of my solution. Removing the Miata ash tray left me with a small tapered slot ready to receive the modified GM coin holder.

First, you will need to purchase the coin holder, GM Part #12504901 (cost approximately \$13.95, plus tax). The holder is slightly tapered on the sides from top to bottom, and requires minor modification. If you have access to a bench vise, clamp the coin holder in the upside down position, with the narrow end extending past the jaws of the vise. Next, you will need a hacksaw to cut a line in the recessed slot on the end making your cut approximately 1/8" deep. Next, you need to make a cut 3/32" wide from the bottom, angling your saw parallel to the original shape until you

intersect your first cut. After removing this slice, use a utility knife to shave any burrs that remain along your cut. Repeat this procedure for the other side.

Slide the unit into your ash tray slot, load with coins, and you are done. The total time, excluding your trip to the parts house, is less than 15 minutes!

Submitted by: Bill
Bullington
St. Petersburg, FL

Sunriders Member #08
bill@rowe-newberry.com

QUICK TIP:

Do you hate that annoying buzzer that whines at you every time you open the door with the key in the ignition? Well, you don't have to tolerate it. You can get under the dash and unplug it with no ill effects to the car. With the key in and the door open, stand on your head under dash on the driver's side and find that little buzzing box. Unplug it and tuck the dangling plug up somewhere it won't flop around. Viola! No more whining buzzer!

Enjoy!

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WE'D LIKE TO THANK
QUICKSILVER
PRINTING
FOR THEIR SERVICES
AND HELP IN PRODUCING
THIS NEWSLETTER



Wayne Holder - Model Maker Supreme

The next time you are running through Brooksville, take a break and stop in at Shoney's on the bypass. As you enter the restaurant, check out the display case by the cashier. You will see some of the most fantastic wooden models of vehicles, all carved out of cedar, walnut and maple woods. No paint, no stain. Everything is just what the color of the wood happens to be. There are models of farm tractors, trains and antique automobiles.

Last year I spotted the showcase after a hearty Shoney's breakfast and wondered if this master craftsman could - and would - carve out a model of my pride and joy that carries the license plate 'Eds Toy'.

A few days later, I called Wayne and asked if he would be interested in working on a model of my Miata. He mentioned that he had already done a Miata and would enjoy doing another now that he had a little experience on that model.

When I first met him, I was very impressed with the extensive workshop he had in his two car garage. Wayne retired in 1994 after a career as a physics teacher. It was then that he decided to pursue his hobby of wood carving of vehicles. Often using plans he has created himself and power tools, from a bandsaw to a belt sander, he transforms scrap wood into beautiful replicas of mostly antique vehicles.

After he told me what it would cost, I asked him to take on the job. I had looked through his book of models he had made and was certain that he could do real justice to my favorite car.

A few days later, I went back to his house armed with a camera and a cleaned and polished red '95 Miata with top down. We took many pictures from all different angles and Wayne drew up a sketch of the car and measured everything imaginable. Here was a guy that left nothing to chance. I was sure I had picked a real pro to create my model. He asked if I wanted it with the top up or down (silly question!) and even if I wanted the antenna up or down!

Well, three nail biting weeks later he called and said it was done. With heart pounding, I whipped over there and when I saw it I was absolutely amazed at the detail he had built into the car. It even includes my license plate and elongated automatic transmission shifter. It now stands as the centerpiece in my bookcase in my office and is admired by all who see it. Last year I brought it along on one of the breakfast runs and all of us Miata Nuts agreed it was an amazing piece of work. Regrettably, I had to admit that I had not carved it myself - besides Wayne had scribed his name on the undercarriage of the car!

Six months later I thought it would be neat to have a model of my first car that I ever owned to go along with this, perhaps the last great car that I'll ever own (at least that's what I tell my wife, Eileen). That was a 1934 Ford convertible roadster that I had in high school during World War II. Let me tell you about that car and the fun I had in it. But, hold the phone, - let me save that for sometime in the future. Perhaps we can start a continuing article of 'My First Car' in 'Horizons' and let us all in on how we started on this road to Motoring Madness!

Ed Simon



Wayne Holder proudly displays his creation with Ed's real thing in the background.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday March 9 - 7:00 PM - Monthly meeting at Landry's Seafood House, at Rocky Point on the Courtney Campbell Causeway (SR60) in Tampa. Call Kevin Morrison at 813-222-0509 for more details. This event is always on the second Tuesday of the month.

Wednesday March 17 - 6 PM KART racing at MoKart in St. Petersburg. Located on 34th St. in St. Pete (just south of where we have our autocrosses), MoKart is an indoor race track for racing karts. We're going to spend a couple hours embarrassing ourselves trying to lap faster than some 12-year-old kid. Call Jonathan at 727-784-5529 for details.

Saturday, March 20 - 12 Hours of Sebring Sports Car Race. This is one of the top 3 endurance racing events in the world. Several club members are going to be there. Join us on Saturday for the 12-hour race (10AM to 10PM). Miatas will be racing in the Motorola Cup on Friday, the 19th, and historic cars race on Sunday the 21st. A ticket that's good for the entire 5 days of the event is \$60. Call Kevin at 813-222-0509 for details, or call the Sebring Raceway at (941) 655-1442.

Sunday, March 28 - 9:00AM Sun Riders Autocross Series event #2. This is the second in our series of autocrosses for '99. It will be held at the St. Pete Junior College Allstate Campus on 34th St. in St. Pete (same place as the last 4 events). Registration will begin at 9:00 and first car out will be at 10:00. The entry fee is \$25 and that includes your lunch. You can pre-register by downloading an application from the web site or by calling Kevin at 813-222-0509. Helmets are required and your car must pass a basic tech inspection. Non-Miatas are more than welcome, so tell your friends you can beat them and challenge them to come out and race!

Remember, autocrossing is a single-car timed event where you run on a course laid out with traffic cones. Speeds rarely exceed 35 mph. Beginners are strongly encouraged to attend.

Sunday April 4- 9:30 AM Semi-famous Sunday Lunch Run: Southern Route. Meet us at 9:30 at Courtesy Mazda in Tampa, 10:15 at the SPJC Allstate Campus in St. Pete, or at 10:45 (more or less) at Thornton Mazda in Palmetto. We'll take a leisurely drive down Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key and have lunch at Cha-Cha Coconuts at St. Armand's Circle.

Tuesday April 13 - 7:00PM - Monthly meeting at Landry's. Be there or be square!



INTERESTED IN ADDING A ROLL BAR?

Greetings fellow Sun Riders! Several members have expressed a desire to purchase and install a real roll bar for their Miatas. Last year, we installed one in Steve Swiger's white '95. Several other Sun Riders such as Jeremy Schuster, Ann Venables, and Dewaine Norris also have equipped their cars with this important safety device.

Therefore, I am organizing and coordinating a group purchase of roll bars manufactured by Hard Dog. They are the premier manufacturer of roll bars for the Miata. So far I have received four inquiries from people who have expressed an interest in participating in the group purchase. I would like to see if there are at least one or two others out there who would be ready to buy in two months.

I would like to place the order in early May. Even allowing 5 - 6 weeks for Hard Dog to manufacture and ship the bars, it still allow us plenty of time (5 - 6 weeks) to schedule an all day Roll Bar Install Party well in advance of leaving for Deal's Gap at the end of July.

I will be placing this order on or around May 1st. The anticipated cost, including delivery to Tampa, should be between \$300.00 — \$400.00 for each roll bar depending on model, options selected and the size of the discount we might receive. (Early scouting has already confirmed a 10% discount - stay tuned.)

Please contact me at (727) 784-5529 if you would like further information, or are ready to place an order.

Jonathan Skinner
Co-Prez, SRMC



RANDOM PICTURE



BILL BULLINGTON PUSHES HARD AROUND THE LAST TURN AT THE JANUARY AUTOCROSS.

FOR SALE
MIATA HARD TOP, BLACK, \$1000
727-821-1566 / ST PETE

QuickSilver ad goes here

WHERE SHOULD I GO TO GET MY MIATA SERVICED?

Where should I go to get my miata serviced? We get inquires like this all the time! While we recognise that some club members are able to do their own maintainace service, the club is happy to promote the sponsoring Mazda Dealers, and can whole-heartedly recommend them, (especially the ones that offer a Club Discount!) We also realize that many club members have discovered other shops that are qualified to work on our cars. Since this is a question that comes up pretty frequently, here is a quick summary of several club members experiences so far:

Rob Schmidt highly recommends a shop in Tampa, saying "I found a gem of a mechanic in Jack Grulke. His shop is called TMR&S (Tampa Mazda Repair & Service). He's right across the street from the Suburu dealership on Hillsborough close to the Veteran's Expressway. It's really neat to go there and see nothing but Miatae and RX-7s ready for his magic." TMR&S is located at 6220 Hillsborough Ave. West, and can be contacted at (813) 886-4449.

Michael McKeon also has had good experience with a local shop. He says, "...as far as a mechanic, I highly recommend Maztech, it's a private shop owned by Jeff Gladish, a factory trained technician. Jeff will only work on Mazdas, and he's a fanatic about rotary engines. (I've owned two RX-7s.) His work is outstanding and his rates are reasonable." Maztech is located at 4810 N. Clark St. in Tampa, and can be contacted at (813)874-0937.

If you have had a positive experience with a shop, let us know about it, and we will pass it on to your fellow Sunriders. Mail your recomendation to us at Sunriders Miata Club, P.O. Box 26071, Tampa, FL 33623-6071, or just email Jonathan@sunriders.com.

NET NEWS

FOR THOSE OF YOU ON THE 'NET - THE CLUB NOW HAS AN ONLINE EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP. POST QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR FUNNY STORIES TO SUNRIDERS@EGROUPS.COM TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAILING LIST, SEE THE ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON THE FRONT PAGE AT SUNRIDERS.COM

ALSO, PAST NEWSLETTERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON LINE AT OUR WEBSITE. YOU CAN DOWNLOAD EACH NEWSLETTER IN PDF FORMAT FOR VIEWING ON YOUR SCREEN OR TO PRINT A COPY TO GIVE TO A FRIEND.



Thanks Guys!

George Bieber had donated a set of slightly used tires to the club (to be mounted on some cheap wheels and loaned to members in emergency situations or for autocross.)

Also, Ed Simon has donated his Beiffé Helmet to the club for us to use at the Autocrosses.

And Jim Poehlman is letting us borrow his laptop computer to run the timing software at the autocross.

Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

HORIZONS

Visit the club's web page at <http://www.sunriders.com>

Features at the site include "Miatas of the Net"; "There and Back Again" - a trip across the country in a Miata; Photos from SunRiders Events; the Calendar of Events, and links to other Miata-related web sites.

Call the Event Hotline at 813-225-4240 for the latest event information.



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