

March-April 2000
Volume 6, Issue 2



HORIZONS

The Official Newsletter of the SunRiders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

Passing the Torch: First, a bit of club history...

Two years ago Kevin Morrison, Jonathan Skinner, Steve Swiger, and Dewaine and Molly Norris were asked by the Sun Riders Miata Club founder and first president, Nico Pavan, to take over the Sun Riders. He was relocating and there wasn't a anyone else left to take over the operation of running the club. Dewaine and Molly quickly set up the necessary procedures to ensure that the club could continue, and then due to their need to focus on running their own business, they turned over the reins to us. As neither Kevin nor Jonathan wanted the sole responsibility of being president, they decided to split the responsibilities and dubbed themselves "Co-Presidents," something that has actually worked far better than one would reasonably expect!

We have since added additional board members, and together have grown the club into the largest and by far the most active Miata club in Florida. In addition, we are now in our third year of hosting the Sun Riders Autocross Series at the Allstate campus of SPJC, we have monthly club publications, we have an excellent website, we've instituted monthly dinner meetings, membership is way up, participation is way up, and many of us stay in touch via a very active email discussion group.

Under our term of office we have instituted a three pronged system of events: social, technical and driving, with obviously some overlap among the three. We have sponsored a variety of different types of activities from a typical Dine and Drive to tech sessions, to a Performance Driving School, to the autocross series and trips to Deals Gap in North Carolina to play in the mountains.

Neither Kevin nor Jonathan expected to remain in office as long as they have, and the time is now right for them to step aside and let some new leadership come to the front. Kevin will remain as webmaster and Horizons editor, and as such will stay on the board. Jonathan will assume the new title of Past President, and remain in that capacity on the board for the next year as well.

Board Meeting Summary.

A board meeting for the club was held in January to discuss the future of the club. In attendance were Jonathan Skinner, Kevin Morrison, Skip Willis, Pam Barker, and Jim Poehlman. Unable to attend were board members Paul Shaffer, Andrea Gambill, and Steve Swiger. Topics discussed included ways to make the autocrosses run smoother and how to deal with what happens when over 50 drivers show up. Also discussed was a plan to provide for club elections, to elect a new club president once a year, and provide continuity from year to year. The plan we arrived at is patterned after that of the Peachtree Miata Club of Atlanta where each year the vice president becomes president, the president moves to a board position known as "past president" and a new vice president is elected. This provides for continuity as the elected person moves from vice president, to president, to past president over a 3-year span.

Since Jonathan and Kevin have been "co-presidents" for almost 2 years now, they felt it was time to pass it off to someone else and get some new ideas and enthusiasm into the club's management. While both have enjoyed running the club (with a lot of help from many other people), two years is a long time to carry the load. In that light, the club will hold a general membership meeting at our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 18. The

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purpose of this meeting will be to elect a vice president and a president (since we don't currently have a vice president). Nominations have already been submitted (by Kevin) for Pam Barker (pam@barker.net) for president and Jim Poehlman (ragtop@sunriders.com) for vice president. Additional nominations are encouraged. Anyone can nominate someone, and you can even nominate yourself. To make a nomination, send an email to nominations@sunriders.com, or call our phone hotline at 813-225-4240 and leave a message before April 15. If you can't make the April 18 meeting and would still like to vote, contact Kevin and we'll make arrangements for you to exercise an absentee vote. The new officers will take office immediately after the election in April.

Autocross refinements.

Also at the January board meeting, some changes were planned for the autocross program. These changes stem primarily from the need to accommodate larger numbers of drivers, which has been the result of the continued success of the series. Starting with the March 11 event, all timed laps will be one lap of the course, rather than two. A new method for timing and scoring was devised which will speed up the process of recording and posting times and allow the cars to enter the course at much more frequent intervals. Also, a plan was devised to ensure that all course worker positions are filled and that all drivers help with the running of the event. Those who habitually attend our events without putting in their time as course workers or otherwise help out will be asked not to return. We do not anticipate having to do that with anyone, however.

Website relocation a success.

Due to the poor reliability of our sunriders.com email addresses, the club's website was recently moved to the servers of a different web hosting company. The email seems to be working much better now and we also gained a lot more storage space, as well as improved database connectivity with Active Server Pages capabilities. Look for the web site to start sporting more interactive features as we develop database-driven pages to enhance the site's usefulness to the club. For example, you may soon be able to go to the web site to inform the club of an address change. We also have the capability to give out email forwarding addresses from the sunriders.com domain.

The sunriders.com address simply forwards email to your existing email account. If you would like a sunriders.com email address, email me at kevin@sunriders.com, tell me what address you want the forward to send your mail to, and three choices for your username (e.g., username@sunriders.com). There is a \$10 per year charge for the address. Club board members and sponsors get a free email forward.

NEW MEMBERS

**MICHAEL ANGELO
JOHN LAVIGNE
ANDY & DIANE TOLAN
VIRGINIA MEADOR
WILLIAM D. LEOBOLD
ROBERT GRUBBS
MICHAEL ZILORA
SCOTT HOUSTON
CASEY HIGGINS
HARRY & WENDY FIELDS
CONNIE HERSH
MARY KING
JILL KOVACS
NATHAN & FRANCES TERREL**

Sponsors!

A Word for Our Sponsors

A hearty welcome to a couple of new sponsors, who you may have noticed in the last newsletter - Sunbrite Auto Works, and Just Miata. Sunbrite, in Tampa, specializes in all things cosmetic. They do paint, upholstery, and restoration of all types. Just Miata is our area's first independent all-Miata repair service. Owned by Stuart Thompson, JM can do any mechanical work the Miata may need, from a simple oil change to a new clutch or timing belt. Stuart also installs new tops (so does Sunbrite). Be sure to ask Stuart about the specialized braces he has developed for the Miata to reduce the ubiquitous 65 mph shimmy and tighten up the feel of the car. Don't forget our area dealerships, who offer discounts to club members on parts and service. As always, tell them you heard about them here!

Miata Engine Computer Self Diagnostics

By Glenn A. Stephens, Peachtree Miata Club

(Information from Miata Factory Service Manual and Miata Magazine)

The Miata engine computer continuously monitors many of the parameters related to engine performance such as fuel, spark, air, rpm, etc. It uses this information to get the most performance and fuel economy possible from the engine. A nice side effect is that it can detect many problems your engine may be experiencing and it even has a way to tell you about them.

When an out-of-range condition is detected a fault code is recorded in the engine computer. To read the codes, first open the diagnosis connector that is positioned just on top of the driver's side shock absorber under the hood. Raise the lid on the small black box to reveal the legend for the connector.

To test your engine, first start it up and let it reach normal operating temperature. Then shut the engine off and proceed with work at the diagnosis connector. Using an unfolded paper clip, connect the GND and the TEN pins together. Return to the driver's seat and turn your ignition key to "ON" but do not start the engine.

Observe the "CHECK ENGINE" light in your instrument panel. It will flash a certain number of times to indicate a malfunction in your engine's control system. Count the number of flashes to indicate the malfunction code.

If the code is a two-digit number, the "tens" digit will be displayed first, then for a short 1.6-second period the light will be dark, then the "ones" digit will be displayed. This will repeat after a four-second dark pause. If

there are multiple codes, they will each be separated by a four-second pause and may include two-digit codes, so pay attention.

Take as long as you need to record the codes and then refer to the chart below or section "F" of your factory service manual.

FAULT CODES

- 1 Ignition pulse
- 2 Ne signal
- 3 G signal
- 4 SGT signal (1.8L)
- 8 Airflow meter
- 9 Water thermistor
- 10 Intake air thermistor in airflow meter
- 12 Throttle position sensor
- 14 Atmospheric pressure sensor
- 15 Oxygen sensor (output too low)
- 16 EGR function sensor (1.8L)
- 17 Oxygen sensor (output not changing)
- 25 PRC solenoid valve (1.8L)
- 26 Solenoid valve (Evaporative canister purge)
- 27 EGR solenoid valve (vacuum)(1.8L)
- 28 EGR solenoid valve (vent)(1.8L)
- 34 Idle air control (1.8L)
- 36 Idle speed control valve

note: this information is known to apply to pre-OBDII cars (pre-'96).



PRESS RELEASE

February 23, 2000

RoadsterRage Racing announced today that they will be competing in the "Hoosier Tire Motorola Cup Pit Stop Challenge" during the 12-Hours of Sebring event. This event will challenge the RoadsterRage pit crew to prove they've "got what it takes" to make a super fast pit stop and tire change under competitive situations.

The competition will take place in the Motorola Cup Paddock at the Sebring event. The RoadsterRage team will compete against other teams in the C2K class and against teams in Sport/Touring class to determine a bracket winner. The winner of this bracket will receive a new set of Hoosier Race Tires and will face the winner of the Super Grand Sport and Grand Sport classes for the grand prize of \$1,000.

The format of the competition will be a head-to-head tournament with timed sessions. The loser of each round of competition will be eliminated. Early rounds require changing only two tires while later rounds will require changing all four tires. The competition is limited to five crew members per team, plus a driver. Provisions will be made to equalize cars with 4 and 5 bolt wheels.

This competition will be filmed for television broadcast.

Andy Felker of Cleveland, Tennessee and Rob Ebersol of Decatur, Georgia are drivers for the RoadsterRage Team. Steve Swiger of Tampa, Florida will act as crew chief. Pit crew members will include Kevin Morrison, Marcos Espinosa and Paul Shaffer of Tampa, Florida, and Jim Poehlman of St. Petersburg.



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Mazda Announces 2000 Special Edition

CHICAGO, Feb. 9 / PRNewswire/ — The Mazda Miata roadster is such a special automobile that it is hard to imagine making it better. But Mazda has gone and done just that with its new mid-year Miata Special-Edition. Destined for only 3,000 lucky Miata enthusiasts, the limited-production version of the popular roadster is equipped with a host of features not available on any other 2000 Miata.

- Slick-Shifting Six-Speed Transmission -

The limited-production six-speed transmission has close gear spacing for brisk acceleration yet it also provides quieter, more relaxed highway cruising. With one of the shortest and slickest shifters in the industry, shifting up and down through the Miata's gears is one of life's great driving pleasures. The 2000 Mazda Miata Special-Edition also includes a Torsen(R) limited-slip differential.

- Wood, Leather and Chrome Interior Appointments -

Other features include rich Mahogany Mica paint, parchment convertible top, parchment leather-trimmed seats and interior appointments, mahogany-colored NARDI(R) wood-rimmed steering wheel, shift knob and handbrake lever, white gauge faces, chrome accent rings on the gauges, chrome interior door handles, stainless steel scuff plates and polished 15-inch alloy wheels.

The 2000 Mazda Miata Special-Edition also includes a 200-watt Bose(R) AM/FM/CD/cassette audio system.

- Optional Equipment -

Fog lights, an aerodynamic appearance package (front air dam, side sills and rear mud guards), detachable hardtop and ABS brakes are available as options. The 2000 Mazda Miata Special-Edition goes on sale in Mazda dealerships nationwide this spring. Previous limited-production Miata models have sold out in as little as 90 days.

- Razor-Sharp Handling -

Like all 2000 Miata roadsters, the Special-Edition is powered by a 140-horsepower, 1.8-liter DOHC four-cylinder engine. The Miata's razor-sharp handling is the result of its rigid chassis, innovative Power Plant Frame and four-wheel double-wishbone suspension. Power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering and four-wheel disc brakes are also standard on the Miata.

Mazda North American Operations is responsible for the sales and marketing, customer parts and service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States. Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., MNAO has over 750 dealerships nationwide and is owned by Mazda Motor Corporation, Hiroshima, Japan.

SUNRIDERS MIATA CLUB OF TAMPA BAY

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Stuff the Lawyers make us say: All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SunRiders Miata Club, Miata Club of America, Mazda Motors, or the Board of Directors of any of these organizations. Technical advice given is based on the writers' experience with their particular cars. Unless otherwise stated, these procedures are not "Factory Approved". SunRiders assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of any information presented herein. Use any information at your own risk. Some assembly required, batteries not included. Keep away from small children and point away from face when lighting.



Calendar of Events

Friday, March 17- Sunday, March 19 - 48th Annual Superflo 12 Hours of Sebring.

Part of the **American LeMans Series**, this is the annual 12 hour endurance classic. Featuring many of the same teams and cars that will compete in the 24 Hours of LeMans in June, this is the first time many of the teams will race this year. The SunRiders are teaming up with the **Miata Club of America** to provide all Miata enthusiasts at the race with a hospitality area. We'll have a big RV with a grill cooking dogs, burgers and other stuff all weekend. Feel free to drop by, say hi and take a break from the racing. Several SunRiders will be working as crew members for the **Roadster Rage** race team, who race in the **Motorola Cup** street stock championship (the Motorola Cup race is on Sunday afternoon). Look for a big RV in the Motorola Competitors' Paddock with SunRiders and MCA banners hanging on it. Ticket information is available from Sebring International Raceway at 800-626-RACE.

Tuesday, March 21 : Monthly Meeting at Biff Burger and Buffy's Southern Pit Barbeque, St. Petersburg. 7 PM. Biff's is located at 3939 49th St. N. in St. Pete. Meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Saturday, March 25 : 11:00AM. Tech Session - 4615 North Boulevard, Tampa. Call Kevin at 813-222-0509 for information.

Saturday, April 1. 10:30 AM. Celebrate April Fool's day in foolish style by parading with other members of the Sunriders Miata Club at the **Safety Harbor Jesterdays Parade**. We will be driving our Miatas as part of the parade and the Sunriders will provide trinkets and beads to throw to the crowds. This Renaissance/Mardi Gras theme parade will take place on Saturday, 4/1/00 at 12:00 pm until approximately 2:00pm. Immediately following the parade, Jesterdays will continue with a festival featuring restaurant samplings, live music, crafts, a children's area and much more, continuing through the day until 6:00 pm. If you are interested in participating, then please call Pam Barker at 727-528-0334 or email her at pam@barker.net We will be meeting at 10:30 at the Clearwater welcome center on the north side of Gulf-to-Bay at the west end of the Courtney Campbell Causeway and then driving as a group to the parade staging area.

Friday to Sunday, April 14 - 16 : St. Augustine Sizzle hosted by First Coast Miata Club. Check First Coast's web site at www.teeone.net/fcmcmiata for details and registration or contact Kathy Garvin at 904-879-7227.

Sunday, April 9, 8:00AM . Sunday Breakfast Run. Northern Route. Meet at McDonald's at SR54 and US41 in Lutz at 8:00AM. From there we go north to Citrus County for some twisty roads and breakfast at Mizell's Country Restaurant in beautiful Brooksville.

Tuesday, April 18 : Monthly Meeting at Biff's Burgers 7 PM. Officer elections will be held.

Sunday, April 30 . High Performance Driving school at the Southeastern Public Safety Institute, SPJC-Allstate Campus. This is an 8-hour class taught by police driving instructors. Some insurance companies will give you a discount for taking this course. Call Jonathan Skinner at 727-784-5529 if you are interested. We need everyone to sign up and pay in advance for this event.

Saturday, May 13 : SunRiders Autocross Series 2000 - event number three, SPJC Allstate Compus, 7:30AM.

Saturday, June 24 . Trip to Solomon's Castle. More details will be posted as they are available. Rumor has it that King Solomon is a nutcase.

Saturday, July 8 : Third Annual Night Race! SunRiders Autocross Series 2000 event number four. 3PM to 10PM - we like to drive fast in the dark.

ASTONISHING FACTS ABOUT YOUR ROADSTER... (TECH TALK BY STUART THOMPSON)

The gas you choose and your style of driving. The butterfly valve and throttle body on the 99's has a tighter tolerance than earlier Miatas. 90-97's have a gap in the butterfly valve/throttle body (bv/tb) that most would say is abnormally large, but that gap was by design to help make a cleaner running car. When a 90-97 has a clean bv/tb it rests for a few seconds at 1500rpm or base idle set by the butterfly valve after decel and then the computer takes over and tells the idle speed control valve to choke the car down to 800rpm. That rest at 1500 purges back gasses and makes for cleanliness. Over time, as the intake manifold collects muck, fuel vapor, blow-by, exhaust gas, condensation, oil, etc, it forms a dirty ring around the bv/tb that constricts this large gap and the car begins to drop right into an 800rpm idle without the pause at 1500. The car is not as clean as it was but it is clean enough and luckily the car continues to run well enough. When the ring becomes too big it forms an actual raised ridge of carbon around the throttle body at the butterfly valve and the car begins to hesitate or stumble at throttle tip in. Lots of Miatas suffer from this very situation. A sinister and alternate theory is that the factory was precompensating for the build-up, but that is just a theory. Any 97 or older Miata can benefit greatly from a bv/tb service to clean all the unwanted build-up. The 99's bv/tb has a tighter gap or what some would consider a more normal gap between the two. Why this change, I don't know. I wonder if this more normal tolerance may be too small and the car is beginning to choke itself off due to a premature build-up. I've looked at some 99 bv/tb's and have found varying amounts of build up from light to surprisingly heavy. I have no explanation for it, but driving style and quality of gas may have something to do with it. I have cleaned the bv/tb's on several 99's and I am waiting for feedback. Jim Poelman had light build-up and some hesitation. I have cleaned his bv/tb and he reports no hesitation since. Jim runs Mobil gas in his tank and the interior of his intake manifold was relatively clean. Jim also has healthy right foot. There are many factors involved, but the build-up may be a starting point.

If you have noticed your power windows slowing down, it is time to have them lubed. Both right and left windows travel a set of metal rails and one rubber rail. I lubricate the metal rails with

adhesive high temp grease. The rubber rail gets a special silicone rubber care. If the windows slow too much, one of the cables ends that pull the window either up or down can come off and if that happens you're done. The cable that breaks is \$5, but you have to buy the \$300+ mechanism it comes in. I have rebuilt these winder mechanisms with bicycle cable, but that is also expensive at \$200 per side. Do some preventative maintenance. It takes me about an hour or \$45 to remove the door panels and lube both sides. I also lube the locking and latching mechanisms while I am in the door. Just Miata is a Moss Motors, MM Marketing, and West Co. Battery dealer. If you have any accessory needs, I can order for you and atleast save you shipping and I'm sure just a little more depending on the item. West Co. batteries are currently \$70. Other dealerships are in the works.



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On-Line Member Profile Pages Progress...

A committee was formed late last year to organize and implement a way to gather general information about individual club members that could be posted on the Sun Riders' web site with a picture of the person with their beloved roadster. Dave Tietz put together a sample and it was agreed that this was indeed a smashing idea. The task at hand now is to solicit submissions from our esteemed club members who would like to have their distinguished mugs plastered on the internet for all to see. Really, there's a noble intent behind this plan. We want our fellow club members to know who we are and what we look like when we show up for an event. Look to the right side of this page. There you will find a form. Fill out this form and mail it, along with a nice picture of you and your car - or just you - but not just your car - to the club at PO Box 26071, Tampa, FL 33603. The only thing you have to fill out is your name and city, but all that other information makes for a much more interesting member profile and you certainly wouldn't want to appear boring, would you? Of course if you are one of the more technically inclined among us you could forego the pen-and-pencil approach and command the electrons in your computer to convey the information requested, along with an electronic rendition of your favorite photo. If you are so inclined, the email address of choice would be dave@sunriders.com.

Some of you even had your photos taken by Dave back in December at the club's holiday picnic. If that's your case, drop Dave a line and tell him what he needs - no, yearns - to know (if you haven't already).

That is all.

Note: we realize that we have a number of members who actually do not own any Miatas. If you fall into this admittedly bizarre group of individuals, please do not be discouraged. We'd like to see your distinguished mugs, too.

We invite you to post a picture of you and your car on our Member's Photo Gallery on our web site. The photo must include you (significant others & family if you wish) and your car(s).

The first four items following are mandatory, the remaining 6 are optional. You may also include your e-mail address and personal web page(s) in the comments field if you wish.

Please join the others in the Gallery and send us this completed form with a picture (include a SASE if you want it returned).

Name(s) _____

City, ST _____

Sunrider Since _____

Miata Model _____

Miata Color _____

Miata Name _____

Miata Enhancements _____

Hobbies _____

Comments _____

Alternatively, you may fill out this form on the www.sunriders.com site and send photo via e-mail.

CLUB MERCHANDISE!

The club now has in stock a selection of apparel, emblazoned with the Sun Riders official logo.

Here's what's available and the prices:

POLO SHIRTS - \$25. These attractive Polos are made by Jerzees and are professionally embroidered with the logo on the left breast. Colors: White, Gray, Red, Green, Blue, others may be available as special order. Sizes S-XL

T-SHIRTS - \$15. Hanes Beefy-T, 100% Cotton, logo on left breast. Colors: white, red, others special order. S-XL

TANK TOPS - White, small or large only - clearance, \$5 each.

DUFFEL BAG - \$20 Black, nylon construction, real nice! Two left.

WORKOUT SHORTS - black, elastic wasteband, large, one pair only - \$10

CAPS - \$15 - this is the popular low-profile cotton cap. Colors: white, Khaki/green, Khaki/grey. One size fits all.


MEMBER BUTTONS - \$2 - Big, round button with your name and a likeness of your car in the correct color. Contact Ed Simon at an event to order one.

CLUB PINS - \$4 - this unique pin is made in Colorado by Joe Portas, the "Knobmeister" on his Laser-engraver. It's an exact likeness of the Sun Riders' logo carved from real cherry wood. Approx. 5/8 inch square. Buy several to trade with other clubs at regional and national events.

Contact Jonathan Skinner at an event, or at 727-784-5529, or jonathan@sunriders.com to order apparel or club pins.

Membership Cards!

Inside this issue of Horizons, you should have already found your new membership card for 2000. All current members should have received one. If you didn't get one, or got the wrong one, please let us know. Your membership card is good for a 10% discount at Mazda Village, Lindell Mazda and Courtesy Mazda on parts and labor in the service department.



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Borbet Type S Wheels with Pirelli 700Z tires. Borbet Type S: 35 mm offset, 15x7, approximately 15.2 lbs A complete set and only used for about 600 miles. Price \$525 (Paid \$800)

I also have a set of Isuzu Impulse wheels with a set of Kuhmo V700 Victoracer's which are 205/55VR14.

The tires are still above the wear bars and have plenty of autocrosses left. Price \$150 (Paid \$500 - but used). Call Adam Paternostro at (813) 930-0283 or email paternostro@sprintmail.com

A note from Jim Poehlman - Golf anyone?

A few members have brought up the idea of a club sponsored golf outing of some sort or another. I have talked to other clubs about co-participating in an event and golf seems to be a popular suggestion. So I'm soliciting for input and ideas to possibly put together a golf tournament for sometime later this year. This sure could be a lot of fun. It could also be a great way to support a charity too!

If there's anyone out there that has experience in coordinating a golf tourney who would like to take this ball and run with it, let me know! Catch me at an event, send me e-mail (ragtop@sunriders.com) or give me a call at 727-895-4224

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HORIZONS

Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

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

Features at the site include "Miatas of the Net", articles, 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 or to leave a message for the club.



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