

Volume 9 No. 4
October 2018

Show Me Your Curves *Drifting into Autumn!*

The Official
Newsletter of



Editor's message

By Doug Jackson



Autumn has arrived in Muskoka! This can be a wonderful time of the year to enjoy our Miatas ... cool, crisp days, colourful scenery, fewer tourists on our back roads and no pesky bugs!

The summer months have provided us with lots of activities for our group. Summaries of MOST of these activities are contained in this edition. The trip report for the Calabogie cruise and the summary of the Fall Colours cruise will be delayed until the next edition, in order to have at least two or three club activities to report on in our fourth quarterly newsletter (due at the end of December). Look on the club website for a few photos while you wait!

Sincere "Thanks" to all of our members who volunteered to lead and co-ordinate the numerous stimulating cruises and activities for our membership. The expression, "Many hands make light work", certainly was in evidence this summer. It was so nice to see some of our new members taking a

leadership role ... thanks for your willingness to "share the load"!

Cal Lander, once again, has done a superb job in taking my rather ordinary MS Word documents and photos and then manipulating the contents into a very professional newsletter. He's a wizard with his publishing program! Thanks so much, Cal!

Happy cruising this autumn season! Let's hope for some great weather to enjoy our cars before 'old man winter' returns! The poor weather forced the cancellation of our last scheduled ICR, (the Corn Roast at Maureen's), but there will be good days remaining this fall!



Trading Up?

Dominick picks up his Fiat from his mechanic Tony. Tony says, "Dominick, you gotta think about trading this car in. It seems like it's breakin' down every other week. I love having you as a customer but this car is costing you a fortune."

"Yeah, but look at it," Dominick says. "It's starting to rust, the tires are almost bald, and it's got like 90,000 miles on it. Nobody's gonna give me any money for a Fiat with 90,000 miles on it."

"Tell you what I can do," Tony says. "This is just between you and me, but I could roll back your odometer. That way you could maybe get at least a few hundred bucks for it."

Dominick agrees and gives Tony \$20 to roll back the odometer.

Two weeks later Dominick comes by and asks Tony to top off the oil on the Fiat. Tony looks at the car and says, "I thought you was gonna trade this car in. What are ya doin' still driving it??"

"Trade it in??" says Dominick. "Are you nuts? This car's only got 30,000 miles on it!"

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Show Me Your Curves

is a quarterly publication of a Miata enthusiasts group known as the Miatas of Muskoka... We are a small group that like to explore the twisty back roads and scenic lakes in Canada's premier vacation playground Muskoka.

Visit our Website at

URL:<http://www.miatasofmuskoka.com/>

Or

Check us out on Facebook: [miatasofmuskoka](#).

Special Thanks to



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For their ongoing support of our group

Events Calendar. . .

Miatas of Muskoka 2018 Cruise Event Schedule			2018
Cruise Event	Date(s)	Event Type	Cruise Director(s)
Spring Fling Cruise & Brunch Swiss Country Restaurant, Ahmic Lake Resort, Magnetawan	Sun. May 6th	Day-trip	Gord & Laurel Bauldry
Around the Lakes Cruise & Picnic (Lk. Muskoka, Lk. Rosseau, Lk. Joseph)	Sat. May 26th	Day-trip	Mike & Cathy Fedorowich (Macaulay input)
Orillia area Cruise & Couchiching Pk. Picnic/outdoor games	Thurs. June 7th	Day-trip	Cal & Gail Lander (Fedorowich input)
Angevaare Mazda Annual Miata Open House/BBQ/Cruise (Peterborough)	Sun. June 10th	Day-trip	No CD req'd (Michael Topping will lead to Peterborough & back)
Caledon Area Cruise (Forks of the Credit, etc.)	Weds/Thurs June 20th/21st	Overnight (1 nite)	Ed & Judy Gigg CANCELLED
Lake Huron Shore Cruise (& lunch at Walters' Falls Inn)	Tues/Weds July 3rd/4th	Overnight (1 nite)	Garry & Patty Walker
Orillia Mazda BBQ	Sat. July 21st	Day-trip	To be determined
Almaguin Highlands Cruise (& lunch at Edgewater Resort)	Thurs. Aug 9th	Day-trip (desig.charity cruise)	Larry & Barb Dickson (Macaulay input)
"Miata Rally for Kids" (start from Moffat's Mazda Barrie – details being finalized)	Sat. Aug. 18th	Day-trip	No CD req'd – (Bob Macaulay is MoM's contact with event plnr.)
King's Wharf Theatre "Hairspray" Matinee and dinner (Penetang)	Sat Aug. 18th	Day-trip	Doug & Sheila Jackson
Niagara Area Cruise (+ Shaw Fest. & Hamilton area waterfalls?)	TBD (week of Aug. 26th-30th)	Overnight (1 or 2 nites)	CANCELLED
Haliburton/Bancroft Picnic Cruise	Thurs. Sept. 6th	Day-trip	Bob & Carol Macaulay
Calabogie/Renfrew Cty. Cruise	Weds.-Thurs. Sept. 19th -20th	Overnight (1 nite)	Bob & Carol Macaulay
Fall Colours (Muskoka) Cruise (& lunch)	Thurs. Oct. 4th	Day-trip	Mike & Cathy Fedorowich

ICE CREAM RUNS

2nd and 4th Tuesday evg. every month (starts May 22nd) Meet at Fresh Market, Independent Grocer @ 6:30 PM (unless advised otherwise) Runs are May 22nd, June 12th** & 26th, July 10th** & 24th, Aug 14th** and possibly Sept. 25th, weather permitting.

***"Special" runs are usually in advance notice only. May 22nd, June 12th, July 10th, Aug 14th, Sept. 25th, weather permitting.

June 12th - Washago home (Fairy Lk, Huntsville)
July 10th - Quality Inn, Bracebridge
August 14th - Corn roast, M. Newton home (Penfold Lk, Utterson)
Sept. 10th - Corn roast, M. Newton home (Penfold Lk, Utterson)

Cruise Reminders:

1. Before each cruise (except the regular ice cream runs), an Event Notice with all details will be circulated to all members, both for your information and to obtain an RSVP response, to assist the Cruise Directors(s) with final planning and arrangements for the event. **Please respect the requested response deadline and provide a timely “yes” or “no” response by return e-mail, regardless of whether or not you will be attending.**
2. To ensure the safety of all cruise participants, CB radios are required for participation in all MoM cruise events, except for the ice cream runs; please remember to bring and use your CB.

[NOTE: if you don't already own a CB, MoM now has 2 portable (hand-held) CB units available for temporary use on a one-time only loan basis, pending acquisition of your own CB unit.]
3. Please try and member to cruise with your lights on for safety reasons, especially when travelling in a larger group.

Upcoming Events . . . **AUTUMN**

As you can see by the preceding schedule we are finished cruising for the season.

Please treat your little cars gently for the winter .



STEPHEN BAZUK

December 25, 1946 - September 27, 2018

It is with great sadness that I inform members of the Miatas of Muskoka of the very sudden passing of Steve Bazuk on Thursday afternoon, September 27th. Steve and his wife, Wendy, have participated in numerous Miata Club day cruises and overnight excursions with our club during the past few years. His 1999 blue "Tenth Anniversary Special Edition" car attracted admirers wherever it went, and Steve and Wendy were justifiably proud of their Miata. All of us in the car club will fondly remember Steve's bubbly personality and his genuine interest in other people. It was a joy to sit with him at our various lunches, dinners and parties. It was a pleasure to be in his company.



Our thoughts and prayers go out to Wendy and her family at this very difficult time.

Sheila and I are extraordinarily shocked and saddened by Steve's sudden passing because of our association with him at Settlers' Ghost Golf Club. Both Steve and Wendy play in golf leagues there, and Steve and I have been on the same foursome for the past six or seven years. I shall truly miss his friendship and his companionship.

I know that our Miatas of Muskoka Car Club members will offer Wendy and her family support and assistance in any way we can during this very difficult time.

RIP, Steve!

Doug Jackson

Membership

Meet the New Members!

Clarence and Donna Pardy

Clarence and I are thrilled to join the “Miatas of Muskoka Car Club”. Our 1991 Miata is among the oldest in the club, but it still looks like new! The club member’s camaraderie is amazing and made us feel very welcome. We had the opportunity to join the group on three runs this summer and enjoyed every minute!

It’s a stretch for us to talk about ourselves but will do our best to provide you with some

background information. Clarence was born in Little Harbour, Newfoundland, where many of his relatives still live. We have the joy of visiting his folks every few years and are still enamoured with its beautiful landscape.

Clarence has two daughters and 2 grandchildren. He was employed in various positions in Toronto and Beeton before moving to Midland 20 years ago where he has worked in carpentry. He has a workshop attached to the garage and is known as the “Go to Guy” for tools and building kitchens and decks.

In the relatively short time Clarence and I have been married, we have enjoyed taking excursions to Europe and sailing on Georgian Bay. My long career as a nurse in Toronto encompassed both hospital and outpatient settings. I have 2 children and 3 grandchildren, which are a total delight. I am involved in many activities in Midland that include volunteering, YMCA, and book club. Midland is an amazing place to live!

We look forward to discovering unknown curvy roads, top down, with you, the Miatas of Muskoka Car Club.



Donna Pardy

Membership

Meet the New Members!

Jack and Leslie Van der Meer

Leslie and I popped around southern Ontario after we got married in 1966, following my postings with the old Department of Lands and Forests, from Downsview (living at Pape and Danforth, where Leslie finished teachers' College), to Presqu'île Park, Lindsay, Richmond Hill, Lindsay again, Queen's Park (living in Pickering), then to Huronia (living in Minesing just outside of Barrie) and finally, in 1976, to Huntsville. As a student I had worked one summer as a naturalist in Algonquin Park, and that shaped my career. I spent most of my working life working with Provincial Parks, with an unspoken goal of getting back to Algonquin. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to become the "Regional Parks Co-ordinator" for an area from Pembroke to Parry Sound, which included a large variety of operating Provincial Parks and Park Reserves.

Algonquin was one of those Parks.

During this moving about, Leslie had bursts of teaching opportunities, until we uprooted once again. It did not take long for her to settle into a teaching career in Huntsville; of course, while being the primary caregiver for our three daughters.

Early in our young life together, we splurged and bought a Triumph GT6 sports coupe. Our timing was off, because before the limited warrantee was over, we were carrying our first daughter and all of the baby paraphernalia in the back-hatch area. Thereafter followed a progressing of more-or-less practical sedans, wagons, vans and trucks. Except, in 1983, I got a 1981 Honda Silverwing motorcycle to satisfy an urge.

And after retirement, the joy of riding two-up on a vintage motorcycle lost its bloom. While looking for a bigger, newer bike, even considering one of the newer "trikes", we saw a Miata with a for sale sign in front of Northern Imports in Huntsville. The rest is history.

We told our three girls (with three sons-in-law and eight grandchildren) that we had replaced our bike and were driving down to Brampton to show them. A lot of emails in CAPITAL LETTERS arrived immediately, telling us to be careful, watch out for the cars and trucks, et cetera, all the while thinking we were crazy. When we showed up in a Miata, they were surprised, visible relieved, and I think, forgot to think it was almost as crazy and impetuous a purchase as a motorcycle would have been. A good diversionary strategy on our part, don't you think?

So here we are, long time Muskokans, short time Miata owners, and brand new (in spring of this year) members of Miatas of Muskoka.



Events already enjoyed. . .

Shores of Lake Huron Overnight Cruise, July 3 and 4, 2018

by Patty Walker

(with photos from Doug)

Since the Walkers reside in Wasaga Beach, our cruise began there, leaving the Walmart parking lot at 9:30 am, an extremely early hour for those travelling from Huntsville. We were pleased to welcome Theresa



Hutchinson and her new RF for her first cruise with our club. Walmart was not the highlight of the cruise, but lunch at Pebbles in Varney certainly was!

We found our way there through some pretty countryside including Stayner, Creemore, Glen Huron, Singhampton, Eugenia, Markdale and Durham. On the way, we passed the “Pot House”, the

marijuana grow-op just outside Wasaga Beach. We also drove by the competitor of Kawartha Dairy, Chapman’s Ice Cream, in Durham. We tried to get a tour of the facility, but we were turned down, so it’s confirmed that Kawartha Dairy remains the trademark



of MoMer’s ice cream cruises. Pebbles Restaurant served up some pretty good grub in an exceptionally clean buffet and we can understand why their signature dish is broasted chicken, crispy and tasty and hot. Their pies are not too shabby either.

With very full tummies, we raced through farm country to Goderich to catch our tour of the Historic Gaol and Huron County Museum before they closed at 4:30. Our friendly guides there let



us stay a wee bit longer, so we could have a good look around. The museum's signature items are the two-headed calves, taxidermied and on display. Souvenir paraphernalia

featured these calves. We also learned that the Gaol (jail) served many purposes including a home for unwed mothers.

Then it was back out into the heat of the day for a quick run up to our lodgings at the Holiday Inn



Express, pick up some petrol for our little cars, have a short rest then toddle across the parking lot for some more grub at the Boston Pizza. After dinner, we had some leisure time and a few of our group went to the pool area and



formed the "MoM Synchronized Hot Tub Floating Team"! End of day one. And it sure was hot that day!

Day two began very hot as well. At 9:30 we gathered in the parking lot after our included breakfast and headed north to Tiverton to the Bruce Nuclear Plant and a guided tour of the amazingly gigantic, sprawling facility. Before the tour we had plenty of time to peruse the numerous exhibits on display. Rules and regulations did not allow for the taking of pictures on the site, so all we have are good memories of the bus tour. We did, however, get a group shot outside the Visitor Centre.



All of us were surprised at the size; it is literally a town not unlike Base Borden. We toured the plant in the air-conditioned comfort of the white tour bus and listened to a well-rehearsed and informative guide who was quite willing to answer questions as we went along.



From the Bruce Nuclear, we headed north to Southampton to “our place”, The Walker House for lunch. We were happy to see that our group of 20 were seated in the air-conditioned side of this historic pub. The main part of the restaurant had the windows open.

On our way home through downtown Owen Sound, we put the lids on the little cars to keep from baking. We managed an ice cream stop in Thornbury (not Kawartha), and after that some of the

northern people headed for home because of the late hour. The rest of us continued on through the Town of Blue Mountain to bypass the lights in Collingwood and said our final good-byes at the Tim Horton's parking lot in Stayner.



2018 Charity Event

Almaguin Highlands Cruise

Thursday, August 9, 2018

by Larry and Barb Dickson

(with photos from Doug and Barb)

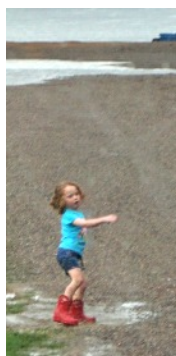
Each year, the club selects a worthy charity and designates one event as a charity cruise. This year's charity was Hospice Orillia. For this year's cruise, we revisited some of our favourite routes and destinations in the Almaguin Highlands. Prior to departure, participants engaged in some unusual warm-up exercises that included a graceful limbo maneuver under a fence.



It was tops down for the first leg of the trip which wound along backroads from Huntsville through Sprucedale and Katrine for a stop at the Wooden Roo in Burk's Falls. At 3 points, deer were seen at the



side of the road admiring the parade of Miatas.



On route to Sand Lake for lunch at Edgewater Lodge, our group was undeterred by torrential rain. As we waited for the rain to subside after lunch, a gleeful young girl reminded us all of how carefree youth can be with an exuberant puddle dance.

Enduring another bout of heavy rain, we headed south along the east side of Lake of Bays for an ice cream stop at Miss Nelle's



in Baysville. The rain subsided as we arrived.

In addition to donations from the 10 cars that participated in the cruise, generous donations from members who couldn't



attend and a special “top-up” from club coffers combined for a total donation of \$1,385.00 to Hospice Orillia from Miatas of Muskoka. Several of our Miata Club members were able to attend a special “cheque presentation ceremony” at Couchiching Park in Orillia in early September.

Thanks to all that helped make this happen.

You don’t need sunshine to have a good time!



Hospice
Orillia

Events already enjoyed. . .

“Hairspray”

Cruise, Farm Visit, Picnic, Theatre and Dinner,

Saturday, August 18, 2018

by Doug and Sheila Jackson

The date of August 18th had been booked since November of 2017, a block of theatre tickets had been ordered for over nine months, but the Jackson's, as Cruise Directors, stewed about what to do in addition to attending the theatre. We have been spoiled by driving on the twisting, undulating roads of Muskoka through the years. There are not many twisty roads in farming country. Farming country. That's it! We'll take the group to an outstanding feature of our part of Simcoe County ... a progressive, modern dairy farm ... one of the suppliers to Kawartha Dairies, our favourite ice cream source!

We sent out a preliminary notice in November, and, to our surprise, had participation responses from the owners of nineteen cars! Since that number was one of the largest for our club, we needed two groups. The voices of Sheila Jackson, Al Fitkin, Gail Lander, and Judy Gigg were

heard on the CB's throughout the day as we journeyed to various destinations.

We asked the group to assemble in Orillia, and, after using the washrooms and having a brief driver's meeting, we left on a drive through the back roads of Simcoe County, arriving at Heritage Park in Elmvale for our scheduled 'pit stop' before leaving for the farm.



After a short drive, we reached the farm of Ross and Debbie Langman. Ross, and his sons Adam, Drew and Curtis, welcomed the MoMers and took us in two groups through their dairy barn. We were all impressed with the high degree of twenty-first century technology used on this very progressive and innovative farm. We saw robots cleaning the stables, robots feeding the cows, computers measuring, tabulating, recording

and analyzing details of cows and calves growth, development and production. Ross had parked two huge pieces of farm equipment outside for us to examine, but we were all so interested in the workings of the dairy operation that we didn't have time to learn much about them!



Adam got the drone that is often used to survey the huge acreage that is farmed by the Langman family and flew it to take some photos of our cars lined up in the farmyard. The clarity of the photos is amazing! Ross and his sons were thanked for their excellent tour and then we made our way back to Elmvale for our picnic lunch.



After lunch, we went northward on some secondary roads, eventually

reaching Penetanguishene and the King's Wharf Theatre. We arrived in enough time for folks to enjoy a beverage on the patio, before making our way into the theatre. Once inside, we were entertained by an excellent production of the musical, "Hairspray". Even though the music and the storyline is not as familiar as some other more-famous productions, the performances by the cast and the band were highly entertaining!



After the production, we leisurely strolled around the boardwalk, posed for a group photo and then made our way to "Captain Robert's Table", the on-site restaurant where we enjoyed our pre-ordered dinners.



Since we had experienced a very full day, some of the members elected to return directly to their homes, while some others drove into Midland to the "Tugboat Festival". We saw at least fifteen tugboats

from all around the Great Lakes moored at the harbor. Many of the tugs had information signs placed alongside so that folks could learn about their history. Of course there was a Kawartha Dairies ice cream shop right at the harbor, so you know what we did!

This is the third year in a row that the group has attended a production at King's Wharf. We have enjoyed "Mamma Mia", "Joseph" and "Hairspray" so far. Will we be attending another production in 2019? Stay tuned!



Events already enjoyed. . .

Haliburton and Bancroft Picnic Cruise,

Thursday, September 6, 2018

by Cathy Fedorowich

(with photos from Fedorowich and Lander participants)

SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

In August of 2015 we bought our first Miata and decided to go out with the Miatas of Muskoka group for a trial cruise. We were warmly welcomed by all and it was such fun. A couple of years later, and can still say the same, such a fun bunch!

"Miatas of Muskoka" events are always eagerly anticipated, another chance to be with people you so enjoy and of course, another opportunity to drive our little cars. Well, September 6th arrived, the day for our cruise and picnic in Kinmount area. The only real threat that day was the weather. It was cloudy and a little cool but we hoped for the sunshine to appear in time for our picnic.

As we neared the meeting spot in Baysville, a telephone call came in from Bob & Carol,



our cruise directors for that day. The unimaginable had happened with Bob reporting that they had just gotten a flat tire in their Miata



but were safely off to the shoulder of the road. Oh, my goodness, what to do now! Bob & Carol were not going to be directing us that day and we were now on our own. Fortunately, Mike and I were scheduled to be "pigging in the middle" and Cal and Gail the sweeps, so we had the written directions and map to hopefully get us to the proposed destination of Kinmount but we were without our very seasoned cruise planner, Bob Macaulay and his wife Carol, to provide their excellent skills of leading.

Life can certainly put one on the spot at times but this amazing group of spirited members would somehow carry on and so we did. With written cruise instructions in hand, the Fedorowich's lead the cruise fingers crossed and the Lander's being our sweep; "Piggy in the middle" was now the Walker's. Clouds followed us for the first little while but as we got closer to our destination the sunshine peeked out; that part was good. Oh, oh, we missed a street and now approaching an area where paving was going on. That wasn't supposed to be

happening. We proceeded through with little trouble when conversation over the CB radio questioned if we were going in the right direction. All agreed to pull over on a side street and have a look at what the GPS was indicating. According to the GPS, we were fine, so it was just a matter of driving down the street we were on and doing a turn around. Another oh no, it was a dead end street. Laughter broke out as we all, about 10 cars in total, circled around seeing the entourage coming back at us. We got to wave at each other as we went by spoke one member. Back on to the intended route again, still hopeful of reaching our destination.

Pretty much on the scheduled time Bob had planned for, and with the help of Cal's portion of written directions and GPS, we joyously arrived in Kinmount at the lovely park with the old railway station and restored sawmill. It was definitely worth the drive. What a beautiful relaxing spot for a picnic lunch.



After lunch it was back to the cruise notes and map. A little confusion as to how to depart the park and now more laughter. Thinking that Bob would not have turned left (that would have been a no,no on a cruise) we turned right. Laughter broke out through the CB radios as we changed our direction with another turn around. Soon we were back on route to Minden for our ice-cream stop at Kawartha Dairy.





Spirits saved and still wearing smiles we enjoyed our ice-creams and said our goodbyes each of us going home in different directions now.

***"step in" Cruise Directors
Cathy & Mike Fedorowich***



Special ICR

Cruise and Potluck Dinner at Macaulay's July 10, 2018

by Bob and Carol Macaulay

(with photos from Doug)

On a sunny Tuesday afternoon, July 10th, 24 people in 13 MoMer cars gathered in Port Sydney for the second “special” ice cream run of our 2018 cruising season. This time, the event included a nice late afternoon Miata cruise on some great Miata back roads around Lake Vernon in north Muskoka, ending at the home of Bob & Carol Macaulay on Fairy Lake in Huntsville, for a “genuine” potluck supper. Several of our neighbours noticed the many Miatas trekking along our shared private road to our place and made a point of asking us afterwards if the event was some sort of “Miata rally”.

The potluck supper truly was “genuine”, because we did not attempt to pre-arrange any of the food items to be brought by everyone, but rather, just decided to go with the flow and take our chances that, for instance, 8



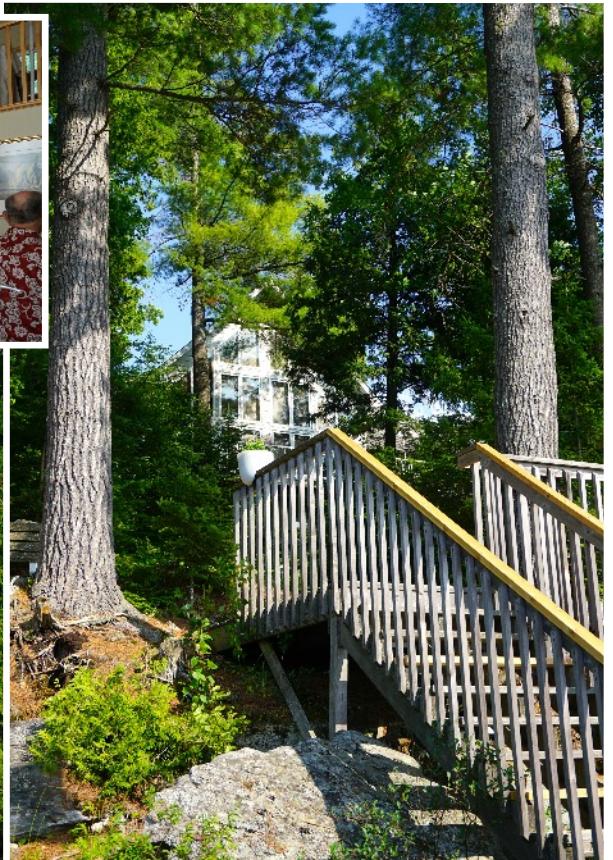
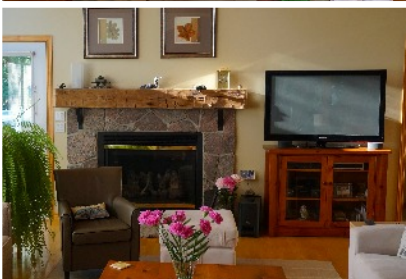
people didn't decide independently to bring the same item (such as potato salad, usually a staple of summer meals.) As a matter of fact, not a single person brought any potato salad ... go figure! What did show up was an amazing variety of different, very tasty food choices ... including lots of different types of salads (e.g. bean, lettuce, taco), meatballs, pulled pork, chicken, and turkey, just to name just a few. Needless to say, everyone was able to find lots of choice among foods they like to eat. All these main course choices

were followed by further options for dessert ... 3 yummy flavours of Kawartha Dairy ice cream from which to choose.

Another enjoyable "special" ice cream run was in the books which probably should become an annual event (with a different host each year, of course!...)



Bob Macaulay



Special ICR

Bowling and Dinner

August 14, 2018

by **Bob Macaulay**

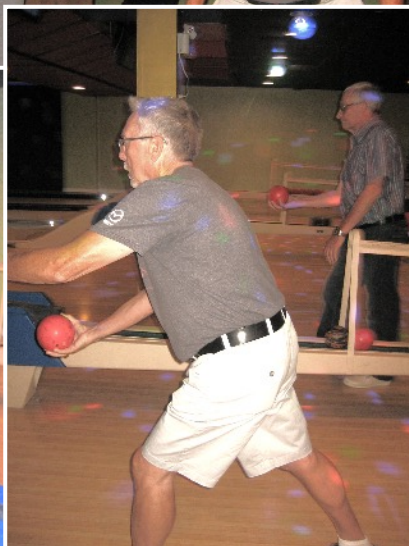
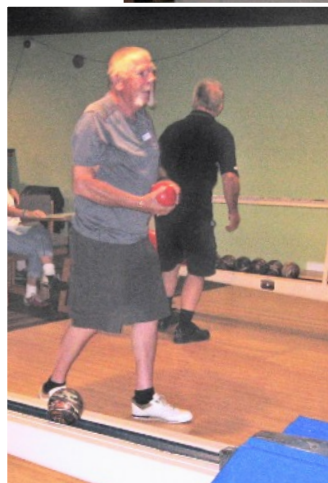
(with photos from Carol)

MoM's third "special" ice cream run of the 2018 season comprised our third annual "bowling & dinner" event, which took place on Tuesday August 14th. Many thanks to Laurel Bauldry for facilitating the necessary arrangements.

This year we bowled in Bracebridge, at the 5-pin lanes available in the basement at the *Quality Inn* on the Muskoka River on Ecclestone Drive; a total of 9 cars and 12 intrepid *MoMers* gathered to bowl, while being cheered on by a small but very vocal contingent of 4 additional *MoMers*. It was a spirited bowling session, although some who shall remain nameless were in less than fine form. The highest scores of the night were as follows: Carol Macaulay at 156; Al Fitkin at 166 (after only 4 frames!) of Game #2, which was suspended because we ran out of time; and, Ken Payne at 139. The lowest score was 78, by a participant whose identity shall also remain nameless to protect their dignity. Lots of laughs were had by all.

After bowling, we all adjourned across the street to *The Burger Shoppe* for a tasty casual dinner, which was of course followed by the requisite ice cream treats for dessert. As usual, it was a fun evening.

Bob Macaulay



News and Trivia

MG to return to the roadster game with electric MX-5 Miata rival



Sean Szymkowski



MG E-motion concept

MG isn't known for crossovers and sedans like it sells today under its Chinese owner SAIC. The British brand is best remembered for spritely roadsters of the 20th century, and according to MG, the brand will return to its roots.

Speaking to Australian publication Drive in an interview published Thursday, MG head of design Shao Jingfeng confirmed the development of a new roadster. And it will specifically take on the Mazda MX-5 Miata. The new MG roadster won't be a Miata copycat, though.

Instead, it will feature an electric powertrain and boast all-wheel drive while sitting on a brand new platform. Reports from 2014 hinted at MG's development of a new platform specifically for a small sports car. The brand's plan has long been to re-establish the marque with mainstream offerings, which it has done, and then return focus to MG's roots.

"I will make [the] MG brand closer to history because the brand stopped for several years, and for customers [building SUVs] doesn't answer, 'who is MG?' So we need to get back to the beginning," Jingfeng said.

The plans for a new roadster come as SAIC is flush with cash to expand MG after launching a sedan and new crossover models globally. MG also showed off the E-Motion concept (shown above) in 2017, which hinted at an electric sports coupe. Jingfeng said plans at MG include a "motorsports car, a sports car" and more electric cars.

The head MG designer did not say when we should expect to see a new roadster, but it's unlikely the car will ever reach U.S. shores.



2017 Shanghai auto show [photo: RonanGlon]

News and Trivia

2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata: more power, higher redline



Jeff Glucker



We don't have official EPA figures just yet, but Mazda says the car will outperform the current 28 mpg city, 35 highway, 29 combined achieved with the 2018 MX-5 with the optional automatic transmission.

Tap into that added power and Mazda said you'll also find a more adventurous redline: from 6,800 rpm last year to 7,500 rpm for 2019. While you're playing in the increased rev range, your ears may pick up on another change.

There's a brand-new exhaust system that Mazda says provides a richer sound.

It's finally official. Mazda on Wednesday upped the zoom-zoom baked into its MX-5 Miata for 2019. This fall, when the 2019 MX-5 Miata hits dealerships, it will boast 181 horsepower—a 17 percent increase over 2018, Mazda said.

A number of engineering upgrades allowed for this increase in power. Internally, Mazda reduced the weight of the pistons by 27 grams while also trimming the connecting rods by 41 grams. Mazda also fiddled with the camshaft so it produces greater valve lift and a larger valve opening angle. This, coupled with an increase in the inner diameter of the exhaust manifold results in a 30 percent reduction in the force required to move the intake and exhaust valves up and down.

While the increase in power is a plus, it's joined by another positive outcome: improved fuel economy, Mazda said.

The 2019 Miata has improvements in the cabin as well. Those with a bit more... girth to their figure will appreciate the new telescoping steering wheel. Outside, the MX-5 now offers a brown soft top and the new black metallic 17-inch wheels, while automatic emergency braking is a new option. Mazda also said doors are easier to open, but we've never really noticed a problem there.

Mazda has yet to announce pricing for the updated 2019 MX-5. The car will be made available starting this fall, but the automaker hasn't announced pricing. Along with those numbers, Mazda will also roll out an updated version of the MX-5 Cup race car.

Slow car fast just got quite a bit faster.

News and Trivia

It's Official, the Miata Is Old: First-Gen Versions Now Eligible for Vintage Racing

BY AARON ROBINSON

PHOTOS BY MAZDA MOTORSPORTS

Those of us who well remember 1989 and the very first moment we clapped eyes on a Mazda MX-5 Miata have yet another reason to shudder at the increasingly cold breath of Father Time: the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association (SVRA), one of the main sanctioning bodies for vintage racing in the United States, has created classes for all first-gen Miatas, including the early 1.6-liter and the later 1.8. The first weekend for the SVRA's new Mazda Miata Heritage Cup was

held April 28–30 at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California.

The recognition by SVRA that first-gen Miatas have become old cars was perhaps hastened by the continued popularity of the Spec Miata class in the more contemporaneous Sports Car Club of America and National Auto Sport Association events. Mazda doesn't have an exact figure of racing Miatas; it only knows that it has sold 3000 Spec Miata kits for first-gen cars—a.k.a. the NA model—over the years, and typical SCCA and NASA events have ample first-gen fields.

More than 400,000 first-gen Miatas were produced between 1989 and 1997. Total Miata production passed the 1 million mark in recent years, with an average of just over 37,000 of the roadsters produced every year since '89. It became the best-selling roadster of all time in 2000, when production passed 531,000.



News and Trivia

I Crashed a 20-Year-Old Miata—And Walked Away

BY KEVIN A. WILSON

“I could never drive something that small, I wouldn’t feel safe.”

Owners of Mazda Miatas, particularly the first-generation NA model, hear that *all the time*. I can no longer count myself among their ranks because I crashed my 20-year-old Miata in late December (Merry Christmas!). The “not safe” claims, though, still seem worth addressing. I walked away unharmed, aside from a cussedly stubborn bone bruise in my right hand. I hit a bigger car at 35 to 40 mph without time to even tap the brakes. My 1996 Miata—79,000 miles, mechanically sound but cosmetically worn aside from a seven-week-old new top—was a total loss. But its safety systems and structure did what they were designed to do: protect the occupant.

It happened barely two miles from my home on December 22. Headed for a downtown Detroit meeting, I set out under a low overcast sky at about 9:30 a.m.. The airbag warning lamp flickered, as it had been doing intermittently for over a year. My to-do list for the car included pulling the original steering wheel with its 20-year-old airbag. It was unlikely to work anyway, so I figured the wheel could be replaced with something prettier and sportier.

A misty rain had fallen that morning but it had stopped. Out on the main road, spray off wet pavement required that I flip on the



wipers. Habit is to turn on the headlights any time the wipers go on, but I was accelerating through the gears, approaching a traffic signal, so I just parked my left hand fingers atop the steering wheel hub to remind myself to turn on the lights (on the left stalk) when I got a moment. The signal was green and I stayed in the left lane to pass traffic that was slowing to turn right. My own right turn was coming up, at the next signal only a quarter-mile ahead, but there are several driveways in that short stretch—a strip mall with a 7-Eleven, a township fire station, then another shopping center. This route was familiar to me from more than 20 years of commuting into the city. The right lane is a perilous place to be in the morning, better to drive past it all and get over later, when two right-turn-only lanes appear.

I never got that far. Approaching the first intersection, I noticed a Ford Taurus coming the other direction as it pulled into the left-turn lane. The front bumper dipped toward the ground; good, he was on the brakes. His left-turn lane was governed by a blinking red arrow, I knew, and he seemed to be stopping as required. So I checked my right side mirror to make sure the cars I was

passing really had turned right. When I turned my head forward again, the windshield was full of Taurus. Three thoughts came in quick succession: “I can’t believe he decided to go!” “There’s no avoiding this.” And, “I hope my femurs survive.” Shattered femurs are a pretty common injury in such collisions, and I’ve got two artificial hips, meaning such an injury would likely land me in a wheelchair for the rest of my life. I remember dipping the clutch, getting my right foot off the gas but not over to the brake pedal.

BANG! I don’t think I passed out, but aside from loudness, everything went black for a few seconds. In shock, I just sat there, heart racing, thoughts muddled. The cabin was full of dust—both airbags had deployed, the passenger-side one busting the windshield, the driver-side one propelling my left hand into my face. My nose hurt and there was a nose-shaped bruise on the back of my left hand. My right hand hurt and there was a lump on the side of my wrist; I think it banged off the shifter or the handbrake handle. But nothing major, nothing broken, nothing bleeding. I wanted air and found the power window switch on the console, sort

of—the passenger-side window opened rather than the driver-side one I’d intended. Then there was a guy standing outside, rapping on the glass, and I gradually remembered how to open the door, which worked fine.

“Are you okay? Just stay there, that was a hell of a whack. The police are on their way.” My favorite car was sitting pretty much dead center in the intersection, turned nearly 90-degrees from where it had been pointed. The Taurus, which hadn’t been moving very quickly, had stopped just before hitting the stopped northbound traffic. The other driver was trying to get his car to move, but it wouldn’t. He got out of the car, glanced back toward me, and walked into the 7-Eleven. He came out a few minutes later with a new pack of smokes and was standing there watching when the EMS guys arrived. They’d been called, but the station was close enough that one of the guys checking me out told me he’d heard the collision.

The other guy’s car is in the scrapyard. It was done-for, too. The drivetrain isn’t aligned to the chassis anymore.

The bystander who’d come to my window

urged me to stay put, but I insisted I wanted out. This guy would hang around, and offered himself as a witness when the cops showed up. He’d seen it all happen, couldn’t believe the guy had turned right in front of me, either. “He couldn’t have been looking.” Eventually, the other driver said, standing between the two cops who were writing up his “failure to yield” citation: “I didn’t see you. You know, small black car, wet black pavement.” I don’t know . . . I



could have detected the color of his eyes by the time he turned, he couldn't have looked at all. But maybe if I'd gotten those headlights on? In nearly six years of driving the Miata, I'd always taken a motorcyclist-like approach of assuming other drivers didn't see it. Not turning the lights on was my biggest mistake. That, and assuming the guy would stop.



Here she is in the scrapyard. Good-bye faithful friend.

My Good Samaritan/witness also suggested he'd not have been surprised to find me unconscious or dead. Rational assumption: older guy, small car, big hit. The statistics say that's a bad combo with high fatality rates. My safety belt was cinched tight, though, and the collision was impressive but not head-on nor at high speed. And the front structure collapsed almost exactly as it does in the crash tests conducted by the government and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Everything forward of the firewall/floor collapsed, but aft of that, the car was fine. I'm not really sure what the airbags did for me besides punch me in the face. The seatbelt did its job, as the shoulder bruise attested. Might my face

have bounced off that prettier, airbag-free steering wheel I wanted? Hard to say. Would more modern safety technology have helped? Maybe one of the collision-detection systems could have applied the brakes in that split-second, erased a few miles-per-hour from the collision speed, but otherwise, I suspect not.

The size argument always struck me as absurd: Size matters most if you just expect and assume that you will crash. The point, I've always felt, was to avoid incidents with a nimble machine and an attentive driver. Besides, well before 1996, all cars had to pass government crash tests and most do at least okay in the more demanding collisions the insurance industry uses—the Miata did. Designed in the late 1980s, the first-gen Miata didn't score 5-star ratings, but got passing grades (3s and 4s) from IIHS and met the regulatory standards of its day. According to a 1996 study from IIHS' Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI),

the Miata's fatality risk measured 38 in multi-vehicle collisions on a scale that sets "average" at 100 (1 death per 10,000 vehicles on the road). It was the best in the small sports car class at the time. A Corvette of that period was at 61. (Most deaths actually happen in single-car crashes, where mass-differential matters not at all. In that category, the Miata measured in at 47, all small sports cars at 87, and the Corvette at 189).

In vehicle-to-vehicle crashes, mid-size sedans, as a group, came in at 56, on a range from 18 (VW Passat) to 116 (Chrysler LeBaron), slightly worse than small sports cars as a class (53). So maybe there's something to be said for avoiding crashes in the first place. That approach worked for me, generally speaking, for all the years

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between my 16th birthday and three months into my 60th year. Not one significant crash—a few parking-lot-speed scratches, but no big bangs—despite 30 years of writing about cars driven at sometimes ridiculous speeds and trying to satisfy photographers intent on dramatic images. One key was always driving defensively. I'd avoided many an imminent collision by always leaving myself an out and honing my skills so even if evasive maneuvers meant sliding across wet grass at night (as it did once with two toddlers in the back seat), I could do that. Standard car-guy stuff, I'd think, not heroics. It was with that attitude in my mind that I picked up a black-on-black '96 Miata in

2009. With test cars to be driven and no commute, I did about 6000 miles a year. I spun the Miata once that first year on a wet freeway ramp on tires that, I learned afterward, had good tread but were gripless because they were as old as the car. Just before it stopped, we struck the guardrail a glancing blow with the right front corner at under 5 mph. Just my car involved, and entirely my fault. That was my biggest on-road event until December 22, 2015. When the insurance paid off, I picked up a 2006 Mazda RX-8 as my new backup car. Within days, Mazda expanded a recall to include the new-to-me ride. It has Takata airbags, so I'm thinking about replacing a steering wheel again.

