

Miata Fast Track



FEBRUARY 2006

Issue #145

Beware of
Expensive
Imitations.

Get In.
Be Moved.

Get
involved.
Do
something
for your
club.

Join for the
car...
Stay for the
people.

President's Point Of View

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope that each of you who read these newsletters has both enjoyed and survived a wonderful holiday season and are looking forward to a coming year full of opportunity and hope for what lies ahead!

By way of introduction my name is Randy Ames and I have been voted (or coerced) in as the president of the club for the year 2006. I want to first of all take this opportunity to thank all of the past years officers. Don Asperger did a fantastic job as president and I know I have some tough shoes to follow in. Thanks to Lisa, Van, Jim, Bob, and others who have helped make the club a success that it is. Again, many thanks.

I would like to visit for a minute on the need to fill in the rest of our leadership. We need the following positions filled: secretary, club gear, historian, and newsletter. Cindy Ames is to continue as webmaster. She hopes to get the new web page up in a month or so (new job is taking some of her free time right now). Thanks to Tom Jarvis who will be our Vice President and to Ralph Weber who will be our treasurer. My goal for our January meeting is to have a strong attendance and ask each of you to see how you can help out. All of our lives are busy but it has been my experience we do our best and all things seem to get to a manageable state. Bottom line is we need your help. We especially need someone to take over the newsletter from Jim. He is willing to help in the transition and once you are set up then it is just a question of getting article to publish. This is one of the crucial ways of getting information out. If no one steps forward the web page is going to be our only resource for information. Bottom line, if you are a part of the club then let us all be participants.

Now that the sermon is over lets talk about the important stuff! Like, what did your Miata get for Christmas? Ours received a car cover to keep it dust free and pampered in the garage and also a 'Freeway Blaster' horn! Installed the horn and it is a lot louder than the stock one. I think I will wire in another low tone horn once my hands heal sufficiently from installing this one. The car cover is a perfect fit so very nice. I am saving up some of my Christmas money and hoping to add to it so I can get some Flik wheels. Overall, I guess Santa thought the Miata was good this year and so do I.

I will have an agenda sent out soon for our meeting but we need to get on top of a couple of things. First there is the coastal cruise which needs to be finalized by the meeting. Once again, a lot has been done but a lot more needs to get done for this to come together. Thanks to Bob for taking the lead on this one so far. The second critical item is the Charity Run. We voted at the Christmas party that we would split the money between two organizations. They are the Hinds Hospice in Fresno and Imagine U in Visalia. Excellent choices and as we are basing the run out of Visalia this year this will be a nice gesture on our part. Please start talking up both of these events with all you know and start thinking of raffle prizes you can put together. Cindy and Ralph have been putting together an excellent event and Bob assures me we will have a great

(Continued on page 3)

General Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2006

6:30 Meeting was called to order by our new 2006 President Randy Ames.

The November and December minutes were approved as they appeared in the newsletter.

New officers were introduced and volunteers were called for to fill the current vacancies: Secretary, Historian, Club Gear and Newsletter Editor

The December events were discussed. All agreed that the trek down Christmas Tree Lane was wonderful. A BIG thank you to Tom and Linda for hosting the Christmas Party. It was great.

There was a discussion about the future of the newsletter if an editor can't be found. A possible change in the format was rejected. All agreed that the newsletter must continue. Ron Branam volunteered to serve as interim editor.

The club voted to purchase Microsoft Publisher to be used for the newsletter.

Cindy Ames, Web Master reported on the progress on the web site. Everyone said that they liked what Cindy had done.

Ralph Weber, Treasurer passed out an expense statement and reviewed the information. The report was approved as given.

Information for the Coastal Cruise for February 11 & 12 was passed out. Randy give a short report on the scheduled activities.

Cindy, Ralph and Ron each gave reports on the Charity run scheduled for 3/31 & 4/1.

Activities, silent auction, raffle and t-shirts were discussed. Ralph ask that anyone wishing to donate to the auction or raffle to bring the items to the February 16th or March 16th meetings. He will bring his pickup and transport the items to Visalia.

Tom Jarvis, Vice President offered to work with Ron on trying to get a good price on the t-shirts for the Charity Run. Tom told the club that he had been looking into getting clothing (shirts, jackets, hats, etc.) embroidered from a new vendor. He will provide samples and prices at the next meeting.

Ron Branam ask the club to consider a small donation to the Arroyo Grande High School for a Robonics competition. He will bring more information to the next meeting before we vote.

Cindy Ames volunteered to draw for the pie and she drew her own ticket, hmmmmm.

7:55 Meeting adjourned

Marci Jarvis, Interim Secretary

(Continued from page 1)

drive. We are hoping by putting it two weeks later that the weather will be better. Information will be up on the website by January first.

In other matters please come to the meeting with ideas of what you would like our club to do for the coming year. All ideas are good ideas! I would like to see us do a rough calendar of what we want to do for each month. That way we have some goals we can work toward. Remember also that club dues for the year are due in January at the non-inflation price of \$25. Can you beat that!! So please lets get a great turnout for the meeting and remember it is your club, not mine alone.

I know this has been a long letter from the president but I figured I would help out the newsletter publisher. Anything beyond this point is just a little reflective rambling on my part so you can skip this if you want. I thought I would close with why and how we became owners of a Miata. Some of you have heard this before and some have not so bear with me.

First of all, from 1982 up to October of 2004 I was the owner of a 1969 Datsun 2000 roadster. Some people called them Fairlady and some called them sports. They were the precursor to the 240z. It was a convertible not unlike an MGB in size but had a lot of nicer things. I had the 2 liter engine which was good for about 120 hp and good be bumped up to 140 with a hotter cam and different induction. We had a great time with the car and over the years improved it in many ways. The funniest and most challenging was re-building the engine. Learned a lot about myself on that one. We were the founders of the local club which had around 15 cars and 30 people at its core. There were four runs we did each year with two sponsored by us and two sponsored by the club out of Modesto. In March we did the 'Polar Bear' run which was tops down in the mountains east of Modesto. April brought the 'Solvang Run' which usually had 40 cars show up with lots of activities. July brought the west coast meet at Mount Shasta which is the longest event beginning with the first in 1985; finally we did the 'Sequoia Run' east of Fresno. In that club we did a lot more of getting together working on the cars and had a good mix of young and old couples. The cars were fun and the friends were great. Lots of good memories.

So, you might be asking now why did we sell and buy a Miata? That all started about 2003 when I had to replace the clutch master cylinder on the Datsun. While some of the parts can be purchased from other places, most are still available form Nissan and our better quality. Anyway, I went to the dealer to purchase the slave cylinder and was aghast at the price they wanted! It had tripled in about a year! Well, gritted my teeth and bought one and installed it but started to think about this whole proposition. I realized for a car that I drive about 2000 miles a year tops I just could not justify the price of parts and other stuff. In addition a lot of parts are being tossed by Nissan for a tax write-off for them. I can understand that but they were not allowing our specific vendors even the chance to purchase what they had so I new parts would become rarer an more expensive, especially for a very limited car with more of a cult following than anything else.

I came to the realization that maybe it was time to move on to something else. After all, I had the car for over 20 years and there was not much more I could do other than rebuild everything all over. I had always like the 240z and almost bought one here in Fresno that I found on ebay but the owner was asking more than I thought it was worth and dickering with him went nowhere. The Z's are great and fast but ultimately decided on getting a convertible. For me if the top does not go down it is not a true sports car. That is when I started looking at older Miatas. Went on Ebay, the classifieds and everywhere I could think of looking. Driving in Fresno one day I spotted a nice NA white one and called to see if I could drive it. That was the big mistake! After driving a car with a leaky top, no air conditioner, and constant maintenance I felt like I died and went to heaven! While my Datsun was faster the Miata you can actually drive fast and have fun doing it in this car! Plus comfort for long trips and enough made that parts are reasonable and plenty of aftermarket stuff to make it your own. However... we did not buy that one but that is where I cam in contact with Ron Branham. He was President of the club and I called and asked if

(Continued on page 4)

Publication Information

The first issue of the Miata Fast Track is free Membership entitles you to participate in all events, including drives, assemblies, meetings, parties, gatherings, conventions, technical sessions, etc., newsletters, and allows you the opportunity to meet some nifty people.

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the San Joaquin Valley Miata Club (SJVMC). The information presented represents the opinions of the individual contributors. No representation is made regarding the accuracy or reliability of any information contained on any of these pages. Neither the Mazda Corporation, the Miata Owners Club, the San Joaquin Valley Miata Club, the editor, or any of the individual contributors accept any liability for the consequences of using the information presented in this newsletter.

USE THE INFORMATION IN THIS NEWSLETTER AT YOUR OWN RISK

MEMBERSHIP:

Send \$25 with your full name and address, phone number, year & color Miata to: San Joaquin Valley Miata Club
PO Box 27395
Fresno, Ca. 93729-7395

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(Continued from page 3)

he would be willing to meet with me and take a look at the car. Guess what? He said yes and we went to look at the car. Decided no on that one so kept looking. Ron was great and I could tell that when we bought a car we would join the club.

To finish the story I found another white one on the net up in Manteca in February of 2004. I took the day off of work and Cindy and I drove up to look at the car. I told here if I like it I am going to buy it. Well, now you know the rest of the story as Paul Harvey is known to say. We could not be happier with the car (although Cindy wants her own and that is another story) and with all the great people we have met over the past almost two years. We have had lots of fun and look forward to getting to know each of you a little better this coming year.

Randy Ames

From the *Interim* Editor....

Note the emphasis on **interim!** When I learned that Jim was no longer doing the newsletter (two years is long enough!), and that no one had stepped forward to do it, I said I would do it **temporarily!** As in just to keep it alive. My reason for doing it are to keep the flow of information to you. Without a newsletter, there isn't much of a club. My reasons for not taking it over full-time are many. Shirley and I are now both retired and we have plans for doing some (or a lot, depending) of traveling this year. The last thing I want to worry about is getting the newsletter out. We want to be free! We're already planning two full weeks in June and a month—or more—in August or October. So hey!!! Somebody step up to do the newsletter. I'll be glad to show you how easy it is. Once you've done a couple, it's fairly easy. Mostly just cut and paste. While we're on the subject—look on page three, right hand column, and you'll see **Position Open** in three places. Just think, **you're name could be there!** Don't you think that would be a whole lot better than "Position Open." **Get involved. Do something for your club. You'll be glad you did.**

Autocross News...

Congratulations to member **Remy Ducote** who took first place for the SCCA season in C Stock class. CS is where all Miatas are placed that have had no modifications. Yours truly managed to take second place in C Street Prepared which is unusual because for three years in a row I was in third place.

You might be an autocrosser if...

- Your email address refers to your car number rather than to you.
- People know you by your class letters, car number, and car color.
- The local tire shop won't honor the treadlife warranty on any car you've been within 50 yards of...
- You keep a traffic cone in your living room as a reminder that autox season is just around the corner. ("But honey, orange goes GREAT with oak furniture!")
- You keep your hair cut shorter in the summer to avoid "helmet head."
- You have autox shoes (different from walking shoes or running shoes)
- You own a bottle of white shoe polish, but you don't have any white shoes.

OK—so maybe most of you don't think these are very funny. I'm an autocrosser and I think they're hilarious! Call it editor's prerogative.

Do you have any good jokes or favorite recipes you'd like to share? Send them to Editpr@sjvmc.net. Better yet, be newsletter editor.

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

By Marci Jarvis

On December 15th at 6:00 a hardy band of 7 Miatas with their owners and passengers met in the parking lot of Gazebo Gardens for the drive down Christmas Tree Lane. Armed with an array of colored lights, garland, snowmen, bows and Christmas packages the cars were quickly decked out as moving Christmas decorations. About 30 minutes later we moved out into the Lane to begin our adventure.

The sky was clear and the air crisp, perfect weather for an evening drive. With the top down, the heater on, wearing jackets and our Santa hats we were more than warm enough. As we drove along we realized how different it was to view the Lane without the side supports and a car roof to obstruct the view. The colored lights that crisscrossed overhead with incredible brilliance were visible for as far as you could see in every direction. Looking up was the best. There was a slight fragrance of pine in the air that I had never noticed before. As we moved down the Lane the people who were strolling waved and wished us Merry Christmas. Our little moving ornaments drew a lot of attention.

As we exited the Lane's canopy of trees the air became much cooler for our short drive to Fig Garden and the Starbuck's where we enjoyed hot coffee, chocolate and cider in the company of our traveling companions.

Although we have been down Christmas Tree Lane every year for as far back as we can remember, including the week before, this was our first trip ever in a convertible. Without a doubt the experience is something every one should do at least once. We are already planning addition to our decorations for this year.

Poker Run Update

By Cindy Ames

Thanks to great team leaders, our Spring Fling Charity Poker Run is off to a great start! Ralph Weber is hot on the trail of sponsors and donors. He is working to make our raffle and silent auction the best the club has seen. He's even working on sponsors for the poker stops. Way to go Ralph!

Bob Raus has laid out a route for our drive that promises to make the run fabulous. The trees are already blooming, so get ready to enjoy the blossoms as you traverse the roads. Our lunch has been organized, courtesy of Ralph, and promises to be extremely satisfying fare. Be sure to mark on your registration form, which sandwich you would like to have.

Tom Jarvis and Ron Branam are hard at work developing an outstanding poker run shirt. You are sure to be impressed with the design when you see the new shirts. Make sure you purchase one for your passenger, or you'll never get your shirt back!

Hotel accommodations are provided by Holiday Inn of Visalia. They are so excited that we are basing the poker run at their establishment. They have set aside a parking lot, just for the Miatas! A newly created dinner menu will be in place, ensuring a wonderful meal after a day's drive. Saturday night, after dinner, we will have our charity raffle and silent auction.

If you are a SJVMC member, be sure to put together a raffle or auction item to bring to February's meeting. If you are not in our club, but would like to provide an item, perhaps showcasing your business, please contact Ralph Weber to make arrangements for delivery of item. We are already receiving registrations for the run and the buzz is out on how great this year's run will be. Mark it on your calendars and set aside the weekend for fun, speed and relaxation!

March 31—April 1— Be there or be square!

What I Did Last Winter

By Bob Raus

Remember how we all had to write a story on what we did last summer as our first assignment when we went back to school in the fall? Well now that spring driving is upon us, this is what I did during the winter.

First of all I bought a second Miata. It's a 1991 in yellow. Now I like to modify my cars so this is what I did. I started off with an intake system with a header back exhaust system. It added a little power but not enough! But what goes forward must turn left and right so suspension was next. Koni's and springs with sways was in order. A car must also stop, so I did a big brake package next. Now we're getting some were!!

Clutch went bad so I put in a lightened flywheel and stronger disc. As Tim Allen says MORE POWER. So I ported and polished and shaved the head, put in pistons and a cam with stiffer valve springs. Added a timing controller and put the thing on a dyno. 184 rear wheel horsepower. Who'd a thunk this was possible!!

First time I drove the stock car at Laguna Seca my times were 2:05 seconds, now I'm turning 1:43's. As most of you have guessed by now my second car is on my GranTurismo PlayStation. Gotta do something during the down times. Hope to see ya at the Coastal Cruise.

WHAT IS RMP



Riverside Motorsports Park is a 1200-acre, motorsports-themed family recreation and entertainment center in development in Merced County, located in the heart of California's Central Valley.

The Park plans include eight different types of tracks, including a paved super speedway; 3-1/2-mile, multi-configuration road course; 5,000-foot drag strip; kart course; integrated paved oval tracks; integrated dirt oval tracks; an off-road circuit; and a motocross course. Riverside Motorsports Park's multiple tracks will provide a racing venue for every form of automobile, truck, motorcycle and kart racing—meeting the needs of professional and club racing sanctioning organizations across the United States.

A landscaped environment complete with RV facilities, picnic grounds, upscale food courts and family restaurants, video and game arcades, playgrounds and clean, attended restrooms, the park will be a motorsports and recreational destination for racers, race fans and families from California, the West, and the entire United States. In addition to motorsports events, the Park plans to feature mid-week racing and technical motorsports schools, music concerts, car shows and business center events.

Riverside Motorsports Park, LLC
3333 G Street
(Castle Airport Development Center)
Atwater, California 95301

Office: 209.383.RMP1(7671)
Fax: 209.383.7771
<http://www.rmpracing.com/>

Upcoming Events

WARNING: Dates in Calendar are closer than they appear.

Join Us At An Upcoming Club Meeting

Meet at Marie Calendar's Restaurant and Bakery located at Cedar and Shaw in Fresno. We are in a banquet room located in the rear of the restaurant. The optional dinner is at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.. You are welcome to join us anytime!

Coastal Cruise February 11 & 12, 2006

Although Bob is keeping the route a secret, word has it that this year's route will be entirely new and different than past years. However, after much prodding for the benefit of the newsletter, I have been given some little hints and based on my familiarity of the roads between here and the coast, Vada-Vada-Voom and Zoom-Zoom! So if you want to see some new roads and scenery, don't miss this one! Contact Bob Raus, 559-299-0942 or Randy Ames, 559-431-0311, or see the flyer on our web site for more information.

Run to Santa Cruz February 25, 2006

This event is put on by the Delta Miata Club. They are doing a run to Santa Cruz to attend the Clam Chowder Cookoff. Yum! If you are interested in participating, you can get more information at <http://deltamiata.net/events/2006%20eventsSantaCruzClam.htm>.

A1 Grand Prix of Nations, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, March 11-12

A1 Grand Prix has chosen Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca for the U.S. round of their inaugural season. Twenty-five national teams race identical, 520-horsepower, open-wheel cars with no electronic driver aids, in what is essentially the "World Cup of Motorsport". Each car is painted in the colors of its home country, and the championship is awarded not to an individual driver but to the competing nation. For more information, call Ron at 559-323-5243.

Tenth Annual Miata Performance Driving School at Thunderhill March 24, 25, 26

Two and a half days of training and limited to only 80 students, the school will enable you to become a safer driver, and also help you get every ounce of performance your Miata is capable of. There's nothing like having a Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) or NASA instructor right next to you as you drive lap after twisty lap on a race course, helping you to learn just what you and your Miata are really capable of. This course will teach you the basics of high speed driving, equipment, human limitations, proper steering techniques and a lots of other skills necessary for safe performance driving. Come join us for a weekend of learning, while having a lot of fun, as you drive on the Thunderhill track with SCCA instructors and fellow Miata enthusiasts. Also - If you don't sign up for the school, you might want to plan on coming out to the track on Saturday or Sunday anyway. It would make for a fun Miata day or club drive. Plan on coming to, visit and watch the fun! <http://www.teammiata.com/>

Spring Fling Charity Poker Run - March 31 & April 1, 2006

The annual charity poker run will be based out of Visalia this year. We have great roads, perfect for Miatas, picked out for you. This year, we will be fundraising for Hinds Hospice, who is celebrating 25 years of service to the San Joaquin Valley in 2006, and Imagine U, an exploratory center for kids, located in Visalia. Call Cindy Ames, 559-431-0311 or Ralph Weber, 559-732-2842, or see our web site for more information on a fantastic weekend. Please complete and return the registration form as soon as possible.



San Joaquin Valley Miata Club



Meetings are held the **3rd** Thursday of each month at: (Except in December) **Marie Callender's**, 1781 E Shaw Ave (at Cedar) at 6:30 P.M.

Win a free pie!

**NEXT MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2006
SEE YOU THERE**

Newsletter Online!

You are receiving the Miata Fast Track as a courtesy to other clubs or because you are a member of San Joaquin Valley Miata Club.

If you would prefer to read the newsletter on-line, in printable Adobe Reader format (.pdf), and would like to save the club the copying, labeling, postage costs necessary to mail it to you, please let the editor know. Send an e-mail to Editor@sjvmc.net stating your name and to please remove your name from the Fast Track mailing list. Every little bit helps!

Thanks for your consideration!

VISIT THE SJVMC WEB PAGE AT
<http://www.sjvmc.net/>

Miata Fast Track

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Get In. Be Moved.



The first issue of the Miata Fast Track is complimentary.
To continue receiving this newsletter contact the treasurer.



inside...

President's Point of View	Page 1
General Meeting Minutes	Page 2
Christmas Tree Lane	Page 5
Poker Run Update	Page 5
Upcoming events	Page 7
And More.....!	