



# The CAR Enthusiast

June 2003

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## *The President's Post*

By Christian LeHew

Being the “years ahead of my age” car guy that I was, even before I had a driver’s license, I often remember the numerous hours I spent admiring cars. Of course, being the car fan that I was, I NEVER touched the cars at all, and always made certain I kept a fair distance. It didn’t matter if it was a Corvette at a car show, or a Countach at the curb, my rules were always the same.

This kind of curiosity was backed up by the volumes of magazines and books I read. It also led me to amazing automotive experiences – sitting in THE 1967 Lamborghini Miura Spyder show car, rebuilding the carbs on a Triumph TR4, and idling an 11-second Corvette around the block at age 15. It even got me my first ride in a Miata.

Normally, I get antsy whenever a van full of kids parks next to my car, but I had to smile the other night at the snoball stand when they all spotted my red Miata, and went over to take a look. Greedy for treats, they all took a glance and ran to get in line. One boy, though, lingered and seemed to carefully study the car, every line, every angle. I imagined that he might possibly know more about the car than I did (which was often the case with the cars I stalked). But the boy reminded me of myself at his age. I think he knew what the car represented, and that it was just not mere transportation.

Looking at the numerous scratches, door dings, and rock chips, and then seeing the interest of the kids, it made me shed some of my selfishness, and reminded me that it was the unselfish car owners that helped me appreciate the wonderful cars of the world, including the Miata. Chip, Lisa, Tom, Iggy, Don, and my dear late friend and mentor, Egon, helped to teach me this valuable lesson. If you don’t mind me talking your ear off sometime, I’ll tell you all about them.

That's why I encourage you to share this wonderful car that we all own, and maybe you too can be someone's automotive mentor. Turn off the TV, and change your oil with your kids. Invite the kid next door (who's stared the paint off your car) to help you wash your Miata or rotate the tires.

Adults seem to care more about gas mileage, and how long the top will last. They're not much fun. Kids see the 140mph speedometer, and to them it might as well read 340mph, because in their eyes, the car is just that cool. 120hp is enough to blow away a Ferrari, right?

## *Eliminating Blind Spots*

By Christian LeHew

About 6 years ago, I was in a fender bender. I was merging onto 29N from Columbia, looked over my left shoulder to make sure I could move to the next lane, and looked back just in time to cuss as I hit the rear of a pearl white Audi S6.

A dented fender, a nose repaint, and untold dollars paid to my insurance company later, I was still bitter about the accident, but swore I'd be more careful. But I still couldn't figure out a way to get rid of the blind spot issue.

Soon afterwards, I was talking to my friend's father, who had just finished up a BMW driving school, and he started talking about a way they taught him to re-position his mirrors so you could eliminate almost all of the blind areas on your car. His family laughed. I challenged him to prove it to me.

Five minutes later, I was convinced. I've since kept my mirrors that way and wouldn't dream of going back.

The premise is pretty simple. Imagine driving in your car (any car, it doesn't have to be a Miata), and you're being passed on the left (hey, I said to *imagine* it – I know how some of you drive...). As the passing car approaches from the rear, you see them in your inside rearview mirror. As he passes to the left, the car starts to disappear from the mirror, and starts to reappear in the outside left mirror. As the car continues to overtake you, it will start to disappear from the side mirror, and as it's just about out of view, you can turn your head slightly and see the front of the car through the window.

Setup is easy. You can either do it by trial-and-error or you can find a friend to help. If your friend is available, sit in the driver's seat, and have them make the "Hang Loose" sign (make a fist then stretch out your thumb and pinky finger), and have them place their pinky on the rear corner of the car. Then adjust your mirror so that you can just about see their thumb in the bottom right hand corner, in this case, for your driver's side mirror. Repeat the same for the passenger side window (just have their thumb appear on the bottom left corner of the mirror).

Another way, albeit less accurate, is to sit in the driver's seat, and lean your head as far over to the left as you can. If you hear a bang, and feel some pain, then roll the window down before continuing. Once you have your head leaned over, position the mirror so that you can just about see the rear corner of the car.

You may need to fine-tune them, but once their in the proper position, you're all set. It will take some time to get used to, but once you learn how to use it, and to trust your mirrors, I'm certain you'll keep them there. Plus, it helps cut down on headlight glare at night, and gives you a less distracting view when autocrossing.

So see? Now that you're safer on the road, you can save all that money and buy yourself some new toys for the Miata!

## *Coco Chanel only wishes she could be so trendy!*

You may have seen a few members wearing club shirts at a recent event. And while we're trying to get them sold through Sak's Fifth Avenue, and are convinced they'll be the newest fashion trend since Tommy Hilfiger and DKNY, in the meantime, you can get in on the ground floor and make your own fashion statement with a cool new CAR t-shirt, clock, or BBQ apron (hey, our BBQ's are nearly as famous as our tech days). They're affordable, make great gifts and all proceeds go towards the CAR club and future activities. Check out the online site at <http://www.cafeshops.com/chesroadsters>.

## *Speak up, lads!*

Have you just completed a cool project on your Miata that you want to share with other club members? Attend an event that moved you so much you want to write an article about it? Find a new road that seems like it was engineered *just for* Miatas? Got an idea for a future event or article? Then drop us a line and we'll put it in next month's issue. Deadline for submissions is June 21<sup>st</sup>. All submissions can be sent to Christian LeHew at [hotroddesigner@hotmail.com](mailto:hotroddesigner@hotmail.com).

## *Playin' with the neighbor's kids –*

The idea has been brought up to see about doing an event or two with another car club. Not necessarily another Miata club, but perhaps a Triumph club, Jaguar club, etc. We've made a few contacts with a local British car club from the Baltimore area, as well as to the local Honda S2000 club (to which we received no response). As you can probably assume, there are quite a few car clubs in the area, so if you're a member of one, know someone who is, or just think of one that would be cool to spend the day with (I'm leaning towards Ferrari, myself!), then feel free to drop us a line with the contact info, and we'll take it from there.

## *Check your mailbox...*

If you have been to a recent event, you may have already received a window decal. If you haven't, don't worry, we're having more printed up as we speak. We'll also be issuing official CAR club membership cards for discounts at area vendors or for making cool motorcycle sounds in the spokes of your bicycle. Due to some production issues, we got a little behind schedule on them, but rest assured, it's all on the way. If you have questions regarding your membership packages, please drop a line to the club Secretary and membership coordinator, Elaine Farrell, at [silvermiata@comcast.net](mailto:silvermiata@comcast.net).

## *Wanna go racing?*

If you've gone to any autocrossing events this year, you've probably heard one of us (or someone else) griping about the lack of racing sites in the area. "So what can I do?" Glad you asked.

The autocross community is always on the lookout for new venues where we can race. In a perfect world, they'd be smooth, flat, free of traffic islands, and about 20 miles away from a residential area. Event coordinators realize not all these can always be met, but there's been a recent plea to the community to help find some new sites where we can go racing. Maybe it's the parking lot at work. Or a big school parking lot. Or your friend's airfield.

Basically, if you think it might be a possibility, PLEASE let one of us know, and we'll have one of the local officials check it out.

Another nice thing about the autocross groups in the area is that a lot of them are willing to drive a pretty good distance for a decent course (like when we drive up to Hershey, for example). Plus, the Susquehanna SCCA has even offered to let us use their equipment if we can find a venue down in the Maryland area. And how cool would it be to have a short drive to an autocross?

## *Past Events & Happenings*

### **Tech Day – May 10<sup>th</sup>**

It was raining like I haven't seen it rain in a while. Correction. You know the famous "Tornado Alley" that runs through the Midwest? Well, 3 of us discovered that it now stretches over past DC and towards the Fort Washington area. Or at least that's how it felt caravanning over to KevinJ's for a tech day. Although only having five brave Miata drivers come out, it was a great time nonetheless helping Kevin install new Racing Beat springs and sways and AGX shocks on his new-to-him '97. And the car looks SWEET with it's new lowered stance and 15" Panasport wheels. Might want to keep an eye on them, Kevin.

### **Impromptu Tech Session – May 14th**

After waiting for months for the backorder, Tony (medrvmx5) finally received his Hard Dog Deuce roll bar finished in stainless steel. A plea went out to the masses, and Ben (djarum69) lent his carport for a late-night roll bar install and Kirk (Special K) and Sunhak (VoiD) came for support. Rumor has it that they finished around 3am, but my guess is they were busy drinking beer and watching Ben's robot vacuum run around the house. The end result is gorgeous, and really looks nice with Tony's yellow '02 SE with his new 17" Volk wheels. I highly recommend finding the pics in the M2 section of the forum.

### **Carlisle Import/Kit Car Nationals – May 17th**

How's this for a theory: the British Isles are traditionally pretty rainy, right? So what happens when you bring together a couple hundred British cars all in one spot? Yep, Mother Nature gets confused and thinks it's England, and gives us rain and chilly weather halfway through May. If you went to last year's Import/Kit Car show, but didn't make it this year, then you pretty much saw the same show. It was cold. It was wet. It was cloudy. And there were a million Fieros. But despite the weather, a group of die-hard car show enthusiasts from the CAR and PACE Miata clubs headed up to the show again this year to

show off their cars. Among the highlights of the trip was meeting Tim Suddard, Editor-in-Chief of *Grassroots Motorsports*, heat, and going home. Maybe next year there won't be as many British cars, and the weather will be better.

### **Impromptu Tech Session – May 26th**

You know how much it hurts when you go to pick up something REALLY heavy, and your back muscles all tense up and you scream like a little girl? Well, poor Kevin will be all too happy to tell you because he threw out his back while trying to change the timing belt on his '97. And as Murphy's Law would have it, it all happened right in the middle of the install, and the car was dead. But Kevin, being the trooper he is, sent out a call for help via his wife, and a great group of CAR members spent their Memorial Day helping him out and piecing the car together. So a special "Thank You" is due for TJ (miataboybrg1976), Bill Kekszy, Kirk (Special K), Ben (djarum69), and Jay (jaymond) for all their help. Feel better Kevin!

## *Upcoming Events*

Please RSVP if indicated. For full details, check out the Events section of the CAR forum. If you have an idea for a future event, please drop a line to our Events Coordinator Christian LeHew at [hotroddesigner@hotmail.com](mailto:hotroddesigner@hotmail.com).

- June 21<sup>st</sup> – Tech Day, Pool Party, & BBQ at ZoomZoomBrad's in Bowie, MD
- June 28<sup>th</sup> – Annual Eldersburg BBQ/SnoBall run and scenic drive, Eldersburg, MD
- July 20<sup>th</sup> – Crab Run with Del Val, PACE, & MDMC at The Waterman's in Rock Hall, MD
- July 25-27<sup>th</sup> – Mazda Rev It Up competition/expo at FedEx Field, Washington DC
- August 2002 – Scenic Drive/Festival at Linganore Winery, Mt. Airy, MD
- August 2002 – BBQ/Charity Car Show at ZoomZoomBrad's in Bowie, MD