



# The CAR Enthusiast

January 2004

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## *The President's Post*

By Mike Kline

It's January already, and with the start of a new year, we have a new president...Me.

If you haven't met me already, I've been in the club for a little over two years. In that time, I've made many new friends. I can still remember the first meeting I went to at a Don Pablo's in White Marsh where I met most of the original founders. Little did I know that we would all still be here. Since I've joined, the club has grown from 10 members to over 150 registered guests. We've had a lot of fun in the last couple of years, and I'm here to make sure that tradition carries on throughout the next year.

As well as getting the club involved with new activities like autocrossing during the coming year, I also plan to continue the popular events from past years. You can count on more scenic drives, monthly meetings, get-togethers, and even the occasional tech day at Brad's house. If you've never been to one of our now-famous tech days, let me tell you what you've been missing! We have done everything from installing new shift knobs to completely swapping out an engine in a day. We have quite a few very knowledgeable members who know how to fix pretty much everything associated with the Miata.

At this time I'd like to thank Christian, Elaine, Brad, TJ, and Ben for their contributions to the club over the last year. They made this club what it is today, and I can't thank them enough. Ben has offered to remain as the Webmaster over the next year. I'd also like to thank the new officers - Kirk, JD, and Jay - for stepping up to the plate and taking this journey with me over the next year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Looking forward to another fun and eventful year!

## *Driving in a winter wonderland*

Even though there hasn't been much snow this season, there's been a lot of talk on several forums about winter tires for the Miata. And while I'd love to answer the proverbial "which kind do I get", I can't tell you. Instead, this month's tech article is designed to help you better understand what designates a tire as a winter tire, and why it works, so you can make an educated decision.

With the exception of shaved racing tires, every tire has tread blocks. These are the raised areas on the tire surface that you're probably most familiar with. Tire engineers take great strides in developing the overall shape and direction of these blocks to suit the driving conditions of the vehicle on which they're installed.

For example, an off-road tire has large, knobby, and widely-spaced tread blocks so that the tires have more tooth and can bite loose terrain easier at lower speeds. This also allows for debris (dirt or water) to fall between the tread blocks so that the tire can grip to a solid surface more easily.

Conversely, a road-racing performance street tire typically has large, flat, and closely-spaced tread blocks so that the tire has maximum contact with the road at higher speeds. These tread blocks usually have channels that run between the tread blocks which, as before, act to move water and debris away from the tire surface so that it can have maximum contact with the road surface.

I could go on for pages and pages about tire construction and design, but that's for another time. So what makes a winter tire specific to winter use? Siping.

Siping is the name given to small slits cut into the tread blocks. Most all season tires have them, and all winter tires have them. You can see them clearly in this Michelin.



The siping works the same as the larger channels, just on a smaller scale. You see, the thing that makes ice slippery is not the ice itself. There is a thin layer of water on top of the ice that makes it slippery. The siping channels this thin layer of water from the ice, again allowing the tire to maintain as much contact as possible for greater traction. The larger channels and tread blocks are designed for water (like puddles), and for grip in the snow.

Another thing to remember is that with winter tires, a narrower tire is much better than a wider one. Wider tires generally create more rolling resistance for the car, and thus create more resistance for going through snow. Imagine taking a knife and slicing through snow with it. It's thin and narrow, and cuts through easily. Now turn the blade 90 degrees. It now has a much wider edge, and doesn't cut through the snow nearly as easily.

So what size should you run? Ask your tire sales representative for the proper size, but for example, if you typically run 185/60-14 tires on your Miata, you may want to look for a 175/65-14 tire as this will be a narrower tire width, but will still be the proper rolling diameter so your gauges will be accurate.

Also keep in mind that the tire construction for winter tires is much different than that of performance tires. Winter tires are typically created with a rubber compound that is more stable in colder weather, and is not nearly as sticky as a summer tire. The trade off is that you get good traction in the bad weather, but your car will not handle nearly as well as it did with performance tires or even all-season tires. The bottom line is that no matter how great your suspension may be, you can easily out-drive the winter tires.

Having driven several different tire types, I personally prefer a summer performance tire for most of the year, but then switching over to winter tires. I'm currently using all-season tires this winter, and even though they are rated as all-season, I can tell a big difference in how they handle the bad weather versus a true winter tire. The winter tire wins hands down.

Of course, if you can afford to leave the Miata home on snowy days, that's always best. But if you absolutely have to drive, make sure you're well equipped.

## *Meet The New Officers*

They stepped up to the plate, and you chose them to run the joint for the next year. But who are they really? Well now's your chance to get to know a little about the newly elected officers. They're all great guys, and would be happy to talk to you about anything. Especially Miatas and the CAR Miata club! As always, you can find them on the forum, or you can click onto the club home page and e-mail them directly. In the meantime, here's a little background info on the guys.

### **Mike Kline – (GoKart) - President**

By now, you've probably read his first edition of The President's Post, and if you haven't met him already, then you need to come out to more events! Mike owns a turbocharged silver 2001 with a number of suspension tweaks, a roll bar, and numerous other modifications that he hopes will help put him in the top spot in SM2 for the 2004 autocross season. He's also very knowledgeable about turbos in general, and tinkers with everything from hot rod mopeds to potato guns in his spare time. Plus, he's a really great guy.

### **Kirk Rambow – (Special K) - Vice President**

Kirk showed up one day at a lunch meeting with his black 1995 Miata. He'd only owned it for about two weeks, and was ready to start wrenching on it. Less than a year later, and it's become one of the most customized Miatas in the club! Which fits Kirk's personality to a "T", as he's probably more outgoing and fun than his car is. You can never say that Kirk isn't enthusiastic, as he's a regular at events and takes (and gives) good-natured ribbing like a champ. Is there anyone you *don't* like, Kirk? I don't think so.

### **JD Veray – (Junkyard Dog) – Secretary**

JD certainly lives up to his Junkyard Dog surname. His Miata is an early 1990 that most people would have sold for scrap. But JD saw the potential, and now it's fixed better than new, especially with its new Titanium paint. You'd never believe it's the same car! JD comes to us from Connecticut, where he was very active in the Nutmeg Miata Club, and he brings a number of years of car club experience, as well as his vast knowledge of all things automotive. Seriously, he can recite part numbers in his sleep, and can remove a

steering column in less than 2 minutes. He's been a great addition to the club. What would we do without ya', man?

***Jay DeLeyos – (jaymond) – Treasurer***

If you're a regular to the DC autocross circuit, you've probably seen Jay piloting his '94 M-Edition Miata or one of his hot-rodded Hondas. One of the first CAR members, Jay can be a bit quiet and reserved, but he's ready to jump in and help with a turbo install, tell you everything he knows about suspension tuning, and even sacrifice the extra second so you can ride along with him and learn the right way to race. Plus, we really trust him with the money end of things. We'll just be keeping an eye on his future modifications...

***Ben Harper – (djarum69) – Webmaster***

We were a bit worried about Ben the first time we met him. The first event he came to had torrential rain and 2 feet of leftover snow on the ground. And he pulled up in a showroom-gorgeous silver 2002 Miata. As it turned out, within an hour, we had him turning wrenches and fabricating a custom intake. And we liked him right away. So when he showed off his computer prowess, making him Webmaster was a no-brainer. It's only been more recently that we've discovered his autocross abilities and his near-domination of C-Stock. And he's a nice enough guy that you can't help but like him, even when he beats you by 4 seconds.

## *Monthly Miata Meetings*

We're holding monthly meetings every third Thursday at 7:30pm to not only grab something to eat, but to discuss everything from club business to Formula One racing to whatever. This is a great opportunity for anyone who would like to come out and meet some of the members in a casual environment, and you don't even need to wash the car. Plus, it'll give you a chance to talk directly to the club administrators with your input or questions. So bring a friend, a family member, or a new Miata owner, but most importantly, bring yourself out to one of our monthly membership meetings! See the upcoming events section below for this month's location.

## *'Parts Department' has re-opened!*

In case you haven't noticed, the "Parts Department" is back online, and open for business! We have T-shirts. We have sweatshirts. We have hats. We have clocks. We have oversized "holy-crap-that's-a-lot-of-coffee" coffee mugs. And they all come with the official CAR Miata club logo. So if you're looking for some great new Miata club swag, check out the online store at <http://www.cafeshops.com/chesroadsters>.

## *Become a published author!*

Have you just completed a cool project on your Miata that you want to share with other club members? Did you attend an event that was so cool you want to write an article about it? Find a new road that seems like it was designed *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 January 28th. All submissions can be sent to Christian LeHew at [hotroddesigner@hotmail.com](mailto:hotroddesigner@hotmail.com).

## *Cool cars, cool clubs*

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. 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.

## *A place to race*

If you've gone to any autocrossing events this past 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 organizers realize not all these parameters can always be met, but there's been a 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.

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

## *Past Events & Happenings*

### **Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> – Scenic drive – Frederick County**

The initial plan was to meet up for a drive to Hagerstown to view the Antietam Battlefield Illuminations with the PACE and Mason-Dixon Miata clubs, but due to several inches of snow, the drive was cancelled. We'll have to try again next year!

### **Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – Annual Membership Meeting/Holiday Party**

If you've been around the group, even for a little while, you know that the only things we do better than fixing Miatas, driving and autocrossing is partying. And this year's CAR Holiday Party was no different. With uncontested elections, the new officers were sworn in and gave moving and inspiring speeches to the group of 20 CAR members and friends. There were door prizes. There was a ton of food. There was a red and green Miata decked out with blinking lights and parked on the lawn. And there was a lot of fun. There's also pictures somewhere, but we'll be using some of those for blackmail, I can assure you. In any event, if you weren't able to make it this year, be sure to mark it on your calendar for next December, as this is one event that you won't want to miss!

### **Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> – Scenic Drive – Baltimore**

Even though the drive wasn't terribly scenic, eight of us braved the cold night to head over to Hampden (north Baltimore) to the famous "Lights On 34<sup>th</sup> Street" display of Christmas lights. And the residents of 34<sup>th</sup> street came through in fine fashion again this year. If you'd like to see what you missed, there's a picture posted on the forum. I think next year, Tony and his wife will be decking out the condo with no fewer than 15,000 lights. Afterwards, everyone headed back to Christian & Beth's for some lasagna and some of Lisa's wonderful salmon.

# Upcoming Events

Please RSVP where indicated. For full details, check out the Events section of the CAR forum at <http://www.chesapeakeroadsters.com>. 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) or call 410.377.8434.

## **January 15<sup>th</sup> 2004 - Monthly membership meeting**

We tried to change it up this month, but due to unforeseen party-related injuries (it's a long story...), this month's meeting will once again be held at 7:30pm at Rocky Run restaurant in Columbia. It's the first meeting of the new year, so the agenda's pretty wide open, however we're always happy to discuss the upcoming autocross season for CAR as well as any other future events and ideas you have. If there's something in particular you'd like to discuss, please drop a line to Mike Kline (aka GoKart) and he'll add it to the agenda. Otherwise, just plan to come on out for a fun night with the CAR group. Hope to see you there!

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Rocky Run Restaurant is located near the intersection of Dobbin Road and Rt. 175 (Little Patuxent Parkway) and just off 95.

Follow 95 to the exit for Rt. 175 towards Columbia. Go about three lights, and make a left onto Dobbin Road. Make a right at the first light (you'll see the Rocky Run and a Mr. Tire on your right), and follow the driveway back to the sharp right turn, and turn right into the parking lot. Ask the hostess for the Miata club table.

## **January 24<sup>th</sup> 2004 – Go-Kart Racing – Dulles, VA**

If you went to the Mazda Rev It Up event in July, you've probably heard about the hotly-contested CAR go-kart racing. Well, it's been six months, and it's time to get back in the karts and settle the score. So assuming there's no snow, we'll head down to Allsports Grand Prix ([allsportsgp.com](http://allsportsgp.com)) and hit the track. We'll get down there around noon, then grab some lunch afterwards. The folks there assured me there was every conceivable restaurant close by, so we'll do a general consensus. They supply all the equipment, but they recommend wearing a closed-toe shoe, and something comfortable like driving shoes or sneakers.

Because it's pretty centralized (and an old favorite), we'll be meeting in the rear upper parking lot of Savage Mill (8600 Foundry St, Savage, MD 20765 for you MapQuesters) for a 10:30am departure. We'll be parking in our usual spot in the upper parking lot. When you turn onto Fordham, go past the red barn, and make the 2nd left (it's a 180\* turn uphill) and follow that up the street. Go through the stone pillars at the top of the hill, and the lot is on your left. I don't know the "good" roads around there, but if someone else does, and would like to lead, you're more than welcome.

### **From Washington DC:**

- I-95 North to exit 38A (32 East) to Route 1 South towards Laurel
- Turn right at 2nd traffic light (Gorman Rd.)
- Take 1st right onto Foundry Street
- Savage Mill is on your left.

### **From Annapolis:**

- Take 50 West to 97 North to 32 West towards Fort Meade
- Take Route 1 South towards Laurel
- At 3rd light turn right onto Gorman Rd.
- Take 1st right onto Foundry Street
- Savage Mill is on your left

### **From Columbia:**

- Take 29 South to 32 East to Route 1 South towards Laurel
- At 3rd light turn right onto Gorman Rd.
- Take 1st right onto Foundry Street
- Savage Mill is on your left

## **February 19<sup>th</sup> 2004 – Monthly membership meeting**

Monthly member meeting. Location TBD.

## **February 2004 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CAR Chili Cookoff**

Last year's competition was hot – and so was the chili! This year, defending champions Christian LeHew and Kirk Rambow will be out to settle the score, and see if the chili from the new members can really stand up to the hype. The rules are simple: make your best chili, and bring it. Gas-X and Beano are also welcome, so you can bring that too. Also, if you're interested in hosting this event, please let Christian know.

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