



The CAR Enthusiast

February 2004

The President's Post

By Mike Kline

Despite the frigid temperatures outside, things are really heating up in the CAR community!

While the snow and ice continue to build up on the roads, warm your summer-loving Miata soul at our 2nd annual CAR Chili Cookoff. Brad is hosting the event this year, and it promises to be red hot!

Once the mercury begins to climb, we will be hosting tech days to get your car in tip-top shape for top-down weather. We currently have 2 tech days on the calendar, but if you are willing to host one at your home, we would gladly welcome the hospitality.

And what better way is there to enjoy the spring air than a scenic drive? We will definitely be heading up "north" on a day-trip to Pennsylvania and Delaware. We are also open to suggestions for other routes that will be especially enjoyable in the springtime.

The autocross season also revs up in the next few months at local tracks. This year, we are venturing into the new territory of hosting an autocross event, as well as continuing to compete in the local race series.

As always, we welcome your involvement and input in planning any of our upcoming events, and we look forward to seeing you in the coming months!

Seeing the (brake) Light

By Christian LeHew

If you've been on a recent drive that I've led, you're no doubt aware that I have a light out on the Miata. No, I'm not talking about the left turn signal (broken ground somewhere). Nope, I mean my third brake light, a.k.a. "center high-mounted stop light".

I've recently changed the light bulb, and that's fixed the problem. However, shortly after I bought the car in 1996, I had to fix the light. Not just changing a bulb, but I had to actually do some wiring. Since then, I've noticed the problem on a number of early Miatas, but I've started to notice it on newer models as well, now that even the NB's are going on 5 years old.

The problem is in the wiring itself. The problem occurs because Mazda routed the wires from the third brake light, across the underside of the trunk lid, and down the left side trunk hinge. As the wires age, they tend to crack by themselves when they flex while you're opening the trunk lid.

So if your third brake light is out, inspect the wires before making a trip to the auto parts store for a new bulb. It's easy to do, and is quite easy to fix as well. Simply open the trunk lid, locate the wiring for the third brake light, and follow it down the trunk lid towards the fuel tank. If the wiring's okay, then it's probably the bulb. If it's broken, you'll need to take a few minutes and do a quick repair job.

If you're an old hat at electrical repair, you can strip back the outer wire insulation, solder the wire back together, wrap it in electrical tape, and be done with it. If you're not, you can use a small plastic clip that I've heard to be called a Scotch Clip (probably because Scotch invented it). You can usually find them at any auto parts or hardware store for about 5¢. Here's an illustration of what one looks like.



You simply open it up like a clamshell, and you'll see two channels. Take one end of the broken wire, and place it in one of the channels. Take the other end of the broken wire, and place it in the other. Close it up, then take a pair of pliers and squeeze down on it so the aluminum piece bridges the two wires. Then snap the top clip into place, wrap it in some electrical tape for good measure, and you're done.

Have a partner press the brake pedal and make sure the light works. Open and close the trunk lid to make sure everything is secured, and you're ready to go.

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.

Pick up some CAR swag at the 'Parts Department'

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>.

Vie for a Pulitzer Prize!

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 February 26th. All submissions can be sent to Christian LeHew at info@phpwebhosting.blueroadster.com.

Keeping up with the Jones'

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 the officers know, and we'll have one of the local officials check it out.

Past Events & Happenings

Thursday, January 15th – Monthly member meeting

We had a great turnout of about 16 for the Monthly Member meeting at Rocky Run in Columbia. It was incredibly cold, but the food was hot and the conversation lively as ever. We even met new members Chris Frantz and Larry LaSov. Both of them are great guys, and we're pretty sure that Larry's son is busy convincing his father to add the entire Flyin' Miata catalog to the car.

Saturday, January 24th – Go-kart racing

Stupid snow. Due to the incimate weather that day, only Tony and Ben braved the elements and went racing. However, I've also found out that a few of the MSCW folks were there to challenge us as well, but to no avail. Don't worry, once the weather warms up, it's pretty likely this trip will be re-scheduled.

Upcoming Events

Please RSVP where indicated. For full details, check out the Events section of the CAR forum at <http://www.chesapeakeoadsters.com>. If you have an idea for a future event, please drop a line to our Events Coordinator, Christian LeHew, at info@phpwebhosting.blueroadster.com or call 410.377.8434.

Thursday, February 19th 2004 – Monthly membership meeting

This month's Third Thursday member meeting is scheduled for 7:30pm at The Greene Turtle in Laurel. As usual, bring any ideas you may have for the coming year, your enthusiasm, and any questions or concerns you may have. Plus, we even have a private room, so there's a possibility of Mike Kline doing some table dancing. As usual, just ask the hostess for the Miata club table.

Normally, I'd give directions, but their site has much better directions than what I can give, so I'll just direct you to there. It's not too far from 95 or 198, and I've been told it's pretty easy to get to. It's also in front of a Best Buy.

<http://thegreenturtle.com/laurel/>

Saturday, February 28th 2004 – 2nd 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 along with any side dishes, cornbread, or liquid refreshments you'd like to contribute.

This year's contest will be held starting at 12 Noon at Brad Albert's home in Bowie. Many of have been there, but if not, here are directions to help you out.

DIRECTIONS TO BRAD'S (FROM THE NORTH):

RT. 3 South through Crofton

Make a right on Rt. 450

Follow 450 through Bowie, Past HS. etc..

Cross Rt. 197 then your next light is Church Road.

Make a left onto Church Road (look for the Shell station)

Church road will wind through some S turns then make a hard right.

Don't get to excited about the hard right because right at the apex of it you will need to make a left on to Old Stage Road!

Make you second Right on to pleasant View Drive. Follow that to Heatherstone.

We're at the corner of Heatherstone and Pleasant View drive.

DIRECTIONS TO BRAD'S (FROM THE SOUTH)

RT. 3 North through Crofton

Make a left on Rt. 450

Follow 450 through Bowie, Past HS. etc..

Cross Rt. 197 then your next light is Church Road.

Make a left onto Church Road (look for the Shell station)
Church road will wind through some S turns then make a hard right.
Don't get too excited about the hard right because right at the apex of it you will need to make a left on to Old Stage Road!
Make your second Right on to Pleasant View Drive. Follow that to Heatherstone.
We're at the corner of Heatherstone and Pleasant View drive.

***Anybody coming via 50 just get off at 197, take that to 450, make a left and follow same as above.*

Thursday, March 18th 2004 – Monthly membership meeting

Monthly member meeting at 7:30pm. Location TBD.

Saturday, March 27th 2004 – Tech Day

The CAR Miata club's famous Tech Days are back for 2004! Assuming the weather's nice, we'll be holding the first official Tech Day of 2004 at Casa de Kline (Mike's place) in Crownsville, MD starting at 10am. As usual, nothing's particularly planned yet, so if there's something you'd like help with, put your dibs in now. Although I know of a Jackson Racing supercharger install and at least one suspension swap that are anxiously awaited...

As usual, feel free to bring any food, drinks, or fun motorized vehicles to share with the group. Directions to Mike's are below. His house is pretty easy to get to, and directions follow. Just be careful about his driveway where it meets the road. You'll probably want to take it at a pretty good angle. The house is green, and has a red garage behind it. When you pull up the driveway, you can park your car on the left side on the grass. For you MapQuesters, his address is 1218 Generals Highway, Crownsville MD 21032.

Directions from 695:

- Take 97 south toward Annapolis (12 miles)
- Take MD-178 (Generals Hwy), exit #5, toward CROWNSVILLE
- After getting on the exit ramp my house is the first one on the right (about 1/2 - 3/4 mi). The driveway before the black mailbox.
- If you make it to the 1st traffic signal (Herald Harbor rd.) you went too far.

Directions from 495:

- Take 50 east toward Annapolis (10 miles)
- Take 3 north, exit #13, toward Baltimore / Crofton (9 miles)
- Take 97 south exit toward Annapolis (1 mile)
- Stay in the far right hand lane and take the 1st exit (MD-178 - Generals Hwy), exit #5, toward CROWNSVILLE
- After getting on the exit ramp my house is the first one on the right (about 1/2 - 3/4 mi). The driveway before the black mailbox.
- If you make it to the 1st traffic signal (Herald Harbor Rd.) you went too far.

Directions from the East (Annapolis Mall):

- Take West St. west toward the Annapolis Mall
- In front of the mall West St. turns into Generals Hwy.
- Stay straight on Generals Hwy. (178) for 5 miles
- My house is just past the Herold Harbor Rd. traffic light on the left (across from the Shell station)

Directions from the West (Columbia):

- Take 32 east (10-12 miles)

-When 32 east turns into 97 south, take the 1st exit (MD-178 - Generals Hwy), exit #5, toward CROWNSVILLE

-After getting on the exit ramp my house is the first one on the right (about 1/2 - 3/4 mi). The driveway before the black mailbox.

-If you make it to the 1st traffic signal (Herald Harbor Rd.) you went too far.

Sunday, March 28th 2004 – WDCR/SCCA test & tune

As you probably know by now, our club's presence on the autocross circuit is growing on a daily basis, and should be a serious force to reckon with this year. So if you're an SCCA member, mark your calendar and head to FedEx Field in Landover (outside DC) for the first test & tune session of the season. Or if you're not an SCCA, head over there anyway and cheer on your fellow club members and check out some cool cars. If you're interested in a caravan, or meeting up with someone there, then check the forum.

Sunday, April 4th 2004 – MWCSCC Autocross

This is tentatively scheduled to take place at Rosecroft Raceway. Look for more details in next month's newsletter or on the CAR club forum.

Saturday, April 10th 2004 – Spring Detail Day

By now all the salt should have washed off the roads, so we'll make it an easy day of car detailing. Bring your car wash, wax, and any other detailing items you may need. If there's enough interest, we may even have Dent Busters of Maryland come out and offer some paintless dent removal at a discounted price. **If you'd be interested in hosting this event, please contact Christian.** Look for more details in next month's newsletter or on the CAR club forum.

Thursday, April 15th 2004 – Monthly Meeting

Monthly member meeting at 7:30pm. Location TBD.

Sunday, April 18th 2004 – WDCR/SCCA Autocross

Look for more details in next month's newsletter or on the CAR club forum.

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If there is something else that you may be interested in, contact them about that specific item and they'll work with you the best they can. They even sell BMW and MINI parts too!

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