



## Is St. Patty's day just about the beer?

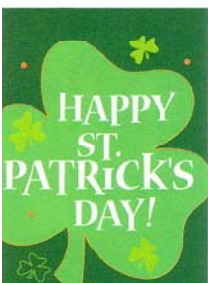
by Mark Brooks

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17, his religious feast day and the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for thousands of years.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink, and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland, but in the United States. Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. Along with their music, the parade helped the soldiers to reconnect with their Irish roots, as well as fellow Irishmen serving in the English army.

Over the next thirty-five years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called "Irish Aid" societies, like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.



Up until the mid-nineteenth century, most Irish immigrants in America were members of the Protestant middle

class. When the Great Potato Famine hit Ireland in 1845, close to a million poor, uneducated, Catholic Irish began to pour into America to escape starvation. Despised for their religious beliefs and funny accents by the American Protestant majority, the immigrants had trouble finding even menial jobs. When Irish Americans in the country's cities took to the streets on St. Patrick's Day to celebrate their heritage, newspapers portrayed them in cartoons as drunk, violent monkeys.

However, the Irish soon began to realize that their great numbers endowed them with a political power that had yet to be exploited. They started to organize, and their voting block, known as the "green machine," became an important swing vote for political hopefuls. Suddenly, annual St. Patrick's Day parades became a show of strength for Irish Americans, as well as a must-attend event for a slew of political candidates. In 1948, President Truman attended New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade, a proud moment for the many Irish whose ancestors had to fight stereotypes and racial prejudice to find acceptance in America.



## Robins' Nest

by Robin George

I want to thank everyone for attending February's meeting. We had a full house and a sea of red. It was interesting how some of our lovebirds met. We have some real romantics. It's a side of our members we usually don't see. Mike Wilson sure made his sweetie smile and Toby made his smile too. Mark Brooks took his sweetie to somewhere other than a Miata General Meeting. That's hard to understand. Unfortunately we had an accident with our PA system. While trying to get the hot scoop (how you met you loved one) from everyone in the room, it fell. Broke one of the internal circuit boards right in half. Now we have a very large CD player. So I'm on a crusade for a new PA system that will fit our needs and has a 46 inch screen. Actually I think we found one and will hope we will have it at the next general meeting. During the meeting we honored one of our own. Skip Noyes. He helped establish this club back in 1990 and has been a member ever since. Dennis Swaney with the same distinction will also be honored as such. Both deserve our thanks and therefore the Board of Officers voted both of them with a Lifetime Membership. We need more participants for the club Autocross. It's a chance to exercise your Miata and get rid of the winter blahs. It doesn't hurt, no will judge you...you race yourself. I get out there at least once a year. It gives you confidence and you'll be surprised how well you can handle your Miata after a couple of spins on the course. The club has all kinds of different events scheduled for this year. There is going to be something for everyone. And if nothing suits you tell us (Officers) what you would like to do and we'll help you. We have lots of experience and some of the best runs are those on the fly. If you have a favorite restaurant you think we would enjoy we can plan a run that way. We love to eat. During the meeting you requested another swap meet. We will have one at June's Meeting. So get those spare Miata parts out. Someone's junk is always someone's treasure. See you at the next meeting in March. Wear Green.

## A Nice Problem to Have

by Mike DeLaurentis

Attendance at monthly meetings is up and on several occasions we've only had one or two empty chairs left. We're either doing something right or you guys have no life! However I hate to think of the time where there are no empty chairs where members are sitting on the floor, standing or worse yet, leaving due to lack of space. We have been quite comfortable at Coco's and the feedback we get from members is you like the menu for its variety and reasonable prices; location; well lit parking; and the hard working waitresses. We, the BOO, also like Coco's because they don't charge the club for the room and give individual tickets and complete menu choices which is rare these days. We would like to stay at Coco's but we realize that as our membership grows we will out grow Coco's. We have



not started actively looking for another meeting place but ask you to keep your eyes peeled for a new spot for future use. Here are the criteria we look for in no particular order.

- No charge for the room
- Separate checks
- Proximity to freeways
- Central to our membership meaning central Sacramento
- Safe and adequate parking
- Private room
- Able to seat at least 75 (assuming we continue to grow)

In the mean time continue attending the meetings, leaving nice gratuities for the waitresses who work under difficult circumstances and begin looking for another restaurant that meets the above criteria.

## Lifetime Membership

by Robin George

I am pleased to announce that Skip Noyes and Dennis Swaney are the recipients of a lifetime membership in the Sacramento Area Miata Owners Association. This honor was voted on by the Board of Officers and approved unanimously. Skip was presented with this honor and plaque during February's General Meeting. Both are founding members and with over 17 years of continued membership with the club. We thank them for their efforts and foresight in creating the best automotive club in Northern California. -Robin George

## Treasure Trove

by Jeanne George

### WELCOME to these new members joining in February

Ross Donner

Meg Masterson, paid and sponsored by Skip Noyes

### Memberships Expiring March 1

Cathie, Peggie

Long, Ed and Chris Allen

Phillips, Duckie and Jeremy Smith

### Memberships Renewed during February

Tak Auyeung

Gundi and Gary Bechthold

Bob and Donna Carlson



## Shutterbug

by Mark Brooks

As the "official unofficial SAMOA photographer", I thought I'd take up a little real estate in the Newsletter this month to talk about my affliction - I mean, hobby. Photography has been something I've been interested in for years, and seem to have a knack for. One of the things I've learned, is that great photographs are not necessarily a result of the camera - they're a result of the person using the camera. Composition, lighting and angle are three things everyone can be aware of to take better photos. When you think about it, most really good photos are taken from an angle that you wouldn't normally see - for example, when taking photos of a car, get down low - on your knee so you're viewing the car from an unusual angle.. or when taking photos of kids or animals, get down to 'their' level. When taking photos of people, you don't necessarily need to get their whole body in the photo - unless it's a sports or action shot. Try to get closer so you're seeing more of the face, and maybe just the upper torso. With lighting, the basic rule of lighting dictates that you should have the light source behind you (the photographer), but as you get more confidence and experience, you can play around with different angles and types of lighting - side-lighting can provide different moods and dramatic effects. Backlighting is a bit more difficult because if you're not careful, it can wash out the entire image, but with

digital photography (what most of us use now), you have the luxury of being able to just delete the photos you don't like! You can also play around with long-exposure photos if you have a tripod (like the one you see here, of my white Miata) for a more dramatic, artsy effect. All the 'random' photos in the newsletter are mine, and you can see the results of some of the techniques I've mentioned here. Don't be afraid to try new things with your camera, and play around with some of the settings. If you ever have questions about photography, feel free to ask me, I love talking about it! While I'm no professional, and may not have ALL the answers, I will definitely do my best!



## Track Day Mania

by Ron Petrich

With the advent of Got Guts III on the horizon, warming sunny spring days tantalizing us, and the whole subculture of sports cars and auto racing once again splashed in the media, I thought it only appropriate to revisit the whole concept of track days. Some of us participate in open track, some in autocross, some in both. But most folks just don't get the attraction... and that's fine too. All I want to do is give you the reader a little taste of how the track day concept evolved, who participates and what is necessary to get involved.

First of all, track days have become immensely popular in the last 10 years or so, not just here in the US of A but also in England, Europe, Japan and Australia, to name a few other hot locales. We all remember those days when almost all speed contests took place on some back road, behind a factory, in some quiet residential neighborhood. Granted, street racing still persists, but is now looked upon disdainfully by most of us, and of course is quite illegal and dangerous. And as cars improved in their abilities to quickly turn left and right as well as go straight quickly, naturally folks wanted to drive left, right and straight quickly. So mountain and rural roads became the venue. And there is nothing wrong with exercising a sports car out in the boonies. We do it all the time – and safely within posted limits. But cars have been designed to exceed posted speed limits quite handily. So, someone got the bright idea to rent a race track and actually drive at (or close to) racing speeds.

So does that mean that all of those crackpots at Thunderhill or Sears Point or Laguna Seca are putting their lives and the lives of all around them at undue risk? No! Although there is risk involved, track days are regulated in a number of ways to mitigate that risk. Granted, you will drive much faster at the track than you ever would on the street, but if you take the proper precautions and make prudent preparations you



will end up having the time of your life, and drive your race car home with a huge grin on your face.

The guys (and gals)

who go to open track days are just like you and I. They are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, students, professionals, accountants, clerks, retired, and probably some unemployed. None are professional racers. Most drive their track cars to and from the track, and many use the same tires on track as they use going to work the next day. These folks have decided that they like the feeling of driving at higher limits, testing themselves, and actually improving their track AND street driving skills. And they are on the track only with other drivers of similar abilities.

But don't think that you will be thrown on the track unprepared (or even allowed out without enough guidance to keep you out of trouble). We all were rookie first-timers



once, and that is why many experienced drivers volunteer to instruct the novice drivers – for free most of the time. As a rookie you will participate in pre-track classroom sessions, and download classroom sessions after you have been out on track. Your instructor will be with you for the entire day (or first 2 or 3 days sometimes), showing you the intricacies of driving the line, proper downshifting and braking, until you are comfortable and confident on your own.



OK, you say, I think I want to try this. What's next? What car should I take? What do I need to do to it before I go? What should I bring with me? How should I prepare? How much will it cost? How is the day organized? What if my car breaks? What if I am hurt? alright, lets answer your questions as best we can. We'll use a typical track day at Thunderhill



as our example, as organized by our own Bonni Weatherwax and TEAM Racing. Bonni has been running track days for the last 6 or 7 years.

Track days are organized into run groups, usually 3. Only those drivers

in a run group are out on track at any one time. Groups, usually advanced, intermediate and novice, are limited to 20-25 drivers, and are classified based upon experience. A novice driver may have been on track between 0-3 times, an intermediate 4-7 times, and an advanced driver more than 7 times. These rules are not hard and fast, and a driver who qualifies for the advanced group may want to run with the intermediate drivers... like me for example. Most advanced groups have more liberal passing rules that a driver may not be comfortable with. And the whole point is to have fun safely, so one's personal comfort level is paramount. If you are a novice, you will be assigned an instructor, an experienced driver who (hopefully) will drive a car similar to yours, and who will ride along with you for most of your sessions during the day.

Most track days consist of a series of 20 to 25 minute sessions for each group, in sequence. In other words, the advanced group will go out for 20 minutes, followed by the intermediate group, followed by the novice group, followed by the advanced group, etc. Each driver will receive at least 2 hours of track time. If you drive a Miata you will be quite able, with very little preparation, to have a wonderful and productive time. If you have a first (NA) or second (NB) generation Miata,

you WILL require an aftermarket rollbar (not a style bar). An MX-5 (NC) from 2006 on has an integral rollbar from the factory, which is sufficient for many track days. Your street tires are also quite acceptable, and preferred if you are just starting out. You will not destroy them at your first track day. Just make sure they have at least 3/32nd tread left and are in good (continued on page 4)

## Track Day Mania - continued

by Ron Petrich

condition. Each driver will be required to complete, sign and turn in a technical inspection form before being allowed out on track. On this form you will self-check (or you can have a mechanic do it but it is not mandatory) all of your car's mechanical systems, including wheels and tires, alignment, lubrication, cooling and braking system, lights, electrical and charging system, window glass, exhaust, wipers and other safety items. Remove all movable items from the cockpit and the trunk (spare as well). Make sure your battery is properly fastened. Check your car for leaks and drips of any kind, and fix them. At the very least bleed your brakes and clutch, use fresh brake fluid, and switch to higher performance brake pads (optional but recommended). You will need a helmet that is Snell 2000 certified or newer. Make sure your seat belts are in good working order. Bring a few tools with you to the track, a tire pump, extra brake fluid, oil and coolant, windshield cleaner, plenty of water for yourself, sun block, a portable seat, etc. Gasoline is sold at the track, but you will be better served to fill up in town before heading out to the track.

Track activities are controlled by the starter and corner workers through the use of different color flags. These workers may wave certain flags to alert drivers to dangerous situations, passing vehicles, or debris on the track. They will also signal you when your session is over. The flags will be explained during the driver meeting before the first session, and they will eventually become second nature to you. In case of mechanical breakdowns or accidents, the track has both tow trucks and ambulances on hand for emergencies. Hopefully they will not be necessary.

At the end of the day, you can expect to be quite tired. It seems easy, but the level of concentration required to drive on a race course for 2 hours is substantial. So drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, ask your instructor and others lots of questions, and if you feel fatigued just skip the next session. It's better to be safe than sorry, and there is no shame in sitting out the last session or two. I pretty much guarantee that you will be much more satisfied on your way home than anxious like you were on the way to the track. Who knows, maybe you will be hooked and giving someone else instruction in a couple of years.

Many of us in SAMOA have been participating in track days for many years in a number of different cars, Miatas and otherwise. Please feel comfortable approaching anyone about getting started at the track. We will all be more than happy to share. Safe driving.

## SAMOA goes High-Tech

by Jeanne George

When you put two devious minds together, which happen to belong to Robin, President and Mike DeLaurentis, Vice-president you never know what they will come up with. Robin and I went to Sedona AZ for a week at the beginning of 2008. Robin informed Mike that he would be in charge of the group for the January general meeting.

But Robin couldn't leave it at that. They arranged for Robin to call Mike at 7:00 pm and start the meeting by cell phone. Mike and Helen practiced to see if they could get a clear sound from their cell phone through the microphone system. Their testing was a success. Meanwhile in Sedona, Robin is busy typing a speech into his laptop.

Here is Robin at his laptop preparing his speech.



It's almost 8 pm in Sedona and Robin is watching for the right time to call Mike.



Robin opening the meeting and reading the speech he has prepared.

We could hear the crowd laughing and groaning as Robin began with his greeting and proceeded with the speech. Afterwards we walked away laughing having enjoyed the success

and celebrated with a nice Mexican dinner and margaritas.

## Sunday Driver

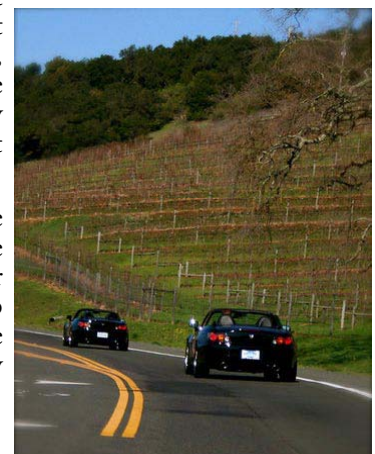
by John Emelio

The phrase "Sunday driver", an idiom meaning "One who drives slowly, as for leisure or sightseeing" is only partially correct, at least for Miata owners, and I'll let you guess which part.

While the 'spur of the moment' or 'unofficial' drives on Sundays are lightly attended, they are among the most enjoyable rides around. We usually meet in Winters, drive around Lake Berryessa, to Napa and back (check the 'favorite drives' link for more detail). I'm usually home by lunch, with plenty of time left over to mow the lawn.

Be a 'Sunday driver'! Join us or share your own favorite local route. OTMs are always welcome, so come show off your ride. Do you really need a big event to bring your baby out the garage? Check the forum often for posts. Really, be a Sunday Driver, you'll thank me.

John Emelio



## Shriners Hospital Concours d'Elegance

by Rod Gonzales

Calling all MX-5/Miatas! Sunday, May 18th is the 15th Annual Shriners Hospital Concours d'Elegance Charity Event, A Classic Celebration to Benefit a Classic Cause, which will be held again at Mather Field in Rancho Cordova. This year's event Marques are Corvette, Jaguar, Alfa Romeo, and the Ford Model T.

The Shriners Hospital Concours d'Elegance, sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America, is one of the Sacramento area's premiere automotive events where hundreds of antique and classic vehicles, sports and muscle cars, and street and custom rods will be shown and judged. All proceeds from this event will go to benefit the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Your very own Sacramento Area Miata Owners Association has received an invitation to participate with a number of the area car clubs in the Concours Club Corral.

A \$40.00 entry fee will get your Miata and two people into the Concours Club Corral. We will need a minimum of 10 cars registered to qualify for club entry. Your entry fee not only includes a spot in the club corral, but also two lunch tickets, two drink tickets, event program, and a gift package.

With a minimum of 10 cars entered, our club will be given three trophies which we can use as we like. Last time, our members judged each other's cars and used the trophies for "Club Choice", "Best Detailed", and the "Zoom-Zoom" award (for most personalized). Similar trophy categories will be used this year. Club trophy winners will participate in the Shriners Concours Award Ceremony.

You do not need to have a pristine Miata to display in the club corral. This is all for fun and to show our support for the Shriners Hospital for Children.

Rod Gonzalez will again coordinate our club's participation in this event. Contact Rod at [rodnoid@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rodnoid@sbcglobal.net) or call 916-366-1670 to request a registration package, which will also be available at the March and April membership meetings. Event details and entry form are also available on-line at [www.shrinersconcours.com](http://www.shrinersconcours.com), or you can download a complete registration package directly from here.

Please forward your completed registration form with a check in the amount of \$40 made payable to Shriners Concours d'Elegance to Rod Gonzalez, 2905 Gwendolyn Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. Visa and MasterCard payments will also be accepted; space is provided on the form. Entry forms must be received no later than Monday, April 28 to reserve your spot in the SAMOA Shriners Concours Club Corral. Confirmation letters will be mailed shortly thereafter.

As in previous years, this event will span the whole weekend with something for everyone including the SCCA Sacramento Chapter's Shriners Charity Event Autocross on Saturday at the Mather Police Training Facilities. Autocross run group schedule and details are on-line at: <http://www.sfrscca.org/solo2/Sacramento/Cup20085.htm>. Run on Saturday, show on Sunday!

Remember – all of these events are fund-raising activities. One hundred percent of all proceeds will go to benefit the Shriners Hospital for Children.

So come on out and join the fun.

Let's have a big SAMOA turnout for this very worthwhile Charity Event!

## Texas Hold 'Em Poker Run

by Jack Parker

This is a poker run where everyone has a chance to win at the and the results wont be determined until the very end of the run regradless of what cards you draw

during the run. Ever been on a poker run where your first two cards left you with no chance of gaining that great hand. Well with Texas Holdem you get two cards on the run and then there are 5 cards drawn at the lunch break and you combine your cards with those to determine the winner. So if you draw a duece and a five you may end up with four of a kind and win the whole thing. Your ante is \$5.00 per hand and winner takes all. Tentative plans for lunch include the same location we had the Teddy Bear Run a few years ago in Ione. It is now a Pizza Factory so we are working on an informal pizza and salad buffet for an as of yet undetermined price. We are asking for an rsvp by April 19 so the restaurant can plan. For more information or an rsvp please contact Jack Parker at (916) 698-2006 or at [culdad@svics.com](mailto:culdad@svics.com).

## Upcoming SAMOA and Local Events

- Thursday March 13 - SAMOA Monthly Meeting at Coco's.
- Fri - Sun March 21-23 - Driving School at Thunderhill Raceway (great way to get ready for Got Guts III !)
- Saturday April 5 - OTM Run II
- Thursday April 10 - SAMOA Monthly Meeting at Coco's.
- Monday April 21 - Got Guts at Thunderhill III.
- Saturday April 26 - Texas Hold 'em Poker Run
- Thursday May 8 - SAMOA Meeting at Coco's.
- Sunday May 18 - Shriners Concours d'Elegance Charity Event
- Saturday May 22 - Club Autocross.

## Got Guts at Thunderhill III

by Jack Parker

Ron Petrich and SAMOA will once again be hosting our annual benefit track day, Got Guts At Thunderhill III, on Monday, April 21, 2008, at Thunderhill Raceway near Willows, CA. The event includes traditional open lapping activities on the track, and a gigantic benefit raffle during lunch. All proceeds of the event will be donated once again to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America ([www.cdfa.org](http://www.cdfa.org)), to fund medical research into finding a cure for IBD. Since June 2006, this event has raised nearly \$20,000 for this cause, and we hope that 2008 brings similar success. Last year the raffle that was held at GGATII was supported by over 100 donors who generously donated more than \$18,000 in raffle prizes.

Once again the event is open to all types of cars, and limited to advanced and intermediate skill drivers with at least three(3) prior days' open track experience. There will be one (1) advanced group and two (2) intermediate groups... formal instruction will not be provided. The cost is just \$235.00 and includes more than two (2) full hours of track time, a catered lunch, and fluids and snacks furnished throughout the day. Drivers and passengers must be at least 18 years of age.

Complete information, including instructions and forms, can be found at [www.gotgutsatthunderhill.com](http://www.gotgutsatthunderhill.com), or contact Ron Petrich at (916) 454-1008 or by email. This event has sold out in each of the past two years, so don't wait until the last minute to sign up.

## The story of a 200k mile Miata

by Adi Damiana

In late 1989 I graduated from college and was on look out for a car to acquire. I was not overly impressed with many of the new cars that were for sale in the closing stages of the 80s. They were mostly large gas-guzzlers or awkward-looking Japanese junk with equally bizarre names. I saw my first Miata that a friend had purchased new and I immediately fell in love with the car. It was a 1990 red basic model with standard wheels, no A/C or other frill for less than \$15,000! I just could not get the car out of my mind. These small Japanese wonders were sooo ... unique, I thought. There was something different about that car. I guess it was the gaping shark-like mouth and the snug cockpit. The next year, I scoured the Sacramento Bee and finally found a cream-colored 1991 Miata with a white, almost creamy, exterior and a tan top. The body was in excellent shape but the engine had 175,000 miles on it and although it ran well, needed a complete rebuild. My friend's dad, who was an engineer and a superb car mechanic helped me inspect and buy the car. He had grown up in Scotland and remembered the pre-Miata days when, in Britain at least, the MG Bs ruled. We spent many a fine Sunday under that Miata slowly bringing the car back to its former glory. I loved the little Miata and enjoyed driving the car. We lived in Davis and there is no substitute for a drive down to Napa Wine country on a sunny summer morning with the top down on Hwy 128. I have so many memories in that car: the cream paint job, my college lady friends with their hair blowing in the breeze, driving to various UCD campus events and finding students taking admiring glances, etc. The interior was a little cold in the winter and the top sometimes leaked. But then what is a sportscar without quirks? Needless to say, the car was very special to me.

Unfortunately we lived in a students' apartment complex at

that time and the little Miata was left outside fending off the elements for months (there was even a storm-lived hailstorm one year). There was some damage done when an expert thief managed to steal almost all the un-screwable parts from the cockpit and elsewhere on the car. I took the car, almost looking like a fish without its flesh, to where the insurers told me to go to get the stolen parts replaced. This shop had a legendary reputation for excellence. They brought the car back very close to original condition. They told me to wait a few years for a new paint job. After that time had lapsed I took the Miata to Davis Auto-Body Shoppe that was reputed for delivering a high quality and excellence in all paint jobs with great attention to detail. My son shares my passion for fast cars and wanted me to paint the car "Ferrari red" (sic). In a moment of great weakness, I gave in and we are in the process of seeing the car change to red as ownership passes to the next generation (see photo). The Miata was finally finished and we took a trip to look at it. The car looked better than new! It was so shiny I could see my own reflection deep into the beautiful red paint job. Which reminded me of my own father telling the frail-looking roadside shoe shine boy that he would not get paid unless he (my dad) saw his own reflection in the shoe after the shine! I only wish my father was here to see the Miata (for he too had a convertible Austin in the 1930s). This was one of the most wonderful days of my life. After about 14 days of almost continuous rain we had a break and it was seasonally warm and the leaves were just changing color. The red color comes alive in Autumn. I could see everything reflect deep into the red paint. Phil added so many extra touches that I never expected. The doors closed perfectly and had a solid "thunk" (ala Mercedes?) when you closed them. You did not have to lift the door and slam it to get them to stay shut like our old 1966 FIAT Millecento back in Bombay. The shoppe had put in door sills that said "Miata Roadster" in red letters. Many of the small cheapo-looking plastic items were changed to chrome. He is truly a master craftsman. I gave owner, Pete a hug and a hearty handshake and I was off on one of the most awesome Miata drives through the rolling hills towards St Helena. I deliberately took to the Pope Valley Road as it is less traveled and is almost devoid of those pesky bicyclists. I ended up driving approximately 250 miles that day before we arrived back in Woodland on Hwy 16. It seemed that nearly every car that passed us gave us a head turn followed by a friendly wave or a toot on the horn. On one of the section between Lake Berryessa and the Spanish Flats roads a black Dodge Viper pulled up along side and gave us the "thumbs up" before disappearing in a cloud of dust and smoke from heated rubber! What a thrill! My kids invited all of their friends over to see the Miata later that afternoon. I spent the rest of the day driving about 20 different children of both genders and all sizes around our neighborhood in Woodland. My son got his wish for a red Miata, just as I had dreamed at one time 50 years ago for a red MGA but could not afford one. I told all of my children that they are never to sell this car or else I will ascend from the grave and haunt them for the rest of their lives every time they opened the garage door at night! There is no other car than the Miata that can re-ignite a burning passion to own, drive and enjoy a real sportscar for those of very modest means. And in that lies the Miata's eternal claim to fame.



## Sedona Vacation

by Jeanne George

Robin and I decided to take advantage of his 3-week winter break from bus driving. We booked a week at a timeshare in Sedona. We enjoy the area and the hiking trails and scenery.



We flew to Phoenix on the day of the big January storm in the Sacramento area. We left home with no electricity. As we traveled to the airport on a transport van the dispatcher indicated that I-5 was closed to the airport

because several big rigs had blown over in the high winds. Robin told the driver that he drove school bus in the area and knew back roads to the airport. As we went along, power poles were being blown over stretching their lines. When we arrived at the airport it was operating on backup generators.



All the food and coffee places were without power. We could see the airplanes on the ground wobbling from the gale force winds. After a 40 minute delay we took off. Safely up we encountered turbulences which prevented the

stewardess from leaving their seats.

By the time we arrived in Phoenix at 4 pm we were hungry. Robin knew just the place to go, HOOTERS just on the edge of city limits. He said it was to allow commuter traffic to pass.

We knew the CA storm was headed our way. Snow was predicted and we had heavy rain and winds. Five days into the vacation we saw the first Miata. We were surprised that there weren't more. For a week of our adventure we only saw 6 Miatas, 5 of which were dull red. They certainly don't take the pride in their vehicles that SAMOA members do.



This area is full of beauty and great driving roads. But if you are looking for night life there isn't any. The area closes down at 8 pm.

## Use Your Resources!

by Mark Brooks

10 to 15 years ago, who would have thought that they would be using a laptop computer to help them install a roll bar or new suspension components in their car? Not me, that's for sure! However, the Internet has changed the way we all do things - from cooking (have you seen [www.thefoodnetwork.com](http://www.thefoodnetwork.com) ??) to lawn care, to automotive repair and more. The amazing thing (to me, anyways), is how some people still don't realize the vast amounts of knowledge and information that is available to all of us in an instant. When I was installing the rollbar in my Miata, I reviewed a few different websites, including that



of the company who made it, and by the time I started, I knew EXACTLY what I was getting into. When I was installing the Flyin Miata springs on my car, I actually had my laptop in the garage

with me, so I could view photos of what I would be doing, and how it all needed to go back together.

The time I replaced my timing belt and water pump, my laptop was just as important of a tool as the ratchets I was using. There are a number of websites out there that have a TON of information available for everyone to see, there's [www.clubroadster.net](http://www.clubroadster.net), [www.miata.net](http://www.miata.net), [www.SAMOA.org](http://www.SAMOA.org) (of course!), not to mention the various email lists that are available to sign up on.



Whenever I'm looking to start a new project, I research it first - chances are, someone else has already done it, and has posted about it on a website somewhere! The folks in our fantastic club have done a ton of work on their cars, and are usually more than happy to lend some advice. Now, it would be great if we had a way to all share our ideas and experiences with other club members, wouldn't it? Oh wait - we already have that!!! Besides the once a month meetings, we have a FORUM on the SAMOA website, where we can ask each other questions, give advice and share experiences.

It doesn't require any effort - you just log into the website and get involved!

Give it a shot - next time you want to start something new, do a Google search for it, and you will find some results!

