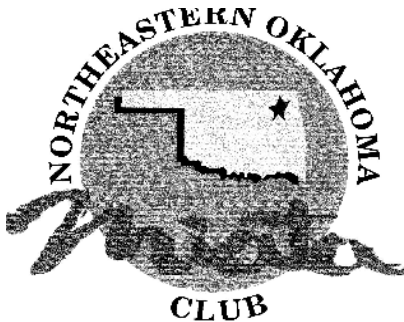


The NEO Classic

Official Publication of the Northeast Oklahoma Chapter of the Miata Club of America

January, 2000

Volume 11, Issue 1



Officers

President

Gene Bedingfield
918.664.4691
GSBeding@aol.com

Vice President

Mac Arnett
918.592.2636

Treasurers

Brad & Jan Coody
918.481.0658

Secretary/Membership

Pam Chronister
918.481.3644
TAXI42@aol.com

Tour & Special Events

Mike Meyer
918.243.7518
Meyline@aol.com
Joe Bohannon
918.622.0578
JOEBOLAW@aol.com
Joel Eads
918.250.3476

Newsletter Editor

Kim Hand
918.252.9254
keajhand@olp.net

The NEO Miata Club assumes no liability for any information contained within this newsletter. The opinions expressed within are those of the individual authors and do not reflect any endorsements or opinions of the club as a whole. Use of this information is strictly up to the reader's discretion.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ January 19 - NEO Miata Club Monthly Meeting
7:00 PM Mazzio's @ The Farm (51st & Sheridan)
- ◆ February 16 - NEO Miata Club Monthly Meeting
7:00 PM Mazzio's @ The Farm (51st & Sheridan)
- ◆ March 15 - NEO Miata Club Monthly Meeting
7:00 PM Mazzio's @ The Farm (51st & Sheridan)
- ◆ October 24- 27 - Miatas in Paradise, Daytona Beach, Florida

From the President

Gene Bedingfield

Well, the new millennium finally made it. It seemed so far away for so long and then all of a sudden it was here. I can hardly wait for the next one to roll around. Shirley and I have never celebrated big on New Year's Eve but since this was a special one I wanted to do something special. Something that we would remember for a long time, something to say when people ask, "What did you do on the millennium?" So we decided that around 11:30 p.m. we would put the top down, bundle up good, and take a short drive. Right after midnight I pulled over and Shirley took a picture. I hope all of you did something you can look back on.

But enough looking back. Let's look forward to what the new-year holds. I look forward to driving some of the same roads and going to some of the same places and seeing some of the same faces, but I also look forward to new roads, new places and new members. What do you want to do this year? It's your club, speak up. Let the

officers know what you're thinking. Tell Mike and Joe about some place you would like to drive to and see. Better yet, volunteer to setup the drive and lead it. Let's have everyone pitch in and make this the best year yet.

Happy Miataing,
Gene



Year 2000 National Miata Event

Miatas in Paradise. October 24-27, 2000. Daytona Beach, Florida.

The host hotel is the Adam's Mark on Daytona Beach and the entire hotel – over 400 rooms – will be reserved for the event. *Every room has an oceanfront view.*

Tentative plans for our club is to caravan down to Florida over three days. We will try to average about 700 miles per day and will probably spend the night in the Memphis and Atlanta areas.

Registration is expected to start this month. Watch this space for more information.

Meeting Minutes

Pam Chronister

November 17, 1999

In the absence of the president and vice-president, John Chronister, a "has-been" former president, pinch-hit for them. The meeting was started with introduction by members and cars. Joe Bohannon reminded members of the Jenks Christmas parade on Saturday, November 20.

Mike Meyer reported on the Eureka Springs trip November 13 and 14. Eleven cars from Tulsa made the trip. With Arkansas club members, 25 cars spent many hours traversing the curvy roads of Arkansas. Kudos goes to the Arkansas club for a well-organized event. Mike also mentioned that a Christmas lights tour would follow the December meeting. The tour will last 1½ to 2 hours with dessert and coffee in Brookside afterwards. Pam Chronister reminded members of the annual Christmas party on Saturday, December 4 (see November newsletter for details).

Joe mentioned that the Arkansas Club is planning an April Fools Day event at Gaston's White River Resort in Arkansas. He has brochures. He also provided information on

where to get club logo apparel and magnetic signs (there may be info elsewhere in this newsletter). Rod Van Koughnet has info on an upcoming racing event. Pam Chronister informed members that 2000 dues are due. Renewal applications were in the November newsletter. See membership article also.

Meeting was adjourned.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Pam Chronister

Hey, boys and girls, NEO Miata is G-R-O-W-I-N-G! We now have 45 households. I believe that's a record. The more the merrier....

A big howdy to our newest members, *Anne & Ray Duckett*, *Mark & Peggy Clemons* and *David & Jackie Schoneberg*. Anne and Ray drive a red '95, tagged as ANNESMG. The tag name has an interesting background; ask them sometime. Ray works at American Airlines. Peggy is a former member but has changed her last name from Gill to Clemons (she & Mark got married earlier this year). Their tag, PEGYSUE, resides on a '99 silver. Peggy works at SABRE as a computer technical consultant and Mark is an

instructor at Meridian Technology Center in Stillwater; I wonder if he gets to drive PEGYSUE back and forth to work each day. No vital details on David & Jackie yet; they joined at the December meeting.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES! Renewal date was January 1. Many of you have already done so, but there are about 12 households that have not yet renewed their memberships (at least I haven't seen your check). I won't embarrass you by publishing your names, but you can tell who you are by looking at the last line of the address label on your newsletter. If the last line does NOT have 1/2001, then I haven't received your check. Please do so by mailing your dues, renewal application and check (payable to NEO Miata) to our PO Box or bring them to the January meeting. For those of you who haven't paid, Kim will include a renewal application in your newsletter. It's important that you provide an application with your check; I will use the info on the application to prepare the membership directories (available at the March meeting). According to the membership rules approved last year, members who have not renewed by March 1 will be dropped from the rolls.

Eureka Springs' Trip Pics

Thanks to the expert photography of Fred Williamson, the trip to Eureka Springs can be enjoyed by the whole club.



The Neo Club "On the Road"



Lunch at Booger Holler



Waiting in line at "One-Way" Bridge

Top Down Tales

VRRROOM!

(How to add special effects!)

by Joel Eads

At a recent meeting, one of our fellow members asked me how I keep my engine compartment so clean. I was very flattered but I couldn't help grinning to myself at the irony. You see, there was a period of years when you could have planted a garden in the dirt under my hood, yet I refused to clean there. Why? FMP (AKA: "Fried Miata Phobia"). I have since been cured but allow me to tell you the events that lead up to this condition.

Imagine this: I'm driving down the expressway in my first Miata, when suddenly to my left there was a car in the next lane honking. Turning to look I saw there was a woman on the passenger side trying frantically to get my attention. Nothing unusual about that when driving such a cool car, right guys? But I couldn't understand her so I rolled down my window. Even though it was still hard to hear against the wind and road noise at expressway speed, I distinctly heard her yell: "your car is on fire!" Possibly the five most dreaded words a Miata owner could hear besides "Your Geo Metro looks great!"

Before I continue, let me flash back to earlier that day. I had decided my engine compartment was beginning to resemble an old garbage truck so I stopped at a car wash on my way home from work. It was an amazing transformation. A few passes over each area with the magical spray wand and the engine looked almost good as new. Feeling good about a job well done, I headed home.

But when I started her up, the engine was running very badly. Now it ran like a garbage truck. I'd

obviously gotten something too wet but I wasn't sure what. I figured it may take a day or two to dry out, so I opted to go ahead and drive straight home and attempt to fix it there.

A few minutes later, my Miata's life was flashing before my eyes as the fore mentioned lady was scaring the bajeejas out of me with news of my car's external combustion. Upon receiving this news and it's accompanying shot of adrenaline, I noticed an exit. I flew down it, into a parking lot, shut off the engine and quickly jumped out to see the impending doom for myself.

With total disregard for my nice clothing, I dove to the ground to make a quick assessment. I immediately saw what she was yelling about. There was a fire all right. But (for the moment at least) it was contained to the *inside* of my catalytic converter, which was glowing like a super nova. From it's position (tucked under the floor in the area of the driver's seat) it was such a bright red-orange that it was no surprise it could be seen at a distance in broad daylight by some lady not even looking for it. It looked like it was about to melt!

My mind was racing. Since the car was no longer in motion, the extreme heat from the converter was free to rise up and possibly set fire to the car's interior. But if I tried to create cooling wind by driving the car, more raw gas would be pumped into the converter and fuel the fire. I knew this because it was obvious to me what had happened. At least one of the spark plugs had not been firing because of the water. Therefore, the unburned fuel was traveling through the exhaust into the catalytic converter and igniting there.

In desperation I ran into a nearby restaurant and begged for a cup of water, ran back out, laid on the pavement and tried to reach under the car to the converter. I splashed the water upward toward the brightest glowing area, with most of the water bouncing off as if thrown

on a hot frying pan. After running back in a few more times for water, I noticed the glow subsiding as well as the danger of the fire spreading.

I waited about an hour and then drove the rest of the way home about one mile at a time. Stopping for 15 minutes or so at each mile to keep the converter at a reasonable temperature.

Once I got home I learned an amazing thing about the Miata's spark plugs. The plugs are mounted at the bottom of a hole several inches deep, and one of the holes was completely filled with water. I had a tough time getting all that water out without turning the car upside down until I remembered my silly straw collection (all that work can give you quite a thirst. Strange flavor though.) Once dry, the engine ran beautifully and all was well again.

There was, however, another consequence that I did not immediately associate with this episode. About a year later, my exhaust "note" began to sound more and more off-key. Now don't get me wrong. I love the sound of a nice loud sports car exhaust like you hear in a James Bond movie. But this noise was just plain ugly. Now it sounded like a garbage truck! It got so bad, I couldn't fathom the converter causing such a foul sound so I replaced the stainless steel muffler. But the new muffler sounded exactly the same as the old. A few weeks later a friend and I removed my catalytic converter and found another amazing thing. It was completely empty! Not one crumb of the catalyst remained. It was just an empty piece of pipe. I replaced the converter and the exhaust note was instantly pleasing again. I'm still amazed at how bad that hollow converter made the exhaust system sound.

It was years later and my second Miata before I washed my engine again. But now I know how to do it, and Fried Miata Phobia is just a memory. Below I've listed a few

(See FIRE - page 4)

NEO Miata

P.O. Box 554
Tulsa, OK 74101-0554



The NEO Classic

(FIRE - from page 3)

precautions that I now use to stay out of trouble when washing my engine and everything works just fine when I'm done. (This may seem like overkill but it's really very quick and easy.)

1) There is a trough in the middle of your valve cover where your spark plug wires plug in. This is the area to avoid with the spray wand. While I'm at the car wash, I fold a small towel until it is approximately three or four inches wide, use it to cover the length of the trough area and tape it to the valve cover with duct tape. (I wouldn't apply tape to an extremely hot engine, but so far I haven't had any trouble getting tape off afterwards.)

2) I avoid using soap on the engine. Soap has wetting agents that allow water to penetrate where it couldn't normally go.

3) I keep the wand at a distance

Nelson Nissan Mazda

BIG DISCOUNTS!!

OVER \$3000 OFF ALL 99 MIATAS

LOTS OF GREAT DEALS!

258-6581

over sensitive areas (decals, electrical connections, etc.)

4) After I get back home I look it over and touch up any spots I missed with a damp rag.

5) Stand back and admire how much a clean engine can keep your car looking brand new.

Obviously, I've had to learn some things the hard way. I hope this

story helps some of you avoid

