

# Dr. Detail Polishes A Rally Route

## There's supposed to be a @!#&\*%! road here!

by Dr. Detail

We're going to take a little detour this month. Those of you who attended the Peach Cobbler Run in June were apparently happy with the route and the instructions. For this I am really grateful. I did spend a lot of time laying out and driving the route trying to make sure that nobody would get lost and everybody would have a good time. It probably looked like the route had been meticulously planned and then just driven. Another example of how things are hardly ever how they appear on the surface. I learned a lot of fairly painful lessons making up the event and I thought I would pass along what I learned so that future rallymasters wouldn't have to go through as much grief as I did.

There are a couple of simple, inexpensive tools that will make your job as rallymaster much easier. The first of the tools is a detailed map of the county or counties that your event will go through. I have one of the DeLorme atlases for Indiana and it is really nice, but there are times when it shows roads that aren't there, or doesn't show roads that are. It's a good start, but what you really need is a county highway map. You can get them from any county highway department for cheap. Just call the highway department for the appropriate county and tell them you want one of the big county maps. This would have saved me a lot of time and aggravation.

Another tool that would have helped immensely was one of those simple stick-on compasses that you buy at Wal-Mart. Get one and stick it on your steering column right behind the wheel. I've got a pretty good sense of direction, but when you're driving roads that you aren't really familiar with, and the sun is directly overhead for several hours like it is during the summer, it is very easy to lose your bearings and spend time driving around in circles. In addition to wasting time, it's pretty embarrassing to keep driving by the same people who are sitting on the porch commenting about how lost you are.

Once you think you have the route laid out and have a good set of instructions, the most important tool comes into play: another pair of eyes. There is no substitute for having someone else try to follow your instructions, even if they are the same person that has been helping you out during the entire process. It's even better if they haven't seen the route before. Have a volunteer (or draftee) ride along as navigator and be brutal about pointing out the tiniest little improvement that can be made in your instructions. The people driving the route haven't been there before and they will need all the help they can get.

Finally, once you have the route completed, give yourself a treat (and a good test) and drive it from memory. If you have laid out a good route, it will be fun and interesting to drive, even if you have to look for clues as you go along. While you are making this final run-through, keep your eyes open for any potentially dangerous, or interesting features along the way. If you find something especially noteworthy, include it in the instructions as a special treat or warning, whichever is appropriate.

Remember, the most important part of any driving event is fun. If you're lost, you aren't having any fun.



Rick explains to John why he'll see Miatas coming at him during part of the route.

## Going to the Gap!

by Chuck Wills

It's happening again this year and Ol' Blue with Chuck and Teresa Turbo are going to the biggest non-event in the Miata community. Every year hundreds of Miatas descend on south eastern Tennessee to drive Route 129 through the mountains. This road is also known as "The Dragon" since it contains over 300 corners packed into a short 11 mile run. Nestled into the Smoky Mountains, the road runs along mountain ridges and streams, making for some beautiful scenery and breathtaking drop-offs from the narrow shoulder of the road. This event is never officially organized, but seems to draw hundreds of people from all over the country.

As usual, the gathering will take place on the last weekend in July — the 26th through the 28th. The main meeting place will be the Topoco Lodge, but I know many people are staying as far away as Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.

I know that a few club members plan on heading down, so please contact me if you are interested in caravanning down together. I know there are other groups leaving from Cincinnati and Chicago as well.

If you are going, please let me know at [chuckwills@comcast.net](mailto:chuckwills@comcast.net) or call at 317-697-7192. Hope to see you there!