

I Survived The Dragon, Then Got Bit By A Fence!

by Ben Hermann

I'm a member of Roadster Chat (www.roadster-chat.net). It's a growing online community that welcomes roadsters of all kinds. It was started after banter and chitchat was banned from the Miata.net forum, so most of the population is Miata owners, but we are always happy to welcome any roadster into the fold. We are very socially oriented as opposed to the more technical side of Miata.net.

Roadster Chat holds an annual event at Deals Gap in April. Fortunately I was able to attend Roadsters at the Gap IV this year; unfortunately, Nancy had to stay home and study for finals. We had a pretty good turn out of 50-75 people making the trip from all over. Nearly all came to the Phillips Motel in Miatas, but the show stealer was a '59 Austin Healey Bug Eye Sprite in classic British Racing Green. The Sprite was driven, not trailered, from Wisconsin. There was also a '62 Midget driven in from the Chicago-land area, but it was overshadowed by the Sprite, even though they are nearly the same after you take off the sheet metal.

Before going down, we had been warned of the increased law enforcement level following the death of a motorcycle rider a few weeks prior. Thankfully, the only run in with flashing lights we had all weekend was from a call we made ourselves after I had a little run in with a fence, more on that later. There were a few cops on the Dragon, but other drivers and riders warned us in advance so we could slow down and then pass on the favor to drivers on the other side.

I had made a clean, solo run on the Dragon on the way down to the hotel in Robbinsville Thursday. I met a few people as I pulled into the hotel, but the majority of the people coming in from the northeast had formed a caravan that hadn't arrived yet. So I settled in with a few new friends and a beer in the front lawn of the hotel and we waited. Before too long, a long string of Miatas rolled in and off to dinner we went, followed by more drinking and socializing that night. Friday was a beautiful day so we formed a small group in the morning and made a very fast run up the infamous U.S. 129. Shane at AIM had dialed in some new alignment specs before I went and I couldn't have been happier with them. The car was taking everything the road or I could throw at it. When we reached the end, my knees were shaking and most of our brakes were smoking. It was fabulous. Then we took it semi-easy on the way back. About an hour after we got back and had a bit to eat, there was another group forming to make a run and of course, I jumped right in line. Hey, I didn't make this trip to sit at the hotel. We had a good run with a mixture of fast cars up front, me in the middle and a few slower cars bringing up the rear. We had stopped at the north end of the Dragon to wait for everybody to catch back up, when a police officer went south, so instead of going back that way we were going to make a loop around on the Foothills Parkway.

On the detour to the parkway is where I had my run in with a fence. I'll spare you the gory details, but let's just say it involved a patch of gravel, my car, and a fence out front of a house with a pit bull chained to the porch. It was mostly cosmetic damage to the front of the car but that little incident effectively ended my driving portion of the trip, though it was good enough to get me back to the hotel that night and on home the next morning.

It was another night of fun at the Phillips. I wasn't in the best of moods when the night started for obvious reasons, but the group managed to cheer me up with a few beers and a Dragon flask filled with Jack Daniels they bought for me while the police officer was scolding me earlier that day.

It was a great trip that I turned not-so-good with my little mistake, but I am definitely going back next year. I'd also invite you to come on over to Roadster-Chat.net and join in the fun online. That way you'll be sure to get all the details for you to join us at the Gap next year.

Driving The Open Road Memory Lane

by Sara J McBride

It was the weekend of June 9-12 in 1994 and who were all those people wearing purple shirts? Look, there's 250+ Miatas running around Indy! What the heck was going on? Well, the Miatas were in town for Miatas At Indy II and the purple shirts were all the hard working Indy Miata Club members who made this event the most talked about National event ever. (The other most talked about event? That would be Miatas at Indy I!)

From registration, hot laps out at Putnam Park, banquets to a lap of the famed Brickyard, club members worked hard so that attendees would have great memories of Miatas at Indy II.

Father Jim Massie was there (he has a white Miata to match his collar!) and was asked by club members to be in charge of the weather but he said that in his organization, he was in sales and marketing and that weather was a function of management. Management was listening as the rain held off until the event was over! (I met him at an event and it's true, you'll chuckle during his blessing at a banquet and applaud afterwards!)

George Farrel (Central Virginia Miata Club) attended and wrote a story of the event. (<http://www.mindspring.com/~georgef3/past.htm##12>) The event was written up in Miata Magazine.

If you attend any national event in the future, I guarantee you, some one will say to you "I was at Miatas at Indy and it was a great event!". A big "Thanks" to all those hard working Purple Shirts!

