



In The Breeze



June 2024

Official Newsletter of the Bluebonnet Miata Club

Still Free!

25 Years of Fun: The Mazda MX-5 story

Editors Note: Unless you know intimately some of the founders of our club, you may find this story very interesting, giving us all the behind the scenes knowledge of how the MX-5 Miata was conceived. I thought newer members would find it interesting.



The Mazda MX-5 reinterpreted the formula for a lightweight two-seat sports car and redefined how much fun drivers could have at a time when there wasn't really such a car that was also affordable. It was so popular Mazda had to double production. Yet it was nearly never made in the first place.

In this first of a special series celebrating 25 years of the world's most popular sports car, Mazda Social meets Bob Hall, the man at Mazda who had the idea to build a two-seat roadster. This is his Mazda MX-5 story.

(Continued on page 5)

2023 Club Officers

- President**
Sophie Parazo
bbmcpresident@gmail.com
 - Vice President**
Dave Ogden
bbmcvicepresident@gmail.com
 - Treasurer**
Joe Knight
bbmctreasurer@gmail.com
 - Secretary**
Stephanie Turner
bbmcsecretary@gmail.com
 - Membership***
Harry Maxwell
bbmcmembership@gmail.com
 - Newsletter Editor***
George Lucas
bbmcnewsletter@gmail.com
- * Appointed positions*

New Members

- Cole and Cassie Almour**
San Antonio
2023 Jet Black Mica
- Luke Elwood**
Fredericksburg
2017 Soul Red Metallic
- Keenan Godbum**
San Antonio
2003 Pure White

Total Membership

191

Contributing Photographers

Sylvia Ferrell, Charles Mims, Sophie Parazo
Marilyn Hamilton, Lisa Martin, & George Lucas

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ZOOM-ZOOM

President's Message

Hello Bluebonnet Miata Club!

So here we are half way through the year!! Can you believe it's already June??!! Well the heat is definitely here but it did not stop the great Polanski Picnic Pursuit this past Saturday. It was a great run and luckily we had a cloudy morning so we didn't feel the heat so much. Thanks again to Monica and Nugget for providing the venue for the picnic. It's always a treat to hang out at their wonderful hangar!

The picnic has been a great annual event and hopefully we can make this an official event and get as many of our members to attend next year, even if only to attend the picnic. It's a great opportunity to see members we haven't seen in a while!

As for the heat, please make sure to take it easy and pay attention to the weather warnings that come out. Reports for serious weather have been coming out more and more to prepare everyone so take heed!



Until next time, drive safely and keep on zoomin!!

Sophie Parazo, president

From the Editor

Greetings from the confused editor's desk!

I guess it just comes with age, right? Right??? I say this because it seems it was only last week I was asked "Where are we going for Lunar Zoomer?" And sure enough after last night's dinner at Formosa Garden I was asked just that. And, well, shoot, I investigate each month different venues and it takes a couple of weeks to decide. So, keep tuned and I'll let you all know. Oh, and thanks to the 27 hungry members that showed up! That was great!

Last month I talked about my recovering my 2006 NC1 LTD. And yes, it's been an adjustment. While I don't regret my decision, I admit to missing some of the fancy features of an NC2. Like, the power retractable hard top, the smart top module, keyless entry and starting, and this last feature that Marilyn will miss, but not me, is heated seats. I'm sure there are a couple of other things I'll miss but I'm spending time upgrading some of those features.

The hot weather came fast, didn't it? I mean, I was sitting at a Missions game complaining how I should have brought a windbreaker! It was 71 degrees and the wind was blowing at about 25 mph! And two days later, it's 92 and humid! Sheesh, it's no wonder that saying about changing weather in Texas, it's true!

In a few days, I'll be polling folks about this year's "Head for the..." run. I had originally planned on returning to west Texas and Alpine, but with our friends in Arkansas changing the date for their 25th Club Anniversary shindig, which is only one week away from our usual Head for the Mountains date, I've decided this year will be "Head for the Ozarks!". We'll be leaving on Wednesday, September 4th and return that following Sunday. Folks can travel on their own or join us, it's going to be lots of fun joining the fine people of the Northwest Arkansas Club! Stay tuned for those details as we are working on them now.

Until then, keep on Zooming!



George Lucas, Editor

How Did I Become a Convertible Lover?

By OpEd Polansky

I read with interest the article that Bob Gautier recently shared with the club on why Americans have stopped buying convertibles. It reminded me about how my infatuation with convertibles began.



When I was 10 years old, I had my first experiences with convertibles. It was joyriding with my older brother in his 1954 all white, sleek Corvette. The thrill of whizzing around town in that chick mobile spurred my interest in convertibles.

In high school, a close buddy of mine occasionally had use of the family car, a full-sized Lincoln, which was a convertible. We were kings of the road when we paraded around in that monster. For my junior year in college, my other brother loaned me (after my uninsured Dodge was t-boned and totaled by an all-night janitor who fell asleep at the wheel) his convertible four-on-the-floor stick shift sports car. That car was just too cool to drive.

Before getting my own convertible, I splurged on a Honda 360 motorcycle that completely satisfied my desire for open air touring. Unfortunately, that satisfaction suddenly stopped when my 10-month-old son placed his hand on a hot muffler pipe just after I returned from a ride. I sold the cycle soon after as a pre-condition for family tranquility.

Fast forward to 2003, when our kids were grown and on their own, I toyed again with getting a motorcycle. Helenan, certainly not in favor of such an event, referred to me a notice that Honda was coming out with a new roadster, the S2000. She said that she would happily ride in the sports car but would never go anywhere with me on the back of a motorcycle. I rushed to the showroom to see the S2000 and was at once hooked. I bought a 2003 S2000 and drove the heck out of it for almost 10 years.



During those 10 years, George Lucas made me aware of Miatas and the Bluebonnet Miata Club. He even got me to attend a Roundup with my S2000. Of course, I drove at the back of the runs. But as Honda began phasing out the S2000, I started getting interested in the Miata and bought my first one, a 2012 NC. The NC's ingenious retractable hard top, Miata's favorable maintenance record, and fun people in BBMC contributed to my decision to become a Miata owner and fan. I followed the 2012 NC with the purchase of a 2017 ND because I was captivated by its styling that happened to be very similar to my S2000, and almost the same color blue.

Ok, so much for my story of how I became a big fan of convertibles and Miatas. My purpose is to express sincere sorrow for the decline in convertibles in American cars. Sadly, convertible sales in the U.S. have fallen nearly 80% since 2005. Even Roadsters are down more than 70%. Reasons expressed for the decline include practicality, durability, cost increases, and new panoramic sunroofs and glass tops.

Safety may also be a factor as oversized trucks and SUVs have become so ever-present. But the managing editor for Car and Driver, says he's doubtful safety fears have driven the decline, noting that safety-concerned families would be unlikely to buy convertibles anyway. Incidentally, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has found that, while SUVs have lower driver fatality rates than the average vehicle, convertibles aren't any less safe than enclosed sedans or coupes. That's good to know!

Still there is some good news about new convertible and roadster models in the coming years, including EVs. Ford unveiled a Mustang convertible as part of the seventh-generation car. Tesla has pledged to bring a new roadster to market. And EV startup Polestar plans to produce an electric convertible.

So, I can't imagine the demise of convertibles. At least, not as long we Miata people are around because we all are so into convertibles. We love them and I hope for our sakes, there will always be drop-top Miatas!

The Mazda MX-5 Story

(continued from cover)

WHO?

Bob Hall, 60, former Mazda executive who worked on product planning

WHERE?

California USA

MX-5 MOMENT?

Discovering Mazda believed in my idea that it should make a lightweight two-seat sports car

IN THE BEGINNING

“I didn’t even work for Mazda when I first suggested the idea for Mazda to build a two-seat sports car to Kenichi Yamamoto, Mazda’s head of research and development.

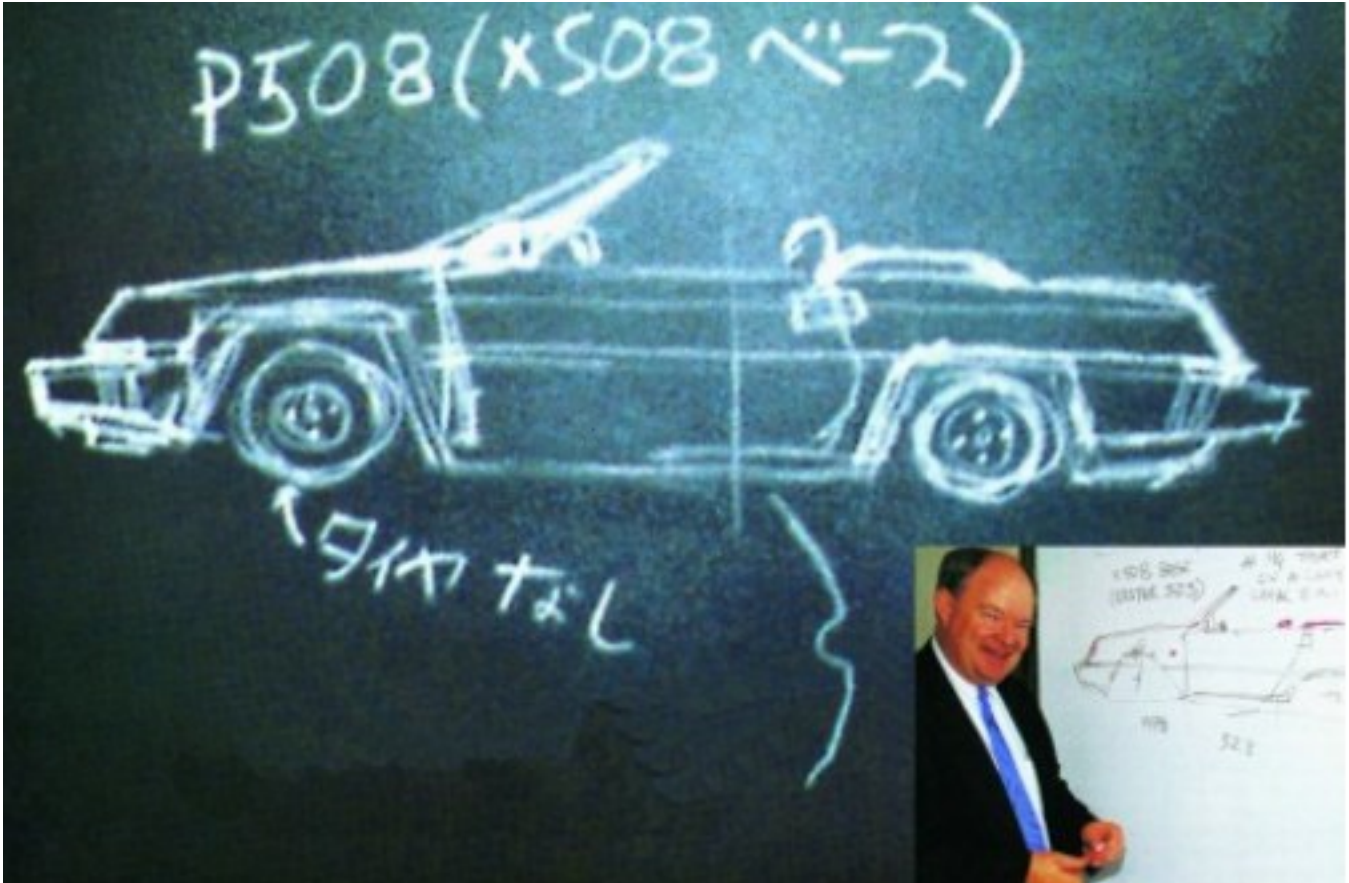
I was a motoring journalist, and had good chemistry with Yamamoto San. (On a past visit to Mazda’s Hiroshima HQ, I’d inadvertently seen a model for a secret Mazda car that was years from being launched and promised I wouldn’t tell a soul.)

The next year, I interviewed him again. At the end of previous interviews, he would show me something that Mazda was working on. This time, Yamamoto didn’t have anything to show me, so instead, he asked me what kind of car I thought Mazda should make next.

I’d had this idea since high-school days for a two-seat, rear-wheel drive sports car, based on the platform of the Mazda 323, so I chalked up a sketch on the conference room blackboard. The director of public relations took a photograph, then it was erased and we went to a baseball game. I didn’t think any more of it.”

TWO YEARS LATER, I WAS HIRED BY MAZDA

“They hired me and put me in the newly established R&D centre in California. I effectively doubled the headcount. In February 1982 there was a tap on my shoulder. It was Yamamoto San. ‘Bob San! What are you working on?’ he asked me. I told him I was working on the B-Series pick-up truck. ‘You should do your lightweight sports car idea,’ he told me. To be honest, I’d forgotten all about the sketch on the blackboard. (Inset: Bob Hall.)



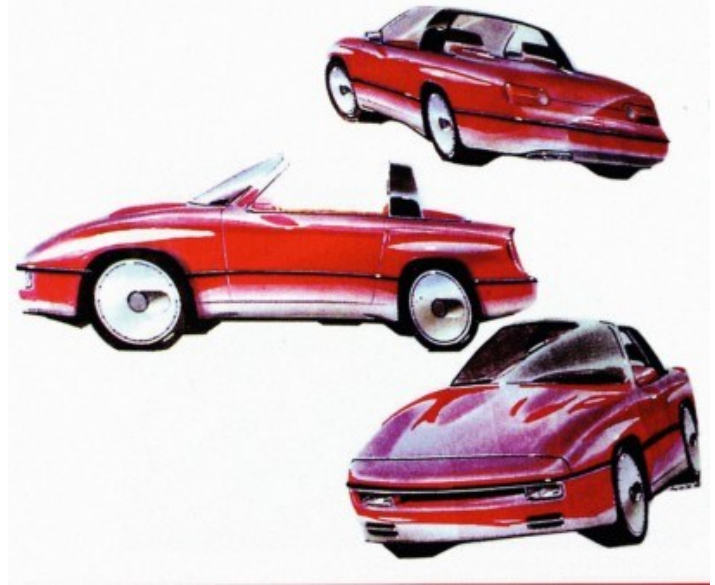
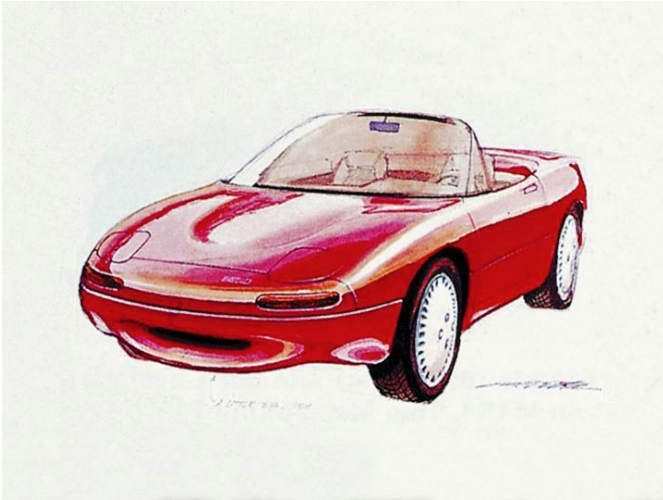
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The Mazda MX-5 Story

(continued)

INITIALLY THE PROJECT DIDN'T EVEN EXIST

“It was run as an ‘offline’ project. Offline was established by Mazda management to allow the engineering and design groups to work on informal creative proposals to encourage innovation. Then one of the managers in charge of offline projects spotted a trend: the Tokyo studio, Hiroshima studio and our California outpost all wanted to do a two-seat sports car. Mazda management sensed an opportunity and initiated an official sketch programme so they could compare our ideas.”



WORKING THROUGH THE NIGHT TO BRING THE CAR TO LIFE

“I spent a year working with Masao Yagi, a designer in our California studio, outside of our normal office hours sketching early themes for the MX-5. At the end of that year another designer, Mark Jordan, joined us. It was his job to finess the design so that it would be feasible for production. Virtually everything in the finished MX-5 can be found in their designs.”

SELLING THE BUSINESS CASE TO MAZDA MANAGEMENT WAS LIKE PUSHING SMOKE DOWNHILL

“US sales of two-seat roadsters were around 2,500 a year. Mazda management considered the company needed to be selling 10,000 cars a year to make a business case. During the board meetings, I had to convince management that this was down to a lack of choice, rather than a lack of customers. It’s a leap of faith when someone is telling you: ‘If we build this car, customers will come’. Especially when it involves a quarter of a billion dollar investment – in 1984!”

OUR FRONT-ENGINE, REAR-WHEEL DRIVE IDEA WAS AN OUTSIDE BET

“The Tokyo studio put forward a mid-engined, rear-wheel drive car, which was very modern. The Hiroshima studio proposed a front-engined, front-wheel drive car. When we flew over to Japan for the presentation, we heard ours was the least-favoured approach. Remember, in the ‘80s, rear-wheel drive was considered old fashioned.

Our clay model had a removable hard top roof attached using tape. By the time we stepped up to present the car, we thought: ‘What the heck’, pulled the tape away and lifted off the roof. At which point the head of the Tokyo studio stood up, pointed at our car and shouted: ‘Build that one! Build that one!’

(Story continued next month’s In The Breeze)

Mark's Double Crabapple Run

Editor's Note: My apologies for not including this run in last month's In The Breeze



Dave's Drive to High's Run

Led by Dave Ogden, VP



zoom-zoom

Ladies, Ladies, Ladies



JUN 14 - MOVIES AND LUNCH, Coordinator Barb Ahmed

JUL 11 - OLD ENGLISH TEA (and dress up!). NOTE: this event will be on Thursday
Coordinator Marilyn Hamilton

AUG 9 - NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS - new cavern area, Coordinator Cheryl Knight

SEP 6 - POOL PARTY, Coordinator Monica Harrison NOTE ADJUSTED DATE

OCT 11 - LADIES ONLY TRACK DAY, Coordinator Monica Harrison

NOV 8 - KRIS KRINGLE CHRISTMAS FAIR, Coordinator Barb Thompson

DEC 13 - MUSEUM - New Braunfels, Coordinator Wanda Begnoche (and Barb Thompson)!

Upcoming Runs and Events

June 2024

In June...it's HOT

Friday, June 14th, , Men's Breakfast, hosted by George Lucas. Meet at Las Palapas, 1564 N Loop 1604 E, SATX 78232 at 9:00 a.m. Great tasty Mexican breakfast! Be there!

Friday, June 14th, Ladies Lunch, hosted by Barbara Ahmed, Movies and lunch. Watch for details on our website!

Thursday, June 20th, Ladies Bunco, hosted by Marilyn Hamilton. Meet at Big'z Burger Joint, 2303 N. Loop 1604 W. Access Rd. SATX 78258

Friday, June 21st, Lunar Zoomer Dinner, hosted by George Lucas. This month we'll go to Dough, Pizzeria Napoletana, 6989 Blanco Rd, SATX 78216

Tuesday, June 25th, Monthly Meeting, chaired by president Sophie Parazo. Meet and greet at 6:30 p.m., meeting starts at 7:30. Be sure to come early and have dinner with your member friends! As always, we'll meet at Big'z , 2303 N Loop 1604 W, Access Rd. See you there!

And...in July...

Thursday, July 11th, Ladies Lunch, hosted by Marilyn Hamilton. This is an Old English Tea (Dress up!) Exact time will be posted on our club website.

Friday, July 12th, Men's Breakfast, hosted by George Lucas. Located in the original Los Patios complex, Comfort Café, 2015 NE Loop 410, SATX 78217 , this promises great breakfast items! Meet time is 9:00 a.m.

Thursday, July 18th, Ladies Bunco, details later

Saturday, July 20th, BBMC Trash Pick Up, organized by Dave Ogden. Meet at Big's Valero (aka the Miata Valero), 18655 FM2252 (Nacogdoches Rd.) at 8:00 a.m. For any new folks, this is one of our community service projects. We pick up trash along a two mile section of FM1863 as part of the Texas Adopt-A-Highway program. We have this organized very well and we can have the whole section picked up in 90 minutes. You need to bring comfortable shoes, and long pants as you will walk a one mile section of roadside with a small group. We provide disposable gloves, but you can bring your own. I will also provide safety vests and water.



Formosa Gardens Restaurant

We tried something different...we met at **5:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 26th** to dine and watch this month's waning full "Flower" moon! Where, you ask? San Antonio's finest Chinese fare, Formosa Gardens! And, we qualified for their Early Bird specials! But, boy oh boy, and we had 27 diners! AND, we had 27 people attend!



Thank you, members!!!

Don't forget our Sponsors!



Our trash pick heroes enjoying breakfast at Grumpy's . Great job!

We need MORE of our members to come out and support our quarterly trash pickup!

Remember When?



Wanda Begnoche, Marilyn and David Hamilton, 2008 Statewide in Fredericksburg