

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

## 2014-2015 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship **Winners!**



**In this edition:**  
**Chapter news...north, south, east, west**  
**'Shifting Gear' - exhibition review**  
**Convoy driving - the elastic band effect**

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5/2015



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Cover  
image:

The season might be over but the competition never ends! Our motor sport winners celebrate at the awards night.  
Photo: Vanessa Macaulay



Find us at:  
MX-5 Club of  
Victoria

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## Don's Drive(l) ...

■ Don Nicoll – President [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

Welcome to the May edition of *mxtra*. Once again there is plenty on offer for your interest.

I'm pleased to advise that we have now finalised the location and timing of the event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Club. We will hold the event at **City Mazda** in South Melbourne, starting at 4pm on 8 August. Thanks to City Mazda's generosity, we will be taking over part of their showroom to celebrate our Club's 25 years of existence. Those of you familiar with City Mazda will know the sheer size of their showroom and the great atmosphere, ideal for a party.

Being such a milestone, we'll be celebrating with food and drinks, awards and some history. Also, if everything goes to plan, our anniversary will coincide with the arrival of the new ND in Australia and we are hopeful that we will have a specimen for you to inspect. You can also check out the entire Mazda range if you are so inclined. So, hold the date free and look out for the flyer.

I have to admit that some months, I have a blank look on my face (and an empty head) when confronted with the deadline for this monthly report. In the absence of any opportunity to obtain feedback (unless I'm accosted at a Club event) it's hard to know if these words are of interest to *mxtra* readers or not. If anyone feels annoyed enough or inspired enough to let me know the sorts of things that you would like to be informed upon, please, please let me know. Having managed a team of self-opinionated scientists during my working life, the skin is thick enough to withstand criticism – whether it be subtle, constructive or below the belt. I've placed a bet with myself regarding the number of takers I get on this request for feedback. I'll admit to the bet next month.

Lots has been written already about NatMeet planned for February 2016 in Tasmania. One thing we haven't made much noise about is the financial situation. So far we have been very fortunate in receiving substantial funding from Mazda Australia which will go a long way to keeping costs to a manageable level.

However it is unfortunate that some anticipated sponsorship from both Tourism Tasmania and the Launceston Council has not been forthcoming. The

reason for this has to do with the timing of the event. If we had been holding NatMeet in mid-winter then it may have been a different story. We are therefore still looking for sponsors to reduce the burden on the Club's finances. If any Club member has suggestions for where we may be able to seek financial support, please email or phone Dave Collins or Bruce Gray.

Finally, another plea. It has been a long-held view of the Committee that the Club would really benefit from having a permanent Clubroom. We have made a few attempts to find suitable lodgings but so far without any success. Although we can place a lot of the Club's memorabilia on the website, we have nowhere to keep the physical things which are housed with Murray, Will or myself. It is unfortunate that, while the Albert Sailing Club is an ideal central location for our Committee meetings, we cannot store or display any Club memorabilia there.

Ideally we'd like a space with a meeting room for the Committee (12 people plus a few guests), sub-committees etc, room for equipment and records storage, some filing and display cabinets, and access to toilets and a kitchen. It would need to be accessible after hours and at weekends.

If it's large enough for Club gatherings such as our new members' nights, so much the better. And, of course, being a not-for-profit club, a long-term occupancy agreement and a peppercorn rent will be a real bonus!

If any Club member has a brilliant suggestion, you can be sure that you will get a good hearing.

I hope you all had a great Easter and enjoyed safe travels. It has been a wonderful autumn for top-down driving ... enjoy it while you can.

Finally, please remember Murray's Red & White Run on 17 May to mark the 25th anniversary of the first MX-5 gathering that kicked off our great Club.

Must go – the driver's seat is getting cold!

Remember ... **Safety first!**

Don



**Mazda MX-5 Club  
of Victoria & Tasmania**

*For your diary ...*

See the full calendar for details

### May

17 Club: The "Red & White" run

17 STas: Picnic at Ross

23-25 Eastern: 3 Peaks run

24 Western: "Not Sure Where" run

31 Eastern: Khanacross @ Bryant Park

### June

2 Eastern: Lunch and Lies (midweek)

6-8 Western: Gippsland long weekend

14 Eastern: Meeniyan-Wilsons Prom

14 Sprints 2015 Rd 3: Broadford

21 Central: Arthur's run to Yarragon

21 STas: Ausmas run

28 Eastern: Khanacross @ Bryant Park

### July

4 Sprints 2015 Rd 4: Phillip Island

5 NE Vic: Jingellic/Walwa run

12 Central: "Too Old for This Stuff" run

19 Western: Sunday lunch at Berringa

26 Eastern: Gippsland run

### August

2 Sprints 2015 Rd 5: Winton

8 Club: 25th birthday and awards

16 Eastern: Tara Valley run

*Mark those corners!*

Please remember, on social convoy runs, to mark the corners for those following.

It's very simple: when you get to an intersection or a point where the route of the convoy might be unclear to the car behind you, please wait at the corner until you're sure the following vehicle has seen you.

If it's unsafe to wait at the corner, please wait in a visible position nearby.

You won't get lost because, if everyone complies, the car you're following will be waiting for you at the next corner!

## Scene about ...

■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Marg Gillick, Alan Bennett, Karen Bradshaw, Daniel White, Jenna Perks, Jill Steer, Kelly Berggren







# Membership

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

Current  
membership count:

601

and growing!

G'day again!

We've crossed the magical 600 barrier again, for the second year in a row ... and there's still two months to go.

I would like to welcome the following 12 new members to the fold:

## Central Chapter

Simon Acfield	1989 Classic Red NA
Gary Davison	2010 Black NC
Stephen Lynn	1990 Red NA
Jan Micallef	1994 White NA
Kerry Reynolds	2010 Metropolitan Grey NC
Phillip, Diana and Ben Savage	2002 Red NB
Pete Yandell	2003 Titanium Grey NB

## Eastern Victoria Chapter

Chris Iddon	1989 Black NA
-------------	---------------

## North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Geoff and Jarrah Pitt 1998 Neo Green NB

On everyone's behalf, I wish them a long and fruitful association with our club.

Enjoy your MX-5 and I'll see you out and about ... *Will*



In an MX-5, far, far away...

... May the Fourth be with you!

## Trading Post



**For Sale** Grace Green NB with cream leather upholstery

For details of this and other items to buy, swap, sell or borrow, see the "Trading Post" section in the "Clubroom" section of the Club's website, [mx5vic.org.au](http://mx5vic.org.au)

## Burson automotive products at trade prices



Current financial Club members can purchase automotive parts, tools, accessories and car care products at trade prices from **Burson Auto Parts** stores.

Simply ask for your discount when you purchase, present your current membership card and quote account number **112558**.

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\*Note: only Peter Rutherford or Hayden Dally are authorised to offer Club discounts in-store.



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Repco will e-mail you online catalogues and offers.



## Car care products - member discounts

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Check out the Waxit range and order online at [www.waxit.com.au](http://www.waxit.com.au). Our Club coupon code is **mx5club**. Please add your Club membership number to the "comments" section of your order.



# Track Torque

■ Tim Emery – Club Captain - Motor Sport [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

Another action packed MX-5 Sprint Championship season kicks off ...

After the end of the 2014-2015 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship, there was hardly time to draw breath before we kicked off the 2015 season at Calder Park with an event hosted by the WRX Club.

Twenty MX-5s were entered and it was great to be back at Calder for an event. Although the track is starting to show its age in some places, the Calder Park circuit is part of Australian motor sport history so it's a great to get a chance to compete at it – oh, and it's a nice change to be so close to home for a track day! It was great to see Fabian Mastronardi back at the track and he has clearly been spending some time working on the car as it is looking fantastic!

City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship 2014-2015 season awards night

With a busy lead-up to the end of the season, it was great to get together with everyone away from the track for the 2014-2015 Motor Sport Awards night.

Held again at the Kent Hotel in Carlton, the night was full of fun and banter.

Awards for all classes were handed out and also the special awards for *Rookie of the Year* and *Motor Sport Club Captain's Award*.

I congratulate Dean Hasnat on winning *Rookie of the Year* after a fantastic full season in the Championship.



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Championship



The *Club Captain's Award* for the 2014-15 season went to Leon Bogers. Leon has only been competing for a couple of years and since joining has been a regular competitor and – more importantly – is always willing to help out at our events. He has become a regular scrutineer and is renowned for *the glove* worn on one hand for those all-important wheel nut checks!

For more on the Awards Night, check out the photos on pages 16 and 17.

*Tim*

*"The older I get, the better I was!"*



## Which Deity is that?

*The Navigator and I recently returned from a wonderful cruise from Singapore to Hong Kong.*

Most afternoons our group would adjourn to one of the ship's bars to listen to an excellent singer/guitarist followed by a session of pub trivia. This involved a few drinks and a lot of laughs. With four and often six people in our team we managed to cover most subjects pretty well.

One question that produced a range of possible answers, none of which was correct I am embarrassed to say, was, "Which auto maker has the same name as an Iranian God?"

Knowing that "auto" was an American abbreviation for an automobile rather than a gearbox was no help at all.

To save anybody desperately rushing to the internet, the correct answer is ... *Mazda*!

We're off now for a spot of worship ...

~ Ron Diprose



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# Daryl Ervine

Club Motor Sport Team / Central Chapter

**Name?** Daryl Ervine

**Age?** 52

**Born?** Box Hill

**Current abode?** Ringwood

**Profession?** Remedial Massage/Myotherapy. I work in a sports medicine practice and do some teaching

**Partner?** Julie – married 1988, best friends since 1975.  
**Kids:** Luke, Rohan and Carly

**Pets?** Labradors – usually two, sometimes three. Australian Customs dogs arrive at eight weeks, then leave to begin their working lives at 16 months

**Fave food?** Home-cooked lamb roast

**Can you cook?** I do breakfasts; cereal, toast and squeeze juice, lunches OK and a BBQ when required. I do not cook!

**Favourite tippie?** Good red wine!

**First drive?** A friend's dad's HR Holden, up and down the driveway learning to use a clutch

**First car?** Toyota Celica, 1975 1600 coupe – nice car!

**First fender bender?** Mum's Renault 10, coming across Skyline Road between Eildon and Fraser National Park. Went into the side of the hill ... had I gone left it was a long way down a very large hill!

**Everyday driver?** MX-5 – I have found it to be very reliable

**How many MX-5s have you owned?**  
Just the one so far

**Current MX-5?** 1990 NA (white)

**MX-5 improvements?** I had the air conditioning fixed before Christmas and this has been a great improvement! I have some RDA EBC brakes for track days

**MX-5 dislikes?** I like my car clean, so I have to wash it all the time!

**Why an MX-5?** A friend had a Healey and TR3 and took them on the track; I thought this was a cool thing to do, but not being one to fix or maintain an English sports car I was pointed in the direction of the most reliable, fun and affordable car on the planet. I was also about to turn 40 – no brainer!

**Fluffy dice?** Only if they were a performance improvement!

**Passions besides the MX-5?** Family, friends, the dogs, my old ski boat and red wine (did I mention I'm in two wine clubs?)

**Favourite TV show / movie / book?** TV: Australian Story or sport. Movie: Shawshank Redemption (just saw Kingsman: The Secret Service – great fun). Book: a good autobiography

**Dream wheels (money no object)?**  
AC Cobra 302 or GT40

**Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong?** If it meant saving a life I would not hesitate

**Favourite other Mazda?** NB, NC, but ND for sure (these are not NAs)

**If not a Mazda (gaspl!), then what?** We have a Territory that tows the camper and boat and does a great job

## The MX-5 Club Grill



**How long in the Club?** Into my 11th year

**How many MX-5 Club runs or track events?** A few runs, but mostly track days – two or three a year since 2009

**Favourite Club run/track?** Winton – minimal risk to life and car, and a real buzz

**Funniest thing seen at a Club event?**

The regular track guys seem pretty serious about their lap times and competitive spirits are high. This seems pretty funny to me when I am the slowest on the track

**Have you been to DECA or NatMeet?** DECA twice

**Ford vs Holden?** Ford

**What's playing in your MX-5?** 774 or Gold FM or TripleM

**Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)?** Go Blues (Carlton)

**Final comments?** Thank you to all in the Club who do so much and allow me to squeeze into the track days, and for the pages of **mxtra** which I love getting in the mail every month. I really do appreciate all the hard work and time put in by the committee to run this great car club. ●

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S-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g i-t?

Words: Will Campbell PhD

Driving in convoy: the "elastic band effect"

We've published this article a few times now, but it's worth revisiting to explain to newer members why those at the rear of a convoy sometimes feel that those at the front "must" be speeding ...

There are many facets to our great Club, but social drives continue to be popular with a majority of members.

I still thrill at the prospect of being one of a group of MX-5s driving snake-like through our State's many scenic regions and love seeing our little cars stretching out into the distance, both in front and behind me.

However, driving with a group of vehicles can be daunting, particularly for new-comers, as they try to keep up with the leader. Over the 14 years I have been in the Club, I have participated in well over 100 such events and have often heard the comment that because a car toward the back of the pack has had to exceed the speed limit to keep up, then the lead car must also be breaking the law.

It would be naive to suggest that this doesn't occasionally happen but, in the main, group leaders adhere to the Club's strict set of convoy rules.

So, what is going on ... and why is there this perception that, because you need to speed to catch up, then the leader is driving too fast ... ?

It's a question that a number of us have pondered and for, obvious reasons, the situation has been dubbed the "elastic band" effect.



The "herd" instinct is very strong, so the tendency is for trailing drivers to catch up and rejoin the group ...

Let's consider a common scenario of a group of cars travelling through the open country side at 100km/h.

If we allow the required two- to three-second gap suggested in the convoy rules, then a group of 20 cars will stretch out approximately 1.25 kilometres. If the group is as large as 30, then the convoy will cover around two kilometres.

Of course, in any group, not all cars maintain a constant 100km/h and this often allows slower traffic to enter the convoy.

When this happens, the result is that whilst the front group continues at 100km/h, those behind the slower vehicle can be travelling at a considerably reduced rate.

However, let's simplify the situation so that our convoy consists of only two vehicles, with both initially travelling at 100km/h (see scenario tables, below).

If the second car is forced to reduce its speed to 80km/h for three minutes, then the distance between the cars grows to approximately one kilometre.

If the lead car continues at 100km/h, then for the second car to catch up, again say in three minutes, it would need to travel at an average speed of slightly more than 120km/h.

Of course, if the second car decides to accelerate only to 100km/h, then it would not catch up until the first vehicle either slowed down or stopped.

The "herd" instinct is very strong, even amongst MX-5 drivers, so the tendency is for the driver of the second car to catch up and rejoin the group.

These figures have been simplified and rounded, and some assumptions made. However, the fact remains that, in order to catch up even short time delays, speeds above the posted limit would be required.

It isn't practical for safety reasons for the lead car to constantly vary its speed so that everyone stays in convoy and retains the two- to three-second gap. However, reasonably regular stops in appropriate areas do overcome the problem.

For those new to convoy driving, it is important that you drive to the conditions and at a speed you find comfortable. If you do get behind, be patient and wait till the convoy regroups.

The Club has an enviable safety record, and it's one that we want to maintain.

Our regular runs are meant to be fun and you should finish the day relaxed! ●

Lead car speed (km/h)	Trailing car speed during delay (km/h)	Delay (minute/s)	km apart	Distance lead car has travelled in next 3 minutes (km)	Distance trailing car has to travel in next 3 minutes (km)	Average speed required for trailing car to catch up (km/h)
Scenario 1:						
100	80	1	0.3	5.0	5.3	106
		2	0.7	5.0	5.7	114
		3	1.0	5.0	6.0	120
		4	1.3	5.0	6.3	126
		5	1.7	5.0	6.7	134
Scenario 2:						
100	90	1	0.2	5.0	5.2	104
		2	0.3	5.0	5.3	106
		3	0.5	5.0	5.5	110
		4	0.7	5.0	5.7	114
		5	0.8	5.0	5.8	116

Chapter chatter ...

4.4.15 | Central Words: Jeff Smith / Bob de Bont Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Alan Bennett, Bob de Bont Organisers: Geoff & Bronwyn Roche and Bob de Bont



Despite the longing to stay in bed on Easter Saturday, we rounded up suitable food and drinks for ourselves and for Jack, our Jack Russell.

We considered just joining in at Romsey (home for us) but got ourselves motivated to get down to Woodlands Park in Strathmore by 8.45 am in time to sign on, as it is part of the event.

Some 18 cars eventually joined the drive with odd ones joining in along the way with a small number of NAs, predominately NBs, and two or three NCs.

Once we got to Oaklands Junction we headed north along Konagaderra Road. You need to know I travel this road twice each day on my way from Romsey to Mentone and that road is also coincidentally where I lose most of my licence points. Anyway, for me that leg was very slow; others may have found it a little bumpy, but being my daily drive I know which side of the road to be on to miss the bumps.

First stop was at Lancefield for coffee, and from there we headed to the Burke and Wills Track. This is where my surprise and enjoyment really began.

It was good to see all the locals in various small villages standing watching our little convoy of Mazdas proceed past them, mostly sounding like angry hornets as drivers took the opportunity to air out the engines a little.

I think we arrived at Huntly for the Bendigo Motorfest pretty much on time. We were continuing on to Landsborough so, after looking at the displays and having lunch, we continued on at about 1.30.

I just want to thank the organisers for their brilliant choice of route and will definitely be watching for the next one. And eight-month-old Jack (right) was totally exhausted from his big day out hanging off the roll bar for the slower sections of the drive. ●

The Motorfest grew from the Saleyard Dash as a car show for local car clubs that wish to display their vehicles into what is now a large motorkhana – capped at 60 vehicles – and car show attracting vehicles from the region, wider Victoria, South Australia and NSW.

After a bit of liaising with the organisers, Geoff managed to secure a space within the display area for all the MX-5s. A few members ventured past the display cars to have a look at the competition cars and the motorkhana dash.

There were three Club MX-5s competing – two from Victoria ... Brian Marks in his NB8B [car 19] and Bob de Bont in his NC [car 23], plus Wayne Casey from the SA Club, who had driven over for the event.

"After a disappointing first run, including a penalty, I didn't take much notice of how others in my class went," Bob said. "Brian had to leave at about 3pm resulting in a 'did not start' penalty for the last two tests.

"After the last test I packed up and headed home, happy with what I had learnt about the NC! I received the results to find I had won Class B and Brian had finished fifth (out of 10). Brian had been leading the class prior to departing, and we both picked up two fastest class times." ●

The Bendigo run





# Chapter chatter ...

12.4.15 | North-Eastern Victoria ■ Run organiser, words & photos: Marg Gillick

*Blue skies, warm sunshine,  
top down, food and wine ...  
what could be better?*

The meeting place was *Corowa Chocolate Factory* for coffee and obviously chocolate. Just for a change Ron and I had a two-minute drive to the start of a run! We welcomed Dennis and June from Central Chapter along with eight North-East cars. The deal was \$10 for a coffee, a rocky road bar and *make your own freckle*, but I was the only one to take up the freckle offer ... everyone else was busy chatting over morning tea.

*Chambers Winery* was the first stop to sample some of Rutherglen's famous fortified wines and a bonus of listening to Bill Chambers' stories and anecdotes. The locality of Gooramadda (which means "where the clouds meet") was next. Melanie showcased *Gooramadda Olives and Oils* while we tasted and purchased.

An easy drive followed, to Beechworth via Chiltern for lunch with everyone choosing their own lunch venue from the huge range of cafés in the town, then a scramble to get to the meeting point at 1.30 (NO ... we were not late ... just right on time!).

Beechworth to Porepunkah – the long way – provided the *fun driving* part of the day with the next stop at *Ringer Reef Winery*. Here we met up with Dominic and Rodney from Central who just happened to be in the area and asked if they could join us (the more the merrier!). Owners Annie and Bruce slave away all year on their four-hectare site (10



acres to most of us), producing cool-climate reds and whites in a very hands-on operation. We toured their tiny winery, sampled (and purchased) their products and admired the view.

Bright in autumn is a *must see*, so we toured through to *Nightingale Alpine Apples* at Wandiligong. A choice of eight varieties, mix and match, \$5 for a large bag – fresh, crunchy and delicious.

Back through Bright, admiring more autumn tones, to the *Bright Berry Farm* where our "Tastes" tour concluded with afternoon tea of berry ice cream, berry pancakes and berry cups and, of course, *berry nice* coffee. ●

*Food, wine and roads  
to suit all tastes!*



## Tastes of the North-East





# Chapter chatter ...

12.4.15 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Organisers: Karen & Ian Bradshaw

*My goodness – where have the years gone?*

Today is the Western Chapter's sixth birthday (to the day). John and I cannot believe it has been six years since we asked Murray (our Club President at the time) if we could start up a group in the Ballarat area.

Nine cars meet at the Phoenix College to leave at 9am sharp. Jeff is our leader and welcomes two new prospective members, Steve and Jack. He gives us the rundown of where we are heading and then, we're off.

We are travelling to Skipton to meet up with three more cars and have a coffee break. We get to the divided road at Scarsdale ... oops – Jeff takes the wrong road *and there has to be a U-turn!* John and I have a little chuckle, glad to see our trademark manoeuvre being carried on.

We arrive at Skipton, grab a quick coffee and after 20 minutes Ian calls us together for another chat about the day's plans. And we're off again.

With Ian leading, we take the back roads through crop farming country, heading to Maroona to pick up another member, Adam. We all give him a wave and toot and he joins in, making our convoy 13 cars.

After a few left and right turns we now have trees on the sides of the road and we are going through a few sweepers. Now, *this* is more like it. The ranges are on the horizon in front now.

We go through the township of Moyston which had to battle the bush fires a few months back. We are close now and getting into some real MX-5 country. Upon arrival at Halls Gap township we find parking and venture to the toilet block.

Halls Gap is a lovely town in the most picturesque setting.

Lockie has arrived to meet us now, so we all head back to our cars to do the loop. We go up the mount, turning off towards the Silverwater Falls. Now this is some road! Once past the falls car park the road is one way (how great is that?).

Apart from being held up by a couple of Sunday drivers (who do let us past) we all have a ball, then the road finishes at the main town road again. Now it's time to head over the Grampians ranges to Lockie Story's place at Mockinya for lunch.

A few of us miss the turn because the golden rule of waiting at the corner failed to be heeded ... *another U-turn!*

The run over the ranges is fantastic for MX-5s and the road is very quiet, so a great time is had by all the little coloured jellybeans and their drivers. I know ours is having the cobwebs blown out, eh, John!

We arrive for lunch and after a lot of laughter and natter at the *Story Ranch* and a good look around at Lockie's treasures, Lockie and Karen present a yummiie birthday cake (baked for us by the lovely Tracey) with candles. Everyone joins in for the sing song and group photo to mark the occasion.

A few part to make their way home and then the rest of us bid Lockie farewell and head to Dadswells Bridge for an ice cream. Then it's off down the highway to our various destinations.

Once again a terrific day, with great company, perfect weather and those special fun cars.

Thank you so much to Tracey and Lockie for their hospitality on the day. *Zoom Zoom.* ●



^ Is it six years already? Noellene blows out the candles on the Western Vic Chapter's birthday cake



^ Roses Gap road



Hip hip! Noellene and Karen (centre) cut the cake, surrounded by (left to right) Jeff, John, Lockie, Ian, Adam, Brian, Chris, Jack, Belinda, Alan, Jack, Ross, Brian, Mary, Ron, Beau and Kev



^ Adam Rentch and his dad, leaving Halls Gap

^ Inset: the Grampians





# Motor Sport awards night

10.4.14 | 2014-15 City Mazda MX-5 Sprints Championship



■ Photos: Daniel White ■ Organisers: Tim Emery, Randy Stagno Navarra



The 2014-15 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship season was capped off with an equally-successful motor sport awards night at the Kent Hotel in Carlton, on Friday, 10 April.

The full house of attendees included a host of previous award winners and so many of our long-suffering motor sport 'WAGS' and extended families.

Motor Sport Captain Tim Emery kicked off the night with a unique welcome speech ... not sure whether he wanted to welcome the gathered throng or thank them for coming, Tim said he wanted to w ... well, you probably get the idea – he was obviously very happy to be at the event!

We enjoyed round 2 of our **Pro-Am MX-5 Simulator Challenge**, following on from the hilarity of last year's inaugural "event", thanks to the team from *U Race-it* who supplied a race simulator set up with the famous Mazda-owned track at Laguna Seca in California. A current Sprint Championship competitor was teamed with a 'non-competitor', both of whom set their fastest time around the "track" in a "Spec Miata" MX-5 for a combined total time. After some strong competition from Max Lloyd's daughter Vanessa, trying to repeat her 2014 victory, Robyn Conrad and Daniel White came away with the win. (Oh, in case you are wondering, Daniel was the *Pro* and Robyn the *Am*.) ●



TOP 5

DM / VANESSA	4:25.8
4:35.5	
R. PHILLIPS / TIMMY	4:27.0
4:30.1	
PAUL / VANESSA	5:24.0
4:35.0	
MAX / SUZETTE	5:57.0
5:45.0	
DW / ROBYN	5:58.0
5:58.0	
NOEL / MADGE	6:00.0
6:00.0	
TRINITY / TIM	6:02.0
6:02.0	
DANIEL M / CLAUDE	6:02.0
6:02.0	



## 2014-15 Sprint Championship Winners

Overall Champions	=	Alan Conrad Robert Downes Russell Garner Ray Monik
Standard NA	1	Robert Downes
Standard NB	1	Dean Hasnat
	2	Jeremy Fredersdorf
	3	Simeon Ouzas
Standard NC	1	Alan Conrad
Clubman	1	Peter Phillips
	2	Max Lloyd
	3	Leon Bogers
Modified	1	Ray Monik
	2	Gavin Newman
	3	Daniel White
Super Modified	1	Russell Garner
	2	Robert Parr
Restricted Open	1	Paul Ledwith
	2	Brendan Beavis
	3	David Wilken
Open	1	Dave Moore
Rookie of the Year		Dean Hasnat
Club Captain's Award		Leon Bogers



^ They need no introduction, but just in case ... the award winners named above are all "centre", flanked on the left by Club Captain - Motor Sport, Tim Emery, and Assistant CC - Motor Sport, Randy Stagno Navarra on the right.



# Chapter chatter ...

**12.4.15 | Northern Tasmania** ■ Words: Kelly Berggren ■ Photos: Jill Steer & Kelly Berggren  
■ Organisers: Carl Berggren & Ken Beaton

*We thought it was about time the ladies had a run and were encouraged to drive, so we set up a short run around some fun roads behind Devonport and Ulverstone.*

With a market at the start ('Groannn ...' from the blokes), we then took off for the back of Wilmot and Spellmans Bridge, ('Yay!' from the blokes), cruising home via Sprent's patchwork paddocks, ('I could have taken that corner twice as fast!' from the blokes), and then lunch and a tour of Home Hill to finish. Trevor made a fetching lady with long red hair, though s/he was a bit of a flirt!

Home Hill, a National Trust property, was the home of Prime Minister Joe Lyons and his inspirational better half, Dame Enid Lyons. We had a lovely picnic on the lawns and a tour of the house, hearing about Dame Enid's life supporting her husband, raising 12 children in hard times and then becoming one of the first female members of Parliament.

Thanks to Ruth and Anne for the Home Hill tours, and to Ken and Carl for plotting the run and then putting up with our driving! ●



^ Home Hill



**19.4.15 | Eastern Victoria** ■ Words & photos: Jenna Perks ■ Organiser: Peter Ferguson



*The Sunday morning was, like the day before, wet and miserable.*

This clearly kept a lot of regulars away thinking that it would be a roof-up dreary run. They clearly forgot that Eastern Chapter runs are *always* dry and sunny – it's a tradition that Alan Laine set and we aim to keep!

So eight "crews" met at the Holden Museum in Trafalgar for coffee and a chat. And because, as the run leader pointed out, it *never* rains after 10.30 on our runs – the rain promptly stopped and other than a few spits stayed away all day.

We had the rooves down for the entire run and the sun played a fair amount of peek-a-boo with us. The heaters did have to go on but it's nice to check, now and then, that they still work – it got fairly chilly up in the Strezelecki hills, but overall we had great driving weather and conditions.

Three cars came down from the Central Chapter, including Ron Diprose all the way from Sunbury (thanks Ron).

All vowed they loved the Gippsland roads and our special brand of bulls\*\*t – perhaps something to do with our close proximity to a lot of cows!

The run was relatively short at 170km, with two thirds of it in the first "half" as we wound our way up through the hills to an eventual lunch stop at Mirboo North. Some valid, and loud, noise was

made about two hours being too long for a toilet break. Might need to do a little adjustment to the run for next time. I guess Dad and his gang of Geriatrics probably need consideration too – lol!

Once the urgent stuff was dispensed with, we all locked up and walked down to the *Inline 4 Café*. If you are in Mirboo North this café [96 Ridgeway] is a *must-see*; whack it on the Bucket List. It is motor bike and motor sport-themed with heaps of memorabilia hung from the ceiling and walls – they also serve great food and coffee.

A lengthy lunch was had, with plenty of room and time to sit and chew the fat, as they say – a lovely treat, as the place is usually so packed but the weather had deterred a lot of motor bike enthusiasts, who are usually there.

The short "half" returned fairly directly (bit still over some nice twisty roads) to the Holden Museum where everyone stopped for another coffee. Most also took the opportunity for a look through the museum.

We love Gippsland and the wonderful roads it provides us, and it is now fantastic that we have other local motoring enthusiasts to work in with too.

**So once again, a great run ... such a pity the weather kept so many away.** ●





# Chapter chatter ...

17-20.4.15 | Central ■ Words: Marg Gillick & Bill Roder ■ Photos: Marg Gillick ■ Organisers: Bill Roder

*Pre-dawn Mt Eliza was too chilly for us northerners but Bill and Margy began their drive with the top down.*

A red NA was already in the car park at Officer but there was no owner to be seen. Neil and Mary arrived in their silver NC then Phil in a white NC, so we had our five cars. Ian, the owner of the NA, returned with coffee and finishing his second breakfast ... he had miscalculated the time from home and had not allowed for the lack of traffic.

Bill gave a brief rundown of the event ahead and we joined the early morning highway travellers, braving the elements and misty rain. A muddle of cars and traffic lights separated the small convoy but we regrouped for morning tea at Rosedale. It took about two minutes for the boys to have a very important meeting under the bonnet of Ian's car... just looking!!!!

Bairnsdale for fuel (and some fuses for Bill) then to Bruthen for lunch, up to Omeo with the weather holding – cloudy but fine – and Dinner Plain for a coffee. Another important meeting, this time under Bill's bonnet, looking for the right spot to insert those previously mentioned fuses as he was having a few electrical hiccups – no radio, no central locking, one window permanently up, etc etc.

**Thickening cloud was hanging over Mt Hotham** and there was a little more traffic including a back hoe. Some vehicles moved over but others did not (especially a white Mazda6 ... we all thought he would have had more manners!). The weather deteriorated as Bill slipped past but rest of us crawled down the mountain getting more frustrated and wetter and wetter as we were going too slow for the rain to blow over the top. A quick stop to put the tops up gave little relief; we were soon crawling again. A regroup at Harrietville then over Tawonga Gap to our motel at Mt Beauty, about 480km for the day.

The fuse diagram in the manual was consulted but fading light and pouring rain made drinks and nibbles a more attractive proposition than puzzling over electrics ... all the important stuff still worked!

**Bill had organised dinner "just around the corner"** so we walked. "Just around the corner" proved to be 200 metres away ... two umbrellas for eight people did not quite work, but the pizzas were excellent!

➤ **Day 2:** Rain storms had crashed through all night and it was still raining next morning as we headed for Falls Creek and beyond. The bad weather had loosened a few rocks in the cuttings and lots of tree debris covered the road. The higher we went, the thicker the fog became, and we could hardly make out the tail lights of the car in front. Vicious winds and driving rain, even sleet at one stage, lashed the convoy across the high plains. Lower down the weather eased with a surprise splash of sunshine as we turned onto the Omeo Highway.

*False hope ...* as we zoomed on, the rain came back with a vengeance and the planned stop was abandoned in favour the warm, dry café in Mitta Mitta.

On arrival in Corryong three cars bought 98 octane fuel ... then the tank ran dry, and 91 was not an option. Luckily there is another service station. The bakery proprietor was not pleased to see us arrive as she had just started to put food away, but the sandwiches and pies were lovely. After a quick consult with the

weather gods on *Google* we decided the rain would stay away long enough for us to complete the planned loop out to Tooma and Cabramurra via Elliot Way and Goat Ridge Road.

**Bill led us out of Corryong, top down; Ian top up; Neil top down; us top up.** Phil decided to rest. A small warning shower and Neil stopped to push his button (NC). Another minute up the road and down it came! Bill executed a neat hand brake stop, jumped out to drag the top up as Margy battled with her umbrella underneath ... *beautifully coordinated.*

We zoomed through the mountains on some great roads. A few minutes after crossing the wall at Tumut Pondage Reservoir, Ron said "That looks like Bill and Margy behind us." We had missed a regroup ... but the others had been hiding behind a work ute. We all saw some brumbies, the lead cars saw kangaroos and a couple of us saw a turtle (the rest reckoned it was a rock). Corryong closes at 4pm so we could not buy anything ... no fuel, nothing for breakfast ... though the pubs were open and we enjoyed a nice meal at the Corryong Hotel.

Another 470+ kilometre day and a big thank you to Bill for leading, road clearing and roo shooting.

➤ **Day 3:** The plan for Sunday was the reverse of the route taken on Saturday. With slight drizzle as we began, Bill and Neil had tops down the other three took bets on how far we would get before a stop. They ignored the showers; a tiny patch of blue sky appeared and by the time we reached Mitta Mitta for coffee we had bright sunshine – a great time for the group photo. Back in the cars, but *REGO 1* would not start ... it was lucky we were there to push!

**Grey clouds gradually gathered.** The stop at Rocky Valley Dam was very, very cold and damp and Neil thought he saw snowflakes. Down the mountain, plenty of corners but a Land Cruiser spoiled the fun. Bill managed to slip past but the other four cars were not so lucky. Ian completed a thorough personality assessment of the driver (none of it favourable) as we crept along, though we all managed to pass before Mt Beauty. Too long at the regroup and he dawdled by, and then turned on to the Tawonga Gap Road in front of us! It was fortunate the lunch stop at Bright allowed frustrations to dissipate. We continued to Wangaratta for coffee (we eventually found a place to serve us), where northerners Neil and Mary and Ron and Marg said their goodbyes.

➤ **Day 4:** Day four from Wangaratta saw a beautiful sunny day with Ian in his supercharged NA running much better with some 98 octane on board. Phil, Margy and Bill headed down the Whitfield Road for a spirited run through the twisty roads. Phil managed to get himself a bit lost on this stretch, but after we reunited we headed to Healesville for morning tea.

We said our goodbyes and headed for home. We had covered approximately 1,900km over some of our best roads and Bill had managed to blow every cobweb out of his SE.

**A huge thanks to Bill for planning the run and the determination to make it happen. ●**

**4 x days + cars + fun = FANTASTIC!**

# High Country run



**Bill & Margy decided to go for a drive ...**

**4 Wheels,  
4 Days,  
4 Fun!**



*High on life: Ian, Neil, Mary, Ron, Bill, Margy, Phil*



^ Run leader Bill, Ron, Ian and Phil



# Chapter chatter ...

19.4.15 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words, photos and organiser: Graeme Johnson



Here we are, ready to go, 19 of us in 10 remaining cars after one sick SE had to go home to bed. Heading to Bothwell in Tasmania's central highlands.  
(Photo: Rob Tanner.)



Our lunch destination, the Castle Hotel in Bothwell, after an enjoyable run from Hobart via the Mud Walls Road north from Colebrook. Built in 1829 it says; Lyndsay thought that was about when the chicken in her 'chicken schnitzel' must have died.



Ammo, diesel and fresh hot food: the local servo meets the town's needs.



Once inside the pub there's an eclectic mix of mounted and stuffed dead animals (well, there's all that ammo to use on something), classic car and motorcycle reading material and memorabilia.



Selfie! 13 degrees forecast, probably colder here. Definitely colder in Bothwell. *But who cares?!*



The joys of topless motoring on a classic clear crisp blue sky sunny autumn day in the Derwent Valley en route to New Norfolk.

## the Bothwell run



It just gets better!



We've arrived at Willow Court, New Norfolk, after the highlight of the day – the Hollow Tree Road drive out of Bothwell: no traffic, lots of fast sweeping corners. Here for an afternoon tea, coffee and, for some, cake stop at the Patchwork Café.



That's G-O-G-G-O! No, no, it's not the Dart – everyone thinks it's the dart! In the grounds of Willow Court (a former lunatic asylum), which is a last resting place for many ghosts, human and mechanical. More rotting Blitzes than you're ever likely to see in one place.



# Chapter chatter ...

25-26.4.15 | Northern Tasmania ■ Words: Kelly Berggren ■ Organisers: Carl & Kelly Berggren  
■ Attendees: Kelly & Carl, Bruce & Cheryl, Peter & Lynn, Rob Davies, Michael & Anna, Michael & Karin



^ Bruce, Kelly, and Michael and Anna, dressed for dinner

*Becoming an annual event, the West Coast overnighiter was again a big hit.*

There are just so many great roads, all perfectly stitched together amongst stunning primal scenery, that it couldn't be anything but. With Targa starting the next week, all our roads were perfectly re-sealed and ready for cruising. Actually, nearly every road we travelled had at least one Targa stage on it.

It's hard to choose a single highlight ... the 99s out of Queenstown are always a scary-fun favourite that we often are tempted to do twice – or more – and going past Lake Plimsoll is pure magic.

But on this run I think the section to the Reece Dam, from Tullah, was the best: 50km of smooth switchback curves alongside the lake with enough curly corners to keep it interesting – all without a single car passed or followed. It was like an endless race track – not that we were racing, of course!

Our stopover was National Trust property Penghana, which is run as a lovely B&B. Penghana also hosted us a fine-dining three-course dinner, followed by coffee and snooker in the ballroom. Of course, we dressed for dinner and there was

some really dodgy snookering! Sunday saw us spoiled with a cooked breakfast and a tour of the mansion attics.

The road home was literally another glorious Targa driving day with a hint of rain (tops still down, mostly!) and then into sunshine at Moina for another spectacular tour around Mt Roland's Round Mt Lookout, ending the trip in Mole Creek.

**A great weekend, thanks to wonderful Tassie roads, delightfully responsive cars and great company! ●**



^ Rob Davies on the 99s



^ Bruce: "Now, Cheryl, aim here and I'll move my finger ..."  
^ On the Mackintosh Dam Spillway



## West Coast overnighiter



^ Passing Mt Mackintosh and Lake Plimsoll on Tasmania's rugged west coast



# Shifting Gear

## Design, Innovation and the Australian Car

■ Words & photos: Alan Bennett

In the entrance to the NGV sit three cars, two representing the oldest and the newest Australian-designed cars. The third is the world-famous *Efjy*, debuting in 2005 as a design exercise by Holden.

The newest car is the *Buick Avenir*, also a concept car and, like the other 22 cars on display, designed in Australia. It does not go, at least under its own steam (pun intended) as it is made of clay, all 2.5 tonnes of the stuff.

Resting adjacent is the oldest Australian-designed car, the 1896 Herbert Thompson-designed steam car. This was the first attempt at commercial car production locally.

The focus is on the iconic cars – several fabulous machines from the 1970s, such as the *Bolwell Nagari Sports Mk 8* (manufactured from 1970 to 1974), an *E49 Valiant Charger R/T* (1971-73), an *XA Ford Falcon GT* (9173), an *HQ Monaro GTS* (1971-74). There's a *Pervis Eureka* with the uplifting roof nestled in a corner of red cars (1974-91).

There's a 2013 *R13e* electric car (looking more like a go kart) mounted high on a wall, built by RMIT Electric Racing to participate in the Formula SAE competition. All the cars bar two are in mint condition. There is a very original 1934 *Ford Coupe Utility* (aka the ute) in mud-encrusted unrestored 'condition' that was discovered under a tree in Geelong in the 1980s. The other used car is a *Maybach Special Mk1* dating from 1946 with a front mounted 4.2L straight-six engine from a WW2 tank, producing 238kW and capable of 225km/hour. The car won the NZ Grand Prix in 1954 after coming second in



the Australian GP of 1952. It has a realistic ding in the left rear due to an altercation at the recent Phillip Island Car Classic.

There are concept cars too, including the *Torana GTR-X* (1970), the *Holden Hurricane Coupe* (1969) and an *FR-1* from Autohorizon Foundation (2009) with a 6L V8 engine capable of reaching the speed limit in 3.5 seconds.

Don't have the opportunity to attend in person? Check out the NGV website at [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/shifting-gear/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/shifting-gear/) or you can buy the book! If you show your RACV membership card you can save the price of a good coffee off the admission price. ●

► **Shifting Gear is on at the National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square, Melbourne until 12 July.**



▲ L-R: R13e; GTS Monaro; Ford Coupe Utility; Thompson Premier with the Buick Avenir; Holden Hurricane

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# Calder Park ushers in a new season ...

■ Words: Fabian Mastronardi ■ Photos: Daniel White, Andrea Stagno Navarra

*After a brief hiatus, I chose Calder Park to mark my return to racing. This coincided nicely with the beginning of the 2015 Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship.*

The day began with a cautious look and prayer to the weather gods. As I approached the track, I recall thinking, "Those clouds look ominous ..." The clouds threatened to turn the damp track into a wet one.

Those familiar with Calder would be aware that the option of running on the dummy grid straight is there for such occasions; however, due to poor track condition, this was not available. The Clerk of the Course had declared that running on the main straight in the wet was too dangerous and, if it became a wet track, the day would end there and then.

But, the prayer to the weather gods paid dividends; only a spittle of rain was felt before the sun came out and all was good.

Although initial reports indicated that the track was slippery, I found plenty of grip in my newly set-up car, which shall henceforth be known as *Smurf* ... a name coined by my partner Karen, due to my newly-acquired white hardtop.

*Smurf* started rough and the initial handling was not great, mainly due to the neutral set-up of the newly-installed suspension. A series of turns on the shocks after a few rounds found a good set-up for the day. Times kept dropping until I reached a personal best of 1:14.32. Although more work is currently underway to improve car handling, the improvements were impressive and I was happy with *Smurf's* performance.

The day was relatively incident-free. The atmosphere was abuzz with the camaraderie of friendly rivalry – driver versus driver – and the tussle of positioning making each turn appear a little tighter and the straights a little faster. Most remained unscathed with the exception of the odd wheel being consumed courtesy of a certain ripple strip pot hole. Here's hoping it has been fixed by now.

The WRX Club put on a great day, complete with parade laps and the much-loved hot laps. The hot laps certainly sparked the interest of at least one new spectator to the sport. I'd recommend this as a regular addition to any Club day. It's a great way to give a taste of the excitement and thrill of why-we-race to non-drivers. ●



*Peter Phillips*



*Robert Downes*



*Paul Ledwith*



*Alan Conrad*

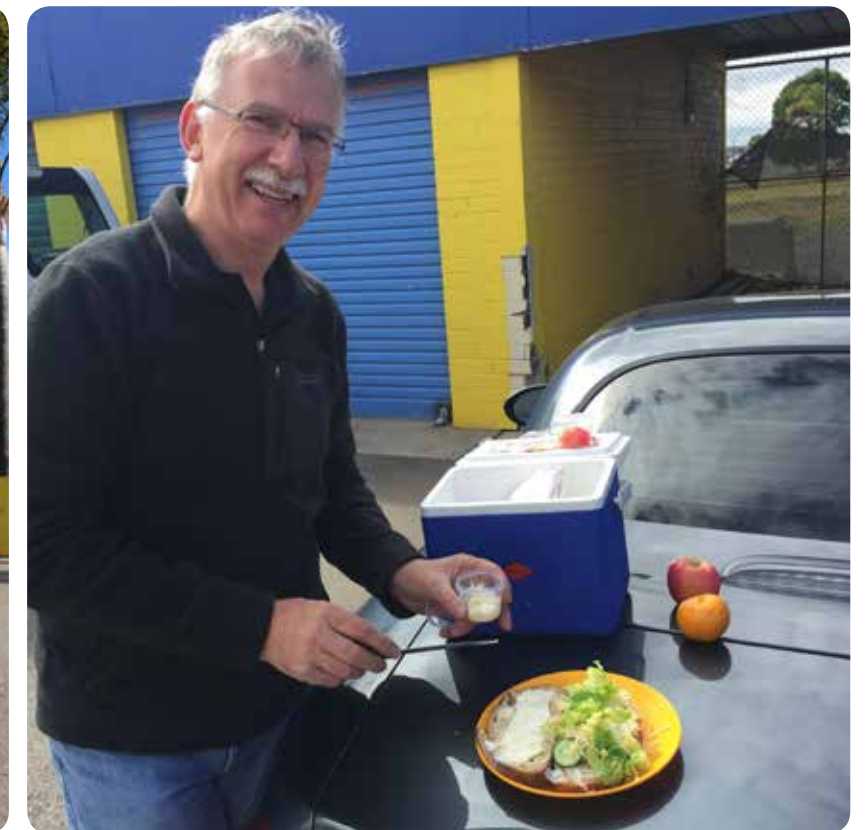
2015 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship | Round 1 ~ 12.4.15



^ Peter "Princy" Phillips, Robert Downes and Max Lloyd at Calder



^ Randy Stagno Navarra's XITAN



^ No pies on Alan ... a healthy lunch at Calder



## NB seats: from hell to leather

■ Words: Ron Gillick, North Eastern Victoria Chapter Captain



**Before ...**



**After ...**

After 12 years, I decided that the original cloth seats in our 2002 NB were starting to look a bit shabby and second hand from all of those years of wear and tear, fading in the sun and a small cigarette burn in the passenger's seat which was done prior to us purchasing the car in 2004.

That cigarette burn had been bugging me for the 10 years we have owned the car.

I had always wanted leather seats after seeing them in the SEs of several Club members. After a long but fruitless search for a used set of these seats I decided that I would get ours re-upholstered.

By chance we had a new member, Ian Mason, on our Snowy Mountains run and his recently-purchased NB had leather seats and steering wheel which had been done by a firm in Melbourne named "Blackmans Automotive Interiors".

It looked to be an excellent job done by them so, on return from the Snowies, I contacted them and arranged to have our car done.

Not being a fan of the people designing Mazda's interiors who, until the past couple of years, seemed to have been allowed to use only black and various shades thereof, Marg and I opted to liven things up with a bit of colour and had red inserts put in to the seats. It won't be to everyone's taste but, so far, we have had only positive comments from those who have seen the car.

For anyone who may be interested, Blackmans have several outlets around Melbourne. Their web address is [www.blackmansleather.com.au](http://www.blackmansleather.com.au) ●

■ Please note: All "Tech Talk" information is provided as a guide only. All work is carried out at the owner's risk.

## A new option for the MX-5 owner

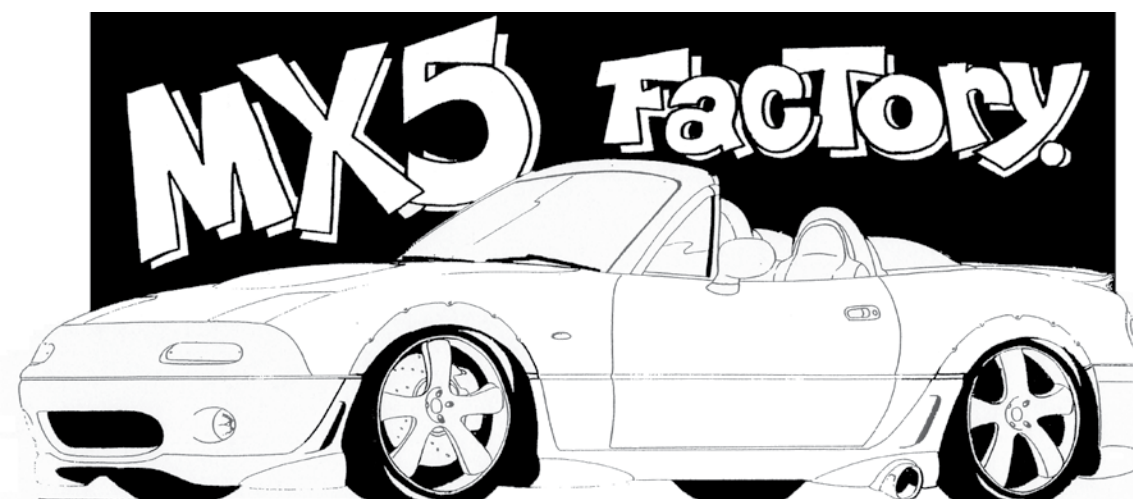
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