

TECH DAY WITH RANDY, April 13, 2014
by Don McCann and Don Gervais



Thirteen BMC members showed up for another Miata filled day at Randy's Garage (Randy Slagle, Triple R Aurtosports) in Delafield, WI. The show started at 11:00 AM, with Don McCann's Miata (NC model), with manual transmission, going on the hoist. Randy said we should ask questions about anything at any time during the day. Once the Miata was Up-In-Air, he discussed advisory and mandatory maintenances and schedules. He also recommended 30,000 mile oil changes for manual and automatic transmissions, and for the differential.

Don had brought along a quart (946 ml) of Red Line Lightweight Shockproof Gear Oil (synthetic), with an applicator pump, so Randy could do a differential oil change on his Miata. After the oil change (710 ml), a thorough inspection of the Miata, and a discussion of the new NC suspension, we proceeded to discuss an actual Miata manual transmission which was on display on Randy's work bench. He had prepared a 5 speed manual transmission (NB model) with all gears exposed for our observations, and he gave an extensive description as to how the transmission works. Each gear set was explained with problems that can occur. He also mentioned that one thing a driver should never do is to rest their hand on the gear shifter while driving, because this will cause excessive wear on transmission parts. At 12:15 PM we broke for lunch and then returned at 1:00 PM.



After lunch, the next Miata on the hoist belonged to Delores Fields (NC model), which had an automatic transmission. Delores showed us all the neat lights she had installed in the dash, in the door, and under the car. All of the lights are red, except for the door lights, which projected a blue Mazda emblem (about 18" diameter) on the ground, like Batman, when either door is open. We then inspected and discussed the different parts under her Miata, comparing manual and automatic transmissions on the NC model. The NC automatic transmissions have a heat shield around the transmission and lack a frame brace at mid-length that is present on the manual transmission models.

Next, Terry Lucas put his Miata (NC model) on the hoist for an undercarriage inspection. Terry also has an automatic transmission. Lastly Dean Zamoth put his newly purchased used 1997 Miata (NA model), with an automatic transmission, on the hoist for an undercarriage inspection. We noted the differences between automatic transmissions on NA and NC models. Dean and Goldie now have two Miatas, with Goldie claiming the automatic transmission Miata.

At about 2:45 PM, all questions had been answered by Randy, and everyone had mental exhaustion with the abundance of knowledge that had come forth at the session. With Randy's Tech Day last year and the one this year, we all came away with extensive technical knowledge of all Miata models: NA, NB, and NC. We now know why the Miata has been on the Best 10 Cars list for many years, and why it is such fun to drive!