

May 2026 Volume 38, Issue 5

The President's Corner

by Chuck Valley



April was the first of the 'busier months' this year for the Miami Valley Miata Club including Spring Shop Day up at the Mott Century Farm when we give special attention to our Miatas getting them ready for the new driving season. Thanks to the expertise of Randy Mott and his mechanical skills, his fantastic facility *_no Miata Club I know of_* has the privilege of using, his lovely wrench turnin' motor-head daughter Christy Haynes, reliable wrench turner Ed Walker, and our Tech Advisor Roger Gordon who coordinated all this to a successful end. As usual for Spring Shop Day, the club provided a carafe of coffee and a great variety of tasty donuts.

The driving season has gotten off to a good start with a drive to New Bremen for a great tour of the American history of bicycles. The tour guide was very knowledgeable and enthusiastic sharing very interesting information dating back to the first bicycle. Club attendees were surprised to learn the first bicycle was more of a 'scoot and glide' type with no pedals! Then came along the pedaled bikes with no brakes! As time and bicycles progressed into the 20th Century, bicycles had become more of a luxury - only the wealthy could afford. Bikes were used in WWI and WWII, and some were designed for combat with mounted machine guns! Thanks to our Rally Master Clyde Hebert for arranging the tour and developing the drive route that was a nice mid-week excursion.

Sadly, the drive and picnic to Charleston Falls has been cancelled, at least for now, due to weather concerns. Turns out sub-60-degree temperatures aren't exactly ideal for an outdoor picnic! It's hopeful the event will take place when conditions improve.

The MVMC Newsletter is a great resource for events three months out but know that we also frequently update the MVMC website so you can be aware of upcoming events that occasionally change dates.




Hope to see you at the upcoming drives!

Chuck Valley, President
Miami Valley Miata Club

"The newsletter is an official MVMC publication. By agreement with Jeff Schmitt Mazda we are to provide them with advertising space with their logo in every issue of the newsletter. As the Jeff Schmitt logo is a part of the newsletter, we don't want to appear to be in competition with our sponsor. Therefore, no advertising of used vehicles will appear in the newsletter.

We will advertise Miata related parts in the newsletter at no charge for MVMC members. The MVMC will help with preparing and releasing advertisements for used vehicles for MVMC members by e-mail distribution directly to members and on MVMC Facebook page(s)."

Miami Valley Miata Club Officers for 2026

 President Chuck Valley	 Secretary-Treasurer Pat Valley
 Vice President Peggy Berry	 Technical Director Roger Gordon
 Membership Director Gina Seay	 Newsletter Editor Dave Berry
 Rally Master L. Calvin (Clyde) Hebert	 Webmaster Christy Haynes

MVMC 2026 Calendar of Events

NOTE: This is displayed as a running calendar of upcoming events for which at least two of the three factors of date, host(s) and venue are CONFIRMED.



Date	Event	Host(s)	Venue
May 19	Meet & Greet	MVMC Officers	Chuy's, Beavercreek, OH
Jun 6	Plain City/Amish Restaurant Drive	Tom & Gina Seay	Plain City, OH
Jun 16	Meet & Greet	MVMC Officers	China Cottage, Centerville, OH
Jun 20	Poker Run	Chuck & Pat Valley	Rotary Park, Beavercreek, OH
Jul 4	Fairborn & Beavercreek Parades	Dan Kirkpatrick	Fairborn & Beavercreek, OH
Jul 18	McClain High School Tour	Dan Long	Greenfield, OH
Jul 21	Meet & Greet	MVMC Officers	Underground Chuck's, Miami Township, OH

From the Membership Desk

By Gina Seay
Membership Director

We added one new member in April. Welcome John Kurokawa to the club!

We wish the following members happy birthday in May:

May Birthdays

Michael Smith, Lee Korb, Mike Wheeler, Tommy Seay, Susan Hughes, Paul Weglage, Paul Monaghan, Roger West, Mike Little



New Members for 2026

John Kurokawa



Mazda ON THE WEB Links of interest:

MVMC GROUP FACEBOOK PAGE:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/300608016771949/>

MVMC ORG FACEBOOK PUBLIC PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Miami-Valley-Miata-Club/229407270577928>

LINKS TO MIATA CLUBS IN THE MIDWEST

<http://www.miata.net/clubs/ohkywv.html>

BUCKEYE MIATA CLUB / COLUMBUS- <http://www.buckeyemiataclub.com/>

GREATER CINCINNATI <http://www.cincimiata.com/news.asp>

INDY MIATA CLUB <http://www.indymiata.org/>

OHIO MIATA OWNERS FACEBOOK PRIVATE GROUP (request to join)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/478759678813248/>

Treasurer's Report

By Pat Valley, Secretary-Treasurer

Financial data for the month of April are as follows:

Income:	\$ 445.00
Expenses	\$ 42.27
Bank Bal:	\$2087.98

Income is from: memberships (\$40), Jeff Schmitt sponsorship (\$300), and Sinclair donations (\$105.00)

Expense is for: Shop Day coffee & donuts

From the Rally Master

Our next drive was to have been to Charleston Falls on Thursday, May 7th. However, as noted in Chuck's President's Corner, we have cancelled it for now due to predicted weather unsuitable for an outdoor picnic. We'll be sure to let everyone know once we've put this back on the calendar.

The drive to the Bicycle Museum of America was huge success. We had eight cars in total. Lunch was at the 17 West Restaurant next to the museum. Our tour guide was enthusiastic and knowledgeable. It makes it really interesting to hear the background stories. I did miss an opportunity to take some pictures of our group. In the future I will attempt to take more pictures.

Below is a list of scheduled drives this year. We have plenty of open dates so please volunteer to host a drive. Think vineyards, museums, restaurant, parks, or your favorite drive.

- June 6, Plain City
- June 13, Poker Run
- July 4, 4th of July Parade
- Aug 8, Covered Bridge
- Aug 22, Valley Vineyards
- Sept 26, Marblehead (overnight)
- Oct 10, Plain Folk
- Oct 22-24, Fall Foliage Drive

Thank you,
Clyde Hebert, MVMC Rally Master

Club Member Items for Sale or Free

FOR SALE - oil filter relocation kit. I believe I bought it from Moss Motors. It fits NA/NB models. I can provide photos and additional info by request. \$75.

Contact Pat Gould 937-232-5614 v/text or email p19g53@gmail.com, write "filter" in the subject line.

Spring Shop Day 2026

by Roger Gordon, Tech Director

The MVMC club is super fortunate to be able to have a Shop Day twice a year. Randy and Lynda Mott are magnanimous enough to allow us to use their equipment barn-with-lift to do work on member's cars. On Saturday, April 18, we had a nice turnout of folks who needed minor work on their Miatas. Scheduling the work in 1/2-hour slots, the members, primarily Randy, Christy Mott Haynes, and Ed Walker, did five oil and filter changes for members Tony Zlocki, Dan Long, Dale Burnside, and Susan Cain. Chuck and Pat Valley brought the doughnuts and coffee.

I asked Randy about preparation, and he said he spends off and on two weeks prior to the event getting the facility ready for Shop Day. As a working farmer, he has all manner of heavy equipment in the barn and has to move all the stuff out of the way and clean up all the accumulated dirt and muck, so we do not get a speck on our little cars. I'm sure he also puts all his tools away so they will be available and in the right place. He has to try to make a place for the tables, clean the bench and put on new coverings, move out other equipment, and then clean the floor. It's a working farm/construction shop so it gets dirty and cluttered. He really wants it to look "nice" for shop day. Then after the event he has to return it to farm/work mode – although I doubt he brings back all that farm dirt that was in there before. For those who have never attended, below are photos of Randy's amazingly pristine facility.

We usually have a good turnout of members that just want to socialize or watch and learn, but on this day, we did not have that many. It was pretty rainy and chilly out there.



Lots of room in the shop to work and socialize.



Ed and Christy working on Tony's NC



Ed and Christy work on Dan's NB on the lift while Randy changes serpentine belt on Tony's NC



Plenty of room in Randy's garage - bring in the next victim.



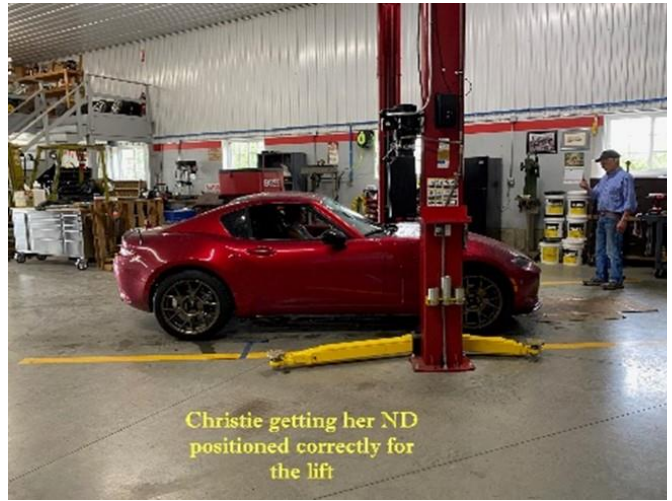
Group Pic!
Tony watches work as Chuck interrogates Susan about her NC and Christy and Ed and Randy get the work done.



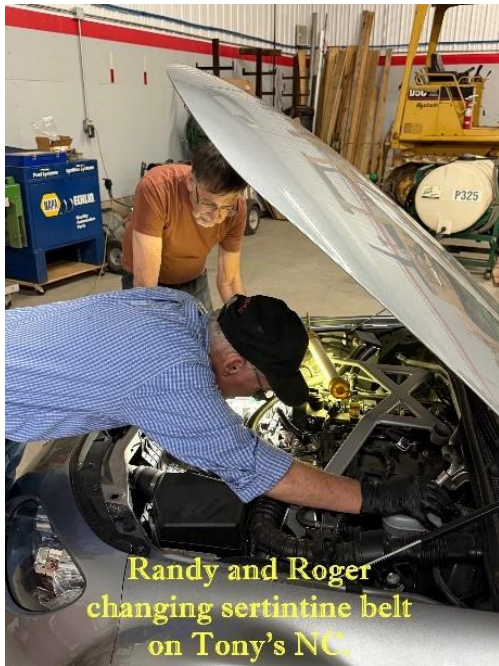
Ed's NC PHRT.
I got to admit, I'm not usually a big fan of wraps on the sides of Miatas, but I really do like this treatment on Eds'.



The gang chats while Dan's NB gets attention and Tony's NC awaits serpentine belt replacement.



Christie getting her ND positioned correctly for the lift

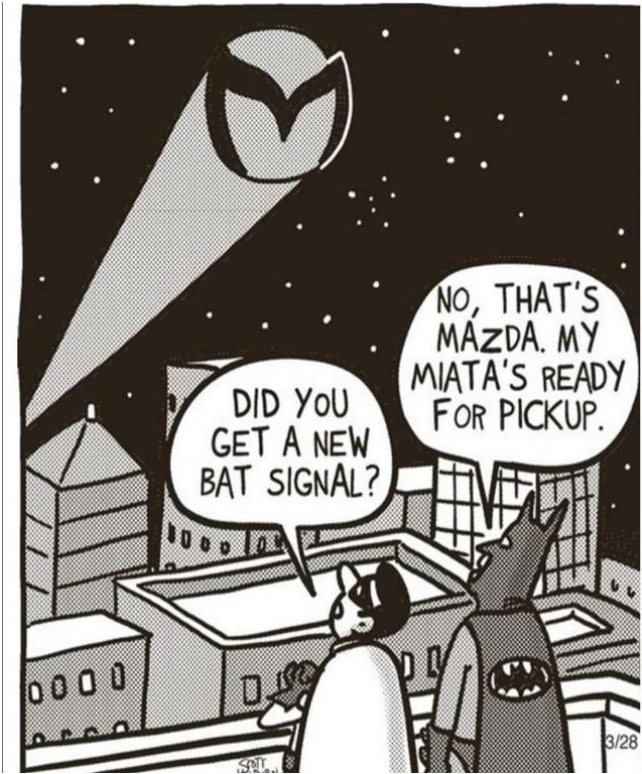


Randy and Roger changing serpentine belt on Tony's NC.



Christie and Ed working on Dan Long's NB.

Some May Humor



*Courtesy of Roger's daughter-in-law,
Vikkie Gordon*



*Ride-sharing outfits have approved the
Mazda MX-5 Miata for multiple passengers*



*May Day was a big deal in the former Soviet Union.
One form of celebration was burning old Russian cars.*

OUR CLUB SPONSOR
Jeff Schmitt Mazda



Shop Talk

It's not just about the Miatas

by Roger Gordon, Technical Director

Struts and Shocks



I never really understood the difference between STRUTs and SHOCKs. To look at them, the only difference appears to be that that STRUT incorporates the coil spring into a single unit.

I asked GROK to explain the difference and got the following explanation.

BEGINNING OF GROK OUTPUT

In modern cars, a shock (shock absorber) and a strut are both hydraulic dampers that control spring bounce and improve ride comfort, handling, and tire contact with the road—but they are not the same. The main distinction is that a strut is a structural component of the suspension, while a shock is not.

Key Differences

Aspect	Shock Absorber	Strut
Role	Pure damper only	Damper + structural support
Structural Support	No — does not support vehicle weight or hold alignment	Yes — bears weight, supports spring, maintains wheel alignment
Design	Standalone cylinder (often with separate coil spring)	Integrated assembly (shock + coil spring + mounting points)
Common Placement	Often rear suspension (or both axles in some vehicles)	Typically, front suspension in many cars (MacPherson strut setup)
Replacement	Easier/cheaper in many cases	More involved (affects alignment)

How They Work

- **Shocks:** These are individual components mounted between the vehicle's frame/chassis and the suspension (e.g., control arm or axle). They dampen (slow) the up-and-down motion from the springs to prevent excessive bouncing. They do not hold the vehicle up or locate the wheel—the springs and other suspension parts handle that.
- **Struts:** These combine the damping function of a shock with additional roles. In a common MacPherson strut design (widely used in front-wheel-drive and many modern vehicles), the strut assembly includes the damper, coil spring, and upper mounting point. It acts as a pivot for steering and helps maintain proper wheel alignment and camber.
- Many modern vehicles use struts in the front (for compact packaging and steering integration) and shocks in the rear (where a separate spring and simpler damper suffice). Some trucks or performance cars may use shocks all around with different spring setups.

Quick Summary

- A shock is just a damper.
- A strut is essentially a "shock + spring + structural mount" in one unit.

They are not interchangeable – you must replace them with the correct part for your vehicle's suspension design. Worn shocks or struts lead to poor handling, longer stopping distances, uneven tire wear, and a bouncy ride.

END OF GROK OUTPUT

Now, here is what prompted me to think about all this – I saw the following explanation in a ROCKAUTO email newsletter that I received recently. It made me realize that I did not really know the difference between shocks and struts.

Excuse the ROCKAUTO references – it was easier to leave them in rather than reformat the document for re-publication – this is not an endorsement.

Are Twin-Tube Shocks Twice as Good?

by Tom Taylor, RockAuto.com

I recently rented a Ford Bronco Sport. I only pattered around town, but the inclinometer on the dash left me curious about what fun off-road capabilities I might have missed trying out. I discovered on Ford's website that the Bronco Sport's chassis specifications include "MacPherson strut-type twin-tube hydraulic gas-pressurized shocks" in the front and "hydraulic gas-pressurized shocks" in the rear. What is a MacPherson strut-type shock? Are twin-tubes twice as good? I decided it was a good time to discuss the significance of current shock/strut terminology.

MacPherson Strut (strut) vs. Shock Absorber (shock):

The MacPherson strut combines a strut cartridge and spring into one unit. Most front wheel drive cars built since the 1980s have struts at all four wheels. Shocks made a big comeback when so many drivers switched from cars to SUVs. Even small SUVs usually have shocks in at least the rear.

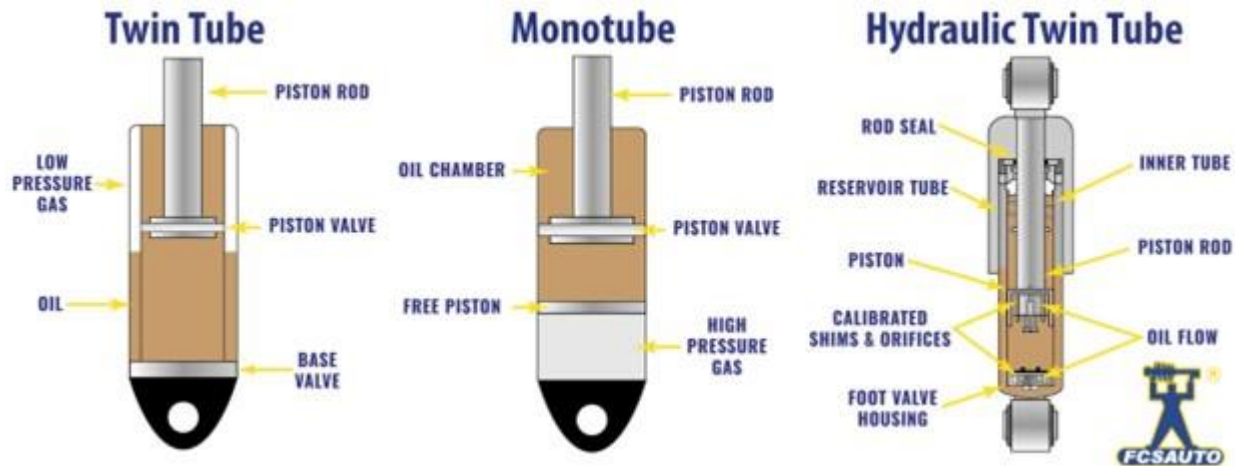
Many newer shock absorber designs resemble strut cartridges, mounting on one end with a threaded rod and nut instead of a bolt. There is now so much overlap in appearance and verbiage (like Ford's "strut-type shock") that RockAuto.com puts all strut cartridges and shocks under "Shock/Strut" in the "Suspension" category for a specific vehicle. Part photos and descriptions facilitate choosing the correct part. Complete struts (cartridge installed in new spring) are listed under "Shock/Strut & Coil Spring Assembly."

Twin Tube (dual tube) vs. Monotube (single tube) shock/strut:

As shown in the image below, a twin tube shock/strut has an inner and outer wall with the pressurized gas and a reserve of oil in the outer tube. A monotube shock/strut has one chamber that contains a pillow of oil separated from a bubble of pressurized gas by a free-floating piston.

Hydraulic Gas-Pressurized:

Pressurized gas (usually nitrogen) in the shocks/struts makes it easier to have hydraulic fluid (oil) valving that optimizes both ride and handling. Shocks/struts have been gas-pressurized for about half a century. (A shipping strap around a new shock prevents the pressurized gas from extending the piston rod through the cardboard box.)



The vehicle's suspension design and how it is going to be driven really determines whether twin tube or monotube is the best choice. A vehicle built for traveling at high speed across rough terrain could benefit from monotube shocks. The nitrogen gas is separated from the oil in a monotube shock so there is no foaming (aeration) and less chance of overheating as the piston rod moves rapidly up and down. The gas pressure in a monotube shock is typically more than double the pressure in a twin tube shock. That means a monotube shock will typically provide more dampening force (ride is firmer but suspension is less likely to bottom out over big bumps).

A vehicle built for low-speed rock crawling might benefit from twin tube shocks. Twin tube shocks keep the pressurized gas and some of the oil in the outer tube so there is more room for the piston rod to move up and down. This longer stroke means the shock is less likely to limit the maximum movement of the suspension/wheel. Twin tube shocks are also less sensitive to dents. The outer tube helps protect the inner tube where the most delicate components are.

There are both mono and twin tube shock designs that reduce disadvantages. A [monotube shock with an external oil reservoir](#) can have a longer stroke because less room is needed in the main tube for oil. A [twin tube shock with a bigger bore](#) has more oil and a larger diameter piston valve which creates better dampening force and heat dissipation.

A good way to shop for new shocks/struts is to use the quality categories in the [RockAuto.com catalog](#) (Original Ride Quality, Heavy Duty, Increased Handling/Stability...). Those categories tell you what goal the shock/strut design was optimized for independent of whether it is based on twin tube, monotube, electromagnetic or some other foundation. Just don't be tempted to mix struts/shock designs on the same axle (front or rear). A monotube shock on one side and a twin tube shock on the other will not help make the vehicle a great handling off-roader with a luxurious ride, even if both shocks are "gas-pressurized."