



## MINI OWNERS of AMERICA, INC.

P.O. BOX 2872-D, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91105

Oct. 14, 1976

The newsletter is a few days later than usual this month, as I have been sick and the meeting date crept up on me faster than I expected. However, this should still reach you before the next meeting.

Our next meeting will be held this coming Monday, Oct. 18, at 8:00 PM at the Glendale Federal Savings Building, 401 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale (a few blocks south of the 134 Freeway). Park on the middle level of the parking garage behind the building.

### EDITORIAL COMMENTS

I moved here to California about two years ago, and bought my Mini (which is my one and only vehicle) shortly thereafter. I first encountered MOA by accident, when I was working as an observer at the races the summer before last; so I have been a member of this club for somewhat more than a year. The national newsletter MiniNews had ceased publication before I joined, and so the national club framework had been disrupted. This probably occurred mostly because of a lack of participation, not just from the Los Angeles area but from the national membership. (But I still receive many inquiries from all areas of the U.S. about the national club and newsletter; and there are several very active local chapters -- so interest still exists.)

Attendance at our Los Angeles chapter meetings has never, in my experience, been very good. There are about 30 names on the mailing list, to which I send this newsletter every month (including a few sent to other clubs), and these names are those of people who have told me recently that they wish to be on the list. (About 20 other people from an earlier list did not respond and were dropped.) But of these approx. 30 people who are thus notified of each meeting and event, and who have expressed an interest in Minis, many do not participate in the meetings or other club affairs. There are people on the mailing list whom I have never met.

With these points in mind, there are two issues I would like to discuss here: the structure of our club, and the content of this newsletter.

First, the newsletter. This should serve several functions. To begin with, it should notify all the members and Mini people in the area of what the club is doing; and we are already using it to do this. But I would also like it to be a more generally useful forum. I would like to see articles on Minis; race reports; technical tips and advice; a question-and-answer column; letters to the editor and the Mini community; advertisements; etc. In short, I would like this newsletter to do what MiniNews tried to do, at least for the local club. (I would also eventually like for at least a single copy to be sent to the other Mini clubs such as those in San Francisco and New Jersey.) We cannot expect

this to develop immediately, but we can certainly try to develop it one step at a time. To this end, I remind you that this paper will print classified advertising (rate: 20 words, 1 month, members 50¢, nonmembers \$1.50). Also, Jim Houston has contributed a technical column to this issue, and he will continue to write this column and to answer technical questions if there is a positive response to his efforts. He will do his best to find a source for any answer he cannot provide on his own. And my notes on long-distance touring in a Mini, intended for this issue, will appear over the next few issues. Any contributions from you readers will also be gratefully received.

Second, the club. As with the discussion of the newsletter, the point of any comments here will be to make the club more convenient, useful, and fun for the Mini community. One thing to consider is the amount of the dues; the present rate of \$10 per year plus an initial \$5 seems a little high to me. Perhaps a flat \$5/year might be more reasonable. (If any change is made, currently paid-up members should receive an adjustment.) To refresh your memory, the most constant club expenditure is for putting out this newsletter. Another major use of dues is to rent or buy equipment for use by the club -- e.g., the club owns a Hydrolastic suspension pump, and we might from time to time rent a commercial movie (like The Italian Job, if we could find out how). Also, the treasury should absorb any losses incurred in club-related events, like perishable food that doesn't get used at a picnic.

Another possibility to consider is a differentiation between full members and newsletter subscribers. For, say, \$5/year, the full member would get the newsletter, and would also get discounts on club-related costs such as ads in this paper, food costs at a picnic, any special price deals obtained for parts, etc; while the subscriber would get only the newsletter for, say, \$3/year or whatever costs dictate.

Club activities should serve the wants and needs of members and other Mini owners. We can and should hold occasional tune-ins, swap meets, picnics, tours, perhaps competitive events such as autocrosses or hillclimbs (these require insurance), meetings with other clubs. But these require advance planning, and also healthy participation. (I am still embarrassed by the tune-in with no attendance, and by the three cars that made the tour to San Diego.) So we must know what you really want to do, what you are seriously interested in taking part in.

The meetings can also be changed if the time or place is inconvenient for many people. And we can restructure them if you would like. We can try to have special features; I am trying to get some Mini films from British Leyland, and I know there some nice slide collections in the club, some of which we have never seen.

In short, the club and what it does should be what you Mini people want. The first step toward achieving this is to determine what is wanted, so I am enclosing a questionnaire. Please fill this out and return it to me at the meeting if possible; if you cannot come, please mail it to me. This is a small effort for you to invest in order to help improve your club.

You can also reach me with your comments at (213) 795-0175.

Dean Deeds

By Jim Houston

Several members of the club have mentioned a desire to convert their Positive ground systems to Negative ground. So, for the first article in this series, I will outline a procedure that has worked for me on 3 Minis and an MGB with no problems. Just follow the steps exactly and the whole job should take you less than 2 hours.

- Step 1. Disconnect battery and remove it from the trunk.  
This is a good time to clean your battery box and use baking soda to neutralize any acid residue that may be present.
- Step 2. If an Electronic type tach is fitted, disconnect the power leads. DO NOT RECONNECT THESE UNTIL CALLED FOR OR YOU MAY RUIN THE UNIT PERMANENTLY. (SEE NEXT PAGE)
- Step 3. Disconnect radio power lead, CLOCK, VOLTMETER, ETC. (SEE LAST PARAGRAPH)
- Step 4. If an Ammeter is fitted, reverse the leads on the back.
- Step 5. Now take your clean battery and place it in your clean battery box OPPOSITE TO THE WAY IT CAME OUT.
- Step 6. Reconnect battery cables, making sure the **Negative** terminal is grounded. CAUTION: ALWAYS CONNECT THE GROUND LEAD LAST!!!! If you don't, you may get very large sparks if you happen to ground the wrench when connecting the power lead. Some modification of the cable ends will be required due to the difference in post sizes of the battery. A good suggestion is to get 2 U.S. type clamp replacement ends (Pep Boys 79¢) and install them on the cables. These work better than the English screw type anyway. Also, you may find that your ground strap is not long enough. If this is the case, either a flat braided or cable type can be purchased cheap enough.
- Step 7. Now start the engine and set an idle of 1200-1500 RPM. Using a screwdriver or pliers, momentarily short the "F" and "B" terminals on the Regulator together. The Ammeter should show a charge and the IGN light should go out. IF they don't, try flashing the terminals again. (I have never had this fail to work.)
- Step 8. Reset your idle to original setting and stop engine. Your Mini is now of the **NEGATIVE EARTH** variety.
- Step 9. Now hook up your tach according to the manufacturer's instructions for Neg Grd. Note: if you have a Smith's tach, you will also have to reverse the wires from the coil to the loop.
- Step 10. Reconnect any other polarity conscious items such as a radio or voltmeter, reverse the two wires to the heater blower, and that is the job.

## TECH TIPS (con't)

As I said at the start, I have used this procedure several times with no problems, so you should not run into any either. Just remember that any polarity conscious item such as a clock, radio, tach, tape deck, etc. will be ruined INSTANTANOUSLY if you connect it in reverse polarity. So disconnect all of those type of items before you start. The gauges in the car (fuel, temp, etc.) do not fall into that class and will not be affected. If you have any questions or problems you can call me at 242-7833 between 7-10 on most weeknights, or call Dean Deeds and he will relay to me.

I will continue to write this column IF I get some response to show me that it is being read. By that I mean questions, suggestions for articles, or just saying that you would like to continue it. If this response doesn't appear, then I don't see any reason to waste what little free time I have writing something that nobody reads. Fair enough?

One last tip: If your bottom hose has a heater outlet on it and it splits at the connection (and that's the usual place) take the old hose and cut it off just below the heater hose and you will have an excellent spare UPPER hose.

That's about it for this month. I hope to see all of you at this month's meeting.



QUESTIONNAIRE

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Los Angeles club readers: Please complete all parts.  
Others: Please complete all appropriate parts.

Do you still have a Mini, or are you considering getting one? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, are you interested in participating in a Mini club  
which reflects your interests and needs? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you read the newsletter carefully? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you wish to continue <sup>your</sup> to receive it, and would you be willing to pay ~~for~~ <sup>Share of</sup> the cost of putting it out (i.e., postage and copying costs if any)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you like to see it enlarged/improved? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following would you like to see in the newsletter?  
(Rank in order of importance, 1 for most important.)

- \_\_\_ Articles on custom and special-interest Minis
- \_\_\_ Articles on high-performance Minis
- \_\_\_ News on Mini races; rules, developments, etc. (in U.S. and U.K.)
- \_\_\_ News from other clubs
- \_\_\_ General tech tips and questions-and-answers
- \_\_\_ Forum for letters, opinions, editorials
- \_\_\_ Classified ads
- \_\_\_ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Can you contribute any of these? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend meetings regularly and try to participate in events? \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings -- if you don't attend, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Nothing of interest
- \_\_\_ what would you suggest? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Inconvenient day and/or time
- \_\_\_ what would be more convenient? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Inconvenient place
- \_\_\_ what would be more convenient? \_\_\_\_\_

Events -- if you don't attend, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Mini not running (of course, for picnics etc. you could come in another car)
  - \_\_\_ Event not of interest to me
  - \_\_\_ Didn't know about event
  - \_\_\_ Inconvenient time/date/place
- (Note that events are announced in this newsletter; and you can help plan event, time, place by coming to meetings)

What sort of events would you like to have? (Rank in order, 1=most imp.)

- \_\_\_ Rally (gimmick-type, not special stage)
- \_\_\_ Autocross, hillclimb, race
- \_\_\_ Concours d'élégance/restoration competition
- \_\_\_ Social events (picnic, beach party, etc)
- \_\_\_ Swap meet
- \_\_\_ Tour (possibly with another club)
- \_\_\_ Tune-in
- \_\_\_ Special showing of a movie
- \_\_\_ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

What services could the club provide? \_\_\_\_\_ Parts references \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain a stock of common parts (hoses, bulbs, bushes, etc) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to see at meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

Please add any comments or further suggestions on the other side.