

Clutch Chatter

Newsletter

January 2017

Editors Corner - Maggie Vang

Hello all and Happy New Year!!!!

This is the first Clutch Chatter for the year. I cannot believe it is 2017!!!! Im very VERY happy to see 2016 go!!! A lot has happened this past year, and I am sure we have all seen a version of "remembrances" so I will not go through it here. God Bless those who we have lost this year. I hope that we all have a good year and have a blast this season!

Recently, I asked about "What You Are up Too," and I will try to give those who responded justice.

C.J.- What are you up too?

"For the last few years I had been thinking about finding some old sports car to restore. I like tiny cars so maybe something British. I have no experience at anything like that but kept thinking about it. One day a friend stopped by in his 1968 Triumph GT6. I had no idea what it was but decided immediately that THAT was the car and suddenly had to have one. Especially when I found out how relatively inexpensive they were compared to an old Jag, Lotus, or Healey. The GT6 is the fastback, coupe version of the Triumph Spitfire, the light weight British convertible of the 60's and 70's."

"I also had visions of autocrossing this restoration project so it had to be light weight, nimble, and reliable. Being British, there are 2 out of three ! Old British sports cars aren't powerful OR reliable. I'm not very auto-mechanically inclined and didn't want to fool with adjusting dual carbs for the rest of my life so I decided to find a restorable vehicle and transplant my '94 Miata drivetrain into it."

"I spent the next 6 months looking weekly on line for a suitable specimen. There were plenty of pristine cars posted that were priced accordingly but that wasn't what I was looking for. I wanted something left hand drive that was complete enough to tear all the way down and restore.....on a budget. There were very few of them out there. I kept coming back to this one example in Austin, Texas, but it was really rough looking. One Sunday afternoon I was looking at the Texas car's photos again and venting my frustration to my wife that I just couldn't find anything else.....in the whole country, and maybe I should "settle" on that one. Getting tired of hearing me grumble she retorted "so what's stopping you !!" HMMMMM. Monday morning I hooked up the trailer and called

the guy in Texas and said I was on my way."

"It was the middle of February, 2016 and the roads were typically bad from here through Missouri, in a 20 year old pick up, with no radio. Yeah, it really sucked.....driving BOTH ways. When I finally got there, the car was sitting there in a junk yard setting, with JUST the body lines I was looking for. Unfortunately it was a lot rougher than I had hoped for. It had been baking there in the arid Texas heat for over 15 years. The frame was good but most of the bottom of the body was eaten away. The motor was in the passenger seat and the remains of the tranny were in a box in the back hatch. That didn't bother me since I had a transplant in mind anyway. I reluctantly loaded it up and hauled it home. The GT6 came with a 2 liter, cast iron block and head, in line 6 cylinder with 95 hp. I'm replacing it with the 1.8 liter (almost bullet proof) lighter Miata 4 pot. This will add 25-30 HP to about a 1700 lb car. I also plan to do a bumper delete to trim a few pounds and streamline it a bit."

"From the '94 Miata, which I had been autocrossing for a couple of seasons, I intend to transplant the motor, transmission, entire wiring harness, instrument cluster, heater core, steering column, seats, and fuel pump/sending unit. Anything to keep the ECU happy ! I immediately began stripping the '69 GT6 down to the last nut, bolt, and bushing. Once the frame was completely stripped of all body and suspension, a mobile sandblasting service came and blasted the frame and body panels. I immediately sealed everything with a rust inhibitor and got everything coated in primer. I took several weeks to dip all suspension parts in a hydraulysis bath to remove all rust. This process is quick and does a fantastic job of removing all rust. After that process, all parts were coated with a rust reversal product, primed, painted, and clearcoated."

"I recently pulled the motor, tranny, and wiring harness from the Miata. The motor has 113,000 miles on the clock so while it was sitting there on the barn floor, a Miata specialist mechanic made a house call to replace the timing belt, rear main seal, water pump, clutch, new light weight flywheel, leaking clutch slave, other various gaskets and seals, etc. He did a great job and it should be strong and ready to go. I have a lift in my barn that has been invaluable to this entire process so far. I'm in my 60's and too old and stiff to be under jack stands at this point! "

"The motor and tranny have been test fitted to the frame and with a little whittlin' here and there on the frame, everything now fits.....just barely. The main body shell was lowered onto the motor laden chassis to trim a little off the firewall away from the back of the motor. The hood (or "bonnet" as the Brits would say) was hinged into place to make sure it cleared the top of the motor.....just barely. Once the motor mount adapters are in place it will be time to winch the rolling chassis onto the trailer to take it to have the drive shaft cut, balanced, and properly fit. It is now the middle of December and that is where this project is at the time of this printing. Once I have the chassis back it will be time to bolt the main body shell onto the frame for proper alignment of all the mounting bolt holes. Then begin cutting away and replacing the rotten rockers, floor pans, trunk floor, rear valance, and eaten out wheel well corners. I learned to weld this summer so I'm going to get plenty of practice."

"I found a used set of original GT6 wheels that I had cleaned up and powder coated in hopes of being able to find a set of slicks to mount on them to autocross. I don't know if this project will be completed by the end of next season's autocross, but it's a hobby project that I've been able to average 25-30 hours a week on and it will be done when it's done. Fortunately I don't have the pressure of a deadline."

Activities Director - Daniel Vang

The Indy Region awards Banquet is coming up quickly. The date is January 28th at Speedway Indoor Karting. Price is \$25 and that DOES NOT include karting. Please make sure to RSVP with me at vangds@aol.com if you plan on coming.

This is also my final Clutch Chatter report as the Indy Region Activities Chair. It has been an amazing 2 years filled with challenges and lots of growth as an SCCA member and even more importantly, an Indy Member. Everyone truly made it a great experience. I'm not going too far. I'm headed back to school to pursue an engineering degree, and with the kids getting older I am just changing gears a bit. I still plan to compete in SMS and the civic should come out stronger and faster than it ever has been (hopefully) for the 2017 season.

Thank you Indy Region for trusting me to be your Activities Chair. See you all at the banquet!

Daniel

