

Can you keep a secret ?

Can you imagine the things that go through your mind, when a member of long standing, comes up with a suggestion that another member might be deserving of being made a LIFE MEMBER?



Several months ago, we (the Old Committee) received such a suggestion from Life Member Peter Simpson. As the prospective recipient was also a member of that committee, there was a certain amount of "cloak and dagger" secrecy involved. Not really a problem except that at times there needed to be some "bending of the truth", much, as you can probably imagine goes on behind the scenes of TV shows such as "This is Your Life". Such subterfuge does not always sit easily with everyone. Ruth Simpson for example absolutely hates lying and considering that plans for the award were under way even before the Coff's Harbour weekend away, some small white lies were necessary if President Jean was not to learn of her impending fate.

Fortunately, there was a large and enthusiastic band of people from N.S.W. and Queensland present at the Coff's event and the quick conferences between the conspiring partners, went un-noticed. Much of the planning took place over the Internet (what did we do before the 'Net?) and it was decided that the award would be made at the Annual General Meeting.

As the day grew closer, we tried to think of ways to "enhance" the experience for Jean and called on a few Foreign friends, some of whom had visited us from overseas, some of whom had met Jean in Cyberspace on the old Compuserve forum



"Miataville" and a couple who had been with us in N.S.W. briefly but returned to their native environs. They were asked to send the kind of "telegram" that one sends to be read out at a wedding, almost a Roast if you like. There were several responses, most though, were from the heart and recognised the fact that Jean has given

all to the Club and it shows, so we missed the humour element but on reflection, it doesn't matter, it matters more that Jean was totally surprised not only by the event or the fact that Peter and Ruth Simpson weren't co-incidentally in Sydney, that they had flown down from Queensland specially for the night to make the award but that recognition was given to someone who has contributed so much to the Club over such a long period of time.

I have to apologise for usurping the job of organising the AGM from those who might normally have planned it but I wanted to enlist the aid of John Newell Mazda who had made their Waterloo Showroom available for the evening and agreed not only to feed us but to hide the flowers and all the other stuff that we wanted to present.

Somehow, we got through the several months to the actual night without Jean finding out. I almost blew it on the night when after all my duties for the evening were over and I made a start for the

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Spare Parts Counter where Jeans Bouquet and Certificate were stashed, when I moved, she called me back and it was then that I had the awful (in a sense) realisation that she was about to present me with something, the Presidents Award had not even entered my mind and I was probably the last person that I would have thought worthy, however, as it transpired, Jean had also been plotting to award me the Presidents Award and I was completely flabbergasted!

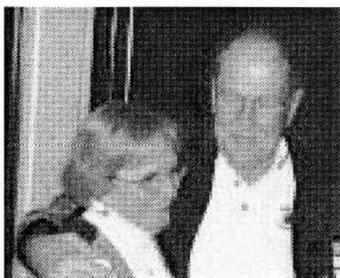
I had to quickly re-focus and introduce Peter and Ruth Simpson to make the Big Award of the night. If I appeared to make light of my award, please don't think that I took it lightly, I was hugely honoured but my mission was to make the award to Jean. We somehow pulled it off and I hope that in doing it, we didn't "upstage" anyone else, when Peter and Ruth Simpson suggested Jean there was not one dissenting voice and the organisation of it was left to Zan Menzel and me so as to minimise the risk of "a leak", I think we did pretty well! Please read the attached "telegrams" and add to them, the best wishes from ex Club Secretary Eva Turek (Peryer).

Ruth, we don't have to tell any more fibs, it's all over, thank you and Peter so much, for coming especially to make the award, even if we did have to lie and tell Jean that you were coming to Sydney for another reason and as long as you were here, you may as well come along to the AGM. We miss you and it's about time that you moved back to N.S.W!

Thanks also to Bruce and Colleen Russ for being there on the night and adding to the atmosphere. For those newer members, obviously, Peter and Ruth, Bruce (or George as we all know him) and Colleen are part of the history of the Club. Without them and without Jean, we would not be the much-envied organisation that we now are. Hopefully you, the newer members will be inspired by these Pioneers and will volunteer to help keep this great organisation growing.

I give you Jean Cook, LIFE MEMBER and my friend.

Jeff Gehrig
Member
#169



A tribute to Jean...

Hi Jean,

When a little birdy told me about you being given life membership, I really wanted to be there, however due to that nasty for letter word "WORK" I can not and for this I apologise.

As a member of the club and for a short time last year a member of the Committee I would like to say thanks for all the hard work that you put in to the club as it's president over the past couple of years, you have done an outstanding job and although you only have small feet your shoes will be a very big set to fill. I hope you have a great night, as I am sure you will, once you get over the shock of this award. Thanks again for all you have done as president.

Best Regards, Gerry Denton



Jean,

Team Voodoo, through our direct connection to the Loa via the "Mother of All Voodoo," has been made aware of your appointment as a lifetime member of the MX-5 Club of New South Wales.

I, Mama Voodoo, and all of the staff (that is, all four of us) at Team Voodoo would like to extend our congratulations to you for your achievement. May the spirits of rubber chickens everywhere be with you, especially when it would have been time to write that annual dues check!

Voodoo Bob Krueger

Team Voodoo proprietor and
co-founder of the San Diego Miata Club

For Jean Cook, re: Lifetime Membership

Thanks to Jean Cook, I now have a life-long MX5/Miata friend Down Under.

A few months preceding my visit to Australia, Sydney in particular, I send an "Open Invitation" e-mail to the leaders of various MX5 clubs.

Jean graciously replied, and began the process of establishing a contact.

Thanks to her abilities, she provided airport pick-up (albeit, with 3 large cases, enough to last the year as an exchange teacher,) along side were other club members eager to assist. She hosted me for my first visit to Sydney at her home, and arranged a special event to meet the "yank" while on a short visit. A year later, I was honoured to reciprocate the offer, by hosting Jean in the US at one of our club's events. This has been the start of not only a friendship, but the beginning of an "International Sister MX5/Miata Club program."

John Hewitt, President
Puget Sound Miata Club

Dear NSW Friends,

It is hard to believe that we left your beautiful country and our wonderful MX-5 family over two years ago. We have many fantastic memories that we shall cherish forever. Among all of these, our memories of Jean shine brightly. Right from the start, in fact on the day after our arrival in Canberra, we had our first cherished "Jean" memory. It rained when we arrived and it was just starting to clear that next morning. Suddenly, I heard the blare of a horn, a very recognisable horn. An MX-5 horn. I leapt out into the front of our apartment building. To my delight, there was the most awesome vision. Out of the mist I could see a beautiful red, shiny, MX-5, with its cute little headlights up, and a tiny blond driver with a big smile on her face. The driver, of course, was Jean. Jean had hand delivered our MX-5 to us all the way from Penrith. What a treat! What a way to start our adventure in Australia! Jean helped us work out a wonderful arrangement with Al Palmer, and turned our visit into a dream come true. Over the next 9 months we saw Jean several times at her place or ours, and at many events including Natmeet, the Tortoise tour, Wakefield, and many Sydney and Canberra runs. Remember that wine-tasting Jean? Or New Year's Eve where we got up close and personal with about a million people? To us, it is obvious that Jean is at the heart and soul of your club. I cannot think of anyone who loves the cars and the people more. She will go out of her way to help any club member, or in fact any MX-5 owner throughout the world. She is one heck of a race driver too.

Congratulations Jean! We love you and we wish we could be there to share your moment. Your spirit is always with us.

Dick and Judy

For: Jean Cook, upon receiving a lifetime membership, MX5 Club of NSW

From: Julie Springer, member Puget Sound Miata Club, Seattle, Washington, USA.

I first met Jean in Wenatchee, Washington when she was attending the Northwest Gathering of Miata's.

Our club president, John Hewitt, was hosting her while I hosted Sue Forrest. I was especially eager to meet Jean since I was planning a visit to her country. Six months later when I was in Sydney, I was fortunate to attend an event with your MX5 Club.

I was able to ride along with Jean and really enjoyed the flags and Koala bears she brought along.

The wonderful day I spent with your club was a high point of my visit to Australia. So, in honour of this auspicious occasion, I have penned a little poetry just for Jean:

*There once was an Aussie Down Under,
She drove very fast but ne'er made a blunder.
Wind in her hair, sun in her eyes: she was
topless.
O'er hills and dips, through lights and curves:
she was stopless.
Life with your MX-5 is always funner,
So isn't it 'bout time for another?
Julie Springer*