



New Jersey Bulletin

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

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Biergarten



Photo by Doug Finley

The 2nd annual Biergarten event was held at the Deutscher club on a beautiful September evening. Over 900 members and guests of the Deutscher club showed up at this fabulous event. We had about 25 of our own chapter members at the event. JMK BMW showcased several brand new cars and our chapter brought 15 cars ranging from the classic E21 to the latest Z4. We also had Jamie's E30 race car on display! There were

lots of German food and beers paired by German music and festivities throughout the entire evening. Thanks to the Deutscher club for inviting the NJ BMW CCA to this event. We have been invited back next year and we hope to make this an annual club event.

- Paul Ngai

Newsletter of the NJ Chapter
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The Cone Catcher



by Larry Engel

I've been experiencing some serious withdrawal symptoms lately. For the first time in almost eleven years, my E46 and I have been separated by life's circumstances. I miss it, and I'm beginning to wonder if I'll ever be able to enjoy the silky smooth rev range of the 2.8 liter M52 engine and the buttoned down but not too harsh UUC suspension again. How did it come to this?

It all started over the summer, when our daughter-in-law Alicia was making a legal left turn near their home in Vermont and someone who wasn't paying attention rear ended her. Fortunately, Alicia was driving "the Gregmobile" - the 1992 Grand Marquis that our son Greg has called his own since Karin's parents sold it to us for next to nothing years ago. After 18 years in the family, it gave it's all to protect one of us. Although the offending driver offered to pay for the damage immediately after the accident, it turned out that she was both uninsured and unlicensed. She also didn't have any money to pay for the damage.

On the surface the damage seemed to be limited to the rear bumper, which looked like it had hugged a telephone pole. Whatever hit Alicia must have been a serious battering ram. Further inspection revealed other problems. The uneven side gaps on the trunk indicated additional body (and possibly frame) damage. An exhaust leak suddenly developed, likely because it was dislodged by the impact.

Greg and Alicia drove the car from Vermont to Westfield after the accident, and I was alarmed when I saw it. I didn't think it was safe to drive, so Karin and I began discussing options on how we might help our starving grad student son and daughter-in-law stay mobile. A new car wasn't in anyone's budget, and the M3 and Mini weren't going to be part of the equation. That left the iX, the E46, and Chris' 2001 Camry.

As the deliberations continued, Greg was working with the insurance company to figure out how much they were going to pay under the uninsured motorist portion of the policy. Their adjuster looked at the car while it was parked in front of our house, and the verdict was as expected - totaled. They offered two choices, they'd send a check of one size if we kept the car, and a couple of hundred more if we let them take it away. Greg and I discussed the options. While I thought it would make a fine LeMons car, I didn't want it to end up in the hands of someone who need a car badly and might drive it on the road. I wouldn't be able to live with myself if someone bought it and had an accident because it was unsafe. We decided to let the insurance company take the car.

Greg's the oldest, so initially I felt that he should get the E46. Unfortunately, the lowered suspension that makes it so much fun on the track and back roads can become a serious impediment to progress on the snow covered and dirt roads of rural Vermont. The kids also don't have the room to store the snow tires, or the inclination to switch to winter mode at the appropriate time. Most of you know that in most cases I think a rear-wheel drive car with snow tires is a fine winter solution, but this isn't one of them. The snow covered roads in Northern Vermont would be too much for the lowered E46. Besides, having witnessed the rusting away of the Mercury, I couldn't bear to see my prized 328 meet the same fate.

The iX is the perfect winter car - but there's that rusting problem again, and I couldn't subject the 20 year old classic to that environment - especially in the hands of a kid who's not tremendously diligent about keeping his vehicle clean and waxed. (Come to think of it, this is a common trait of all my children - it seems that I'm the family car care servant.)

So, that left the Camry. It's a 2001 base model with a 5-speed stick. Alicia can drive a stick, and Greg has driven the 328 a few times, though he'd rather not think about shifting and drive an automatic. He's the only one in the family who isn't comfortable with a manual transmission. However, he usually takes a bus to the lab and probably isn't driving that much, anyway. We offered the Camry as a long-term loaner to Greg and Alicia. Greg, being the frugal one in the family, accepted. So, they returned to Vermont in a car nine years younger than the one they arrived in. The Mercury spent a few weeks in front of our house, and the insurance company finally came and towed it away.

That left Chris without his car, and he was about to return to school at Clemson for his senior year. He volunteered to take the M3. I declined his generous offer. He knew what he was going to end up with, and was thrilled when I explained that he could take the 328 only because I had concerns about the iX on a 700 mile trip. So, off he went with my cherished 2000 328i with Sport Package, Premium Package, wonderful ASA wheels, and UUC suspension.

A tear welled in my eye when they left. Everyone thinks I miss the car more than that Chris, but I think that's only because I'm used to Chris not being around anymore. The E46 is another story. In some ways, I like that car more than the E90 M3. From the day in October 1999 when I picked it up at JMK BMW in Springfield, it felt perfect for me. I intuitively knew where all the controls were, and could reach for them without looking from the first day I owned the car. The visibility is great, and I've always said it's a car you "wear" rather than drive. I think the control layout and visibility are far superior to the E90, and it feels more connected to the road. (Of course, this has been said of every generation of 3-Series when a successor replaces it.)

So, I'm left driving the M3 and the iX. (Elizabeth is at school in the city so I still have the choice of two daily drivers with Roundels on the hood.) I love my E90, but I do feel a little guilt about using so much gas. It's still too new to become the primary track vehicle, and parts are very expensive. So, I'm doing without a lot of track time right now. Still, I'm starting to think about Dinan springs - track wheels - sticky tires - (Oh no!!!! Here I go again!!! Starting down the slippery slope!!!! Help meeeeeee.....)

A couple of weeks ago we drove down to Clemson to visit Chris and attended Parents' Weekend. People that know me understand my main reason for going was to check on the car. I figure Chris can take care of himself, but I have less confidence that he can care for my car the way I do. It appeared fine, but several of Chris' buddies yelled out that they were happy he finally got it washed when they saw I was within earshot. He's putting a lot of miles on it, and I'm glad he has NJ BMW CCA Driver School experience under his belt. I hope he won't be tempted to get stupid with it on the road and that he knows he should only test its limits on the track and under proper supervision.

So, now I have a real dilemma. I have to restore balance and fill the hole in my automotive life. I'm having fun thinking about the possibilities! Until next month, keep the cones standing!

NJ Chapter 2011 Board Nominations

It's that time again. Nominations for the 2011 Board are now open. Elected Board positions are: President, Vice President, Social Events Chair, Treasurer, Driving Events Chair, Secretary and two Members-at-Large.

If you are interested in running for any of the above Board positions, or would like to nominate a willing candidate, send me an e-mail at david@allaway.us. If you have any general questions about the Board just send me an e-mail. If you'd like details on what a particular job entails, go to www.njbmwcca.org/about/officers.php and send an e-mail to the appropriate incumbent. Nominations must be received by the November Board meeting.

Being on the Board is a great way to impact the direction of our club. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

David Allaway
Secretary





Philes' Forum

by Vic Lucariello

Hello, Bimmerphiles! This time out I have an interesting item about an overfilled brake-fluid reservoir and something for you E39 drivers.

I still wish to receive copies of your NJMVC emissions-inspection reports. You can either mail a photocopy of your report [preferred], or simply email the test data. [Include your name, too, if you want to be famous and be mentioned in Philes' Forum!] Please include both the test results and the pass/fail criterion for each pollutant along with your model and year, transmission type, and mileage. If you know at what mileages your oxygen sensor and spark plugs were last replaced, include that as well. Please indicate what, if any, modifications have been made to your motor [aftermarket chip or software, intake, exhaust, etc.] and your exact model number [e.g.: 328i, not 3-Series]. Note that there is no need for you to send in reports of passed OBDII inspections [This is where they simply connect a scanner to your car and do not actually test emissions.], as such reports contain no information other than the fact that you have passed. However, I am interested in failed OBD II inspection results, because the reason[s] for failure are detailed on the report.

At our September driver school at the Shenandoah Circuit of Summit Point Raceway, one participant had a problem with his brakes that I think you ought to know about. After the first on-track session, his Bimmer was emitting a strange odor and trailed some smoke or vapor when entering the paddock. A quick look under the hood revealed that brake fluid was spilling from an evidently overfull reservoir. The fluid had made its way onto the exhaust system, hence the smoke. Could the car somehow be generating brake fluid? The reservoir had not been leaking prior to the track session, and the car had been driven to the track from New Joisey.

Several of us theorized that the reservoir had been overfilled when the brake fluid had been changed prior to the event, and that when the brakes got track-hot, the fluid expanded enough to spill out through the filler cap. We removed some fluid, and sure enough, no more fluid leaked out during subsequent track sessions. So, you may ask, how can I be sure not to overfill my brake-fluid reservoir?

Every BMW I have ever worked on has, on the brake-fluid reservoir, markings that indicate the maximum and minimum permissible fluid levels. The markings can sometimes be hard to see, however, but they are there. Photo #1 depicts a BMW brake-fluid reservoir with the "Max" and "Min"



Photo #1 Brake Fluid Reservoir

level arrows emphasized with felt-marker ink. You can see that there is considerable room for expansion provided above the "Max" arrow. So, when you are changing your brake fluid, ensure that the level is at, but not above, the "Max" mark, AFTER THE CAP AND LEVEL SWITCH ARE IN PLACE.

Sadly, the driver of the car in question reported that a shop had done the brake-fluid change for him. Surely they should have known better than to overfill the fluid reservoir. So, even if you pay someone to change your brake fluid, be sure to double-check the level when you get the car back.

If you have an E39 [96-'03 5-Series] sedan and your center, high-mount stop lamp [CHSL] is not working, this next one is for you!

I recently looked at an E39 with the CHSL out. Simple bulb replacement, right? Not so fast, Alphonse.

The CHSL bulb is accessed from inside the luggage compartment. Stick your head [OK, OK, no jokes about stuffing someone in the trunk!] in and look up under the CHSL and you will see a small cover, which unclips to expose the bulb holder. The bulb holder should come out with a twist after you unplug it. In this case the bulb looked to be a bit hoary, but the filament seemed to be intact. Indeed, checking the bulb with an ohmmeter and comparing to a new bulb suggested that the bulb was still good. Putting 12 volts across the bulb verified this.

Then I noticed the stain on the bulb base [See Photo #2] and examined the bulb holder, which had partially melted in the area of the bulb-ground



Photo #2 Stained Bulb

contact. The fix was a new bulb holder [63-25-8-375-599, Listed as fitting all E39 sedans; List Price about \$5.50], which was conveniently in stock at my local BMW dealer, Hunterdon BMW. Rather than clean up the old bulb and reinstall it, I replaced it with a shiny new one. [My guess is that the old bulb was the original on this 1999 Fiver.] Be sure to use the prescribed 21-watt bulb so as not to exacerbate the tendency of the bulb holder to melt.

That's all for now, Bimmerphiles. See you next time!

Anyone wishing to contribute to *Philes' Forum* should contact me at vic.sr@njbmwcca.org. I'm interested in tech tips, repair /maintenance questions and/or tips, repair horror stories, emissions inspection sagas, product evaluations, etc.

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NJ Chapter of the BMW CCA Board Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2010

Board members present: Larry Engel, Doug Feigel, Al Drugos, Mark Mallory, Jeff White, Paul Ngai, Jamie Kavalieros and Dave Allaway. Board members absent: Warren Brown, Ross Karlin, Bob Conway, Jerry Faber. Others present: Barry Stevens, Neil Gambony, Vic Lucariello.

President

Larry Engel called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM at Alfonso's in Somerville. Al motioned to waive the reading of the August minutes and Jamie seconded (carried unanimously). The format of the year-end Bulletin issue was discussed. It was agreed that this would be a combined 16-page November/December issue, recapping the Chapter's 2010 activities, to be mailed 2nd class postage (as a test) and blast e-mailed. The issue deadline is TBD. Larry reported that Jon Trudel has volunteered as rally master for November's Whack Your Turkey Rally, but needs assistance. Larry noted that he has made appointments to discuss National support for Oktoberfest. This remains at the exploratory stage, and the Board had no objections.

Vice President

Paul Ngai reported that the September 15th general meeting will feature Scott Barton of Duct Tape Motorsports, presenting on The 24 Hours of Lemons. The October 20th general meeting will be at Morristown BMW, topic TBD. The November/December meeting will be Tuesday December 7th at Deutscher Club of Clark (DCC). Paul reported that the BMW corral at the Lime Rock Historic Festival was a success, with the allotted 50 cars both Saturday and Monday, as well as a large number of BMW entrants for Sunday's concours. There was discussion of a possible larger or sponsored setup for the corral next year. The Biergarten event at DCC is next Friday, September 17th, with 10 cars signed up and room for 15.

Treasurer

Mark Mallory distributed a consolidated income and expense report by event, showing a year-to-date \$5,957 net income on a cash basis. This includes reimbursement from National for the Instructor Seminar, but does not include requested reimbursement for the Instructor Training School.

Secretary

Dave Allaway noted that nominations for Board elections are due in writing (e-mail is acceptable) prior to the November Board meeting.
Social Events

Al Drugos reported that February 19th and 26th are available for the Annual Banquet. The Board agreed on February 26th. Al has also booked March 19th for the Instructor

Seminar. Larry requested suggestions on reducing the banquet and seminar costs. Vic Lucariello reiterated that all areas must look at reducing expenses. Al reported that a good time was had at the TD Bank Ballpark game/fireworks event. He still has several tickets available for Sunday September 19th at \$8 each.

Business Manager

Doug Feigel reported that he has had a few spurious inquiries on website advertising, and has deleted some unauthorized advertising postings. An advertising agreement with Liberty Mutual is still pending.

Driver Schools

Jeff White reported that the Shenandoah event has 43+ paying students (vs. 42 projected), despite an unusual 10 cancellations, and he is currently projecting a \$1,200 deficit. He noted that the Summit Point event had fewer driver school students than expected, but a large contingent of BMW Club Racing School entrants. The upcoming Introductory school is currently half-full.

Autocross

Doug reported that the next autocross will be September 19th at PNC Bank Arts Center, our only event this year at PNC. Larry suggested giving out class prizes as an autocross incentive. Jeff suggested creating generic (non-event specific) Chapter shirts for general use, including sale and prizes.

New Membership

Neil Gambony reported that new membership letters have been mailed. There was discussion on a 'windshield letter' to be posted on the website for general use. Some concerns were expressed, and Larry will take this under advisement.

Old Business

Doug has received the registration for the trailer, but still needs plates. It was also agreed that the registration needs to be transferred to the NJ Chapter, and Jamie and Doug will take care of this. Larry has sent a letter to Bill Wade regarding the Tire Rack Street Survival reimbursement policy.

New Business

Vic suggested a single driver school shirt for the season. Jeff indicated that this would not necessarily be a savings, and that event sponsorship would be an issue. The next board meeting was set Wednesday October 6th. Jeff motioned to adjourn at 9:04 PM and Al seconded (approved unanimously).

Respectfully submitted,
David Allaway, Secretary

Vegas and a Mini

It's that time of year again where Sandy and I have to get out of NJ for 10+ days and enjoy all that Sin City has to offer. Maybe it's the hellacious Mojave Desert heat, maybe it's the huge luxurious casinos, the endless shows and performances, the good (and expensive) food, or perhaps it's the street folks handing out calling cards for... um... night companions. Whatever draws us there, Vegas - the Entertainment Capital of the World - has been our choice vacation location for the past 5 years.

And if you have read my previous articles from years past you know that no trip out to Las Vegas is complete without a trip to the Little A'Le'Inn. Just 150 miles north in Rachel, Nevada this town of approximately 78 people is located in the middle of nowhere. The nearest gas station is 40 miles away in one direction and 90 miles in the other direction. It's located on the eastern edge of the Nellis Bombing and Gunnery Range so you might get lucky to see some cool Air Force hardware in the sky flying under 2,000 ft between the mountains. We have seen a couple fighters zipping across the baron plains at Ludicrous Speed before. More importantly, the Range is also known as Area 51.

To get to the Ufologist and Conspiracy Theorist mecca, we needed a car. A speedy car, something that says fun. How about a 2007 Mini Cooper S Convertible? Yup, we rented a red Mini S drop top for our 300 mile round trip cruise through the desert wasteland. Upon getting the keys to this car, the name Mini really applied. Someone had the seat almost all the way forward. I couldn't even get into the car. The first thought going through my head was "Maybe I should have rented the Porsche Boxster instead". Once I got the seat into proper position (all the way back touching the rear seat) I pulled the car around so Sandy could jump in. The helpful attendant from Dream Car Rentals showed us how to put the top down, a most important lesson. We pulled out, top down, onto the freeway and headed towards Rachel.

It took a few miles to get used to the car and its functions, plus where to put my left foot. It was shamefully equipped with an automatic transmission.



Once I settled in, we motored out of town soaking the 106 degree sun with the A/C at full blast. We made it about 20 miles with the top down before we decided that crispy skin is not a fashion statement and we were better off going the rest of the way with the top up. We turned onto I-92, the straightest road I have ever been on. You look down the road as far as you can see to where it disappears and there isn't one turn or even a curve for 20+ miles. In NJ we are so used to trees, buildings, and whatever hampering our vision more than 2 miles or so. Here, you can see forever. The distance is very deceiving.

We arrived at the A'Le'Inn and ordered up a couple Alien burgers. There was a crew doing an independent film on the 'Inn and Area 51. The one guy did a brief interview with me to find out if we had seen anything strange.

(continued on page 8)

Autocross Schedule

Oct 10 TDBP
Nov 7 TDBP

TDBP - TD Ball Park in Bridgewater.
EXPO - Raritan Exposition Center in Edison
PNC - Art Center off the Garden State Parkway

- Elihu Savad

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Another Great Shenandoah Driver School

The weekend of Sep 11-12 found the NJ Chapter at its annual visit to the Shenandoah Circuit at Summit Point Raceway. With near-perfect weather both days (ok, so we had a little rain overnight on Saturday), the event could not have been better.

For the 45 students who participated (spread across 3 run groups), everyone had plenty of open track throughout the weekend. There is no doubt that Shenandoah is a challenging circuit with 17 turns in just 2 miles. Moreover, the circuit provides plenty of diversity with rising esses, falling blind turns, sharp turns, the steeply banked Karussel turn and a long sweeping turn onto a straightaway that isn't completely straight! As we have said in the past, this is a track that will force you to improve your skills regardless of the car you drive. However, beyond the challenge of executing each turn to the best of your ability, Shenandoah provides the opportunity to explore different approaches to different turns and really take time with your instructor to understand the "why" that connects what you do and how your car behaves. There is plenty of paddock talk with drivers and instructors comparing notes on how each drives a particular section of the track.

Beyond the time on the track, students had skid pad sessions on both Saturday and Sunday. Spending time on a skid pad is one of the best uses of a student's time there is. Learning to feel how the balance of your car changes in the moment before it loses grip and then understanding what to do and what not to do to correct the skid can truly help you in normal driving in wet or snowy conditions. Our skid pad instructors were tireless and then treated us to displays of controlled drifting just to give everyone an idea of what real car control is all about.

Rounding out the weekend was our classroom instructor Gerry Chan. Gerry brings both a depth of knowledge and enthusiasm to our classrooms that each and every student commented on. Gerry also treated us to his track walk on Saturday. This is another terrific learning tool to be able to stand at specific points on the track and understand where to place your car and why for both a fast and stable line through each turn.

It has taken time but we are developing a loyal following of both students and instructors who have come to love this track. Many drivers find that the first trip is a bit overwhelming but on a second visit everything comes together and the track really does flow. For those of you who have not yet come to Shenandoah, you owe it to yourself to put it on the calendar for next season - you will have a good time and expand your driving skills.

Our final event of the season will be the repeat of our highly successful one-day school on Monday October 18th on the Lightning track at New Jersey Motorsports Park. The feedback from last year was so positive that we are doing the same format this year. In addition to our "normal" run groups and schedule, we have a run group specifically tailored to students who have never been to the track before. We have special classroom sessions for you, a series of car control exercises and skid pad lessons. All of this is on top of 3 sessions on the track. Have you been listening to your friends go on and on all summer long about how much fun they are having with their cars at the track and want to experience this for yourself? Have you been afraid to "take the plunge" because of cost, time or trepidation? Then this is the school for you. We are once again offering a \$50 rebate to new students beyond the already low price of \$175 for experienced students. We also have a helmet loaner program so we may be able to help you out there. Come out and see what a terrific driving machine your BMW is. Have fun, hang out with your friends (and make new ones) and become a better driver. What could be better?

Remember all you experienced students, we will have our usual mix of classroom and on-track sessions for you as well. Those of you who have been to Lightning know it is a fun, open track that is a great circuit for beginners but has enough nuance that experienced students will always find something to improve on. You know you want to get in one more day at the track before the off-season starts so grab this chance and have fun.

We'll see you at the track!

-Jeff White

Driver School Schedule

School	Dates	Location
Introduction of the Track Driver School	Oct 18	NJMP Lightning Raceway, Millville, NJ

Vegas and a Mini (continued)

(continued from page 6) I guess my experiences and story wasn't interesting enough for them as he didn't even turn the camera on. We had



some friendly conversation with some of the customers and locals. Sandy struck up a conversation with a woman named Annette from Denmark who was traveling all across America solo riding a R1200GS BMW motorcycle.

She was sponsored by BMW who helped provide with some gear and maintenance on her bike. In return she gives presentations at BMW Motorcycle dealerships. Her business card stated she is a motivational speaker. I can tell you it was inspiring to listen to her adventures. This was her second trip to the Americas. The first was a couple years ago when she started her journey in Argentina and worked her way from South America thru Central America and into the US. This year's trip was strictly around the United States ending up in Miami. She has a blog of her tours. If anyone is interested, contact me and I can forward the website information.

Annette had to hit the highway as she was headed toward Utah. We figured it's about time we headed back to Vegas ourselves. We were at the Inn for several hours and we wanted to get back to town before it got dark. The desert is a little scary at night as it's very dark with no lights from anything. The amount of stars you see is amazing when there is no city light pollution. This area of the desert is a free range, which means someone speeding along the highway can come across a herd of cows crossing the road and not be able to react in time. 70mph at night with 1500lb black cows crossing the road and driving a Mini doesn't sound like a challenge I want to try.

We also took a ride over to the Gold and Silver Pawn Shop. Those of you who watch the History Channel will be familiar with the name as it is the location for the show Pawn Stars. Sandy was on the hunt to meet Chumlee. Unfortunately, we had to stop there (continued on page 9)

Finish Lines by Thom Rossi

Depreciating asset, sweet depreciating asset. Eleven years ago when we bought our current home, our builder told everyone in town we got "the deal of the century". He might have been right. After all, we purchased our home in '99, and in that century it looked like a rapidly appreciating asset. But in this century, the data crunchers at Zillow.com never seem to tire of sending me a staccato barrage of e-mail missives documenting the decrements in the market value of my home. How different from the world of my parents and my previous 25 years of home ownership, where it could be safely assumed that the march of time would bring with it an automatic increase of wealth as home prices ratcheted up year by year.

Back then, buying a house was way smarter than buying a car, at least from a financial view point. Anyone parking an expensive car in front of a modest home was thought of as an irresponsible dolt most likely suffering from a mid-life crisis. It seemed that would be the case forever, until the real estate bubble was burst by the inevitable failure of Californian fruit pickers to make the payments on the \$750k sub-prime mortgages foisted upon them by the unscrupulous hogs at Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Countrywide, the investment banks who should have known better, and the congressmen who let it all happen because they enjoyed the resultant PAC money. (Phew, I'm glad I got that off my chest.)

Now the economic tables have turned. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (which for some reason is tasked with publishing the consumer price index), the cost of used cars has increased by 15.5% over the past 12 months. In that same period of time, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased by about 7.5%. That's right, a used car was twice as good an investment in 2009 as a stock index fund. In fact, used cars seem to be increasing in value faster than just about any asset class I can think of except for gold: savings accounts, treasury bills, investment-grade corporate bonds, municipal bonds, you name it.

Suddenly our family collection of automobiles looks a lot less like economic recklessness induced by the male member of the household's mid life need to compensate for dwindling supplies of endogenous testosterone and a lot more like a shrewdly structured investment portfolio, perfectly suited to our times. And let's face it, when's the last time you had fun driving a savings bond down the road?

Some investments, however, like certain mutual funds, carry high maintenance fees. I strive for lowering my cost of ownership by doing as much for myself as I can. Which brings me to the ongoing topic of my wrenching on Starla, Miss R.'s 2001 Audi A4 Quattro. She has 105k miles

on her clock, which is the recommended service life of her timing-belt. She also has the lowest acquisition cost of any street-legal car in our garage, making her the perfect candidate for my DIY mechanical attentions.

I'd never before tackled a timing-belt change, but decided to dig into this one over Labor Day weekend. I spent a couple of weeks doing research before starting the job. I carefully reviewed the Bentley service manual and decided after reading it three times that it simply did not contain a sufficient level of detailed instructions for me. I turned to the internet and found many good posts on Audi forums, and eventually came across a parts company (Blauparts) that specializes in timing-belt parts and tool kits for Audis and VWs. For a bit less than \$400 I was able to get all of the replacement parts I needed (belts, tensioner pulleys, water pump, etc., and all high-quality German-made parts). The really cool thing about this company, however, was that they also provided a very well written 30-page instruction manual for the job, including special dealer service bulletins, abundant photographs, and helpful hints. Moreover, this job required over \$300 worth of special tools, which Blauparts rents at a fraction of that price to people who purchase their parts. Nice!!!

I started by doing a thorough coolant flush to make way for the new water pump and thermostat. A previous owner had used incompatible antifreeze that had turned into a brown sludge that had to be flushed out. The next step was to remove the front bumper and pull the radiator and cross members forward to make room in the engine bay. The rest of the job was a matter of meticulously following instructions so as not to alter the timing alignment of the cams and the crankshaft (I was paranoid I was going to screw that part up). All told it took me about 15 hours to do the job and get Starla completely reassembled and on the road. That's a lot of time to spend on a weekend, and it made me wonder whether it was economically worthwhile to spend that time plus the parts money as opposed to taking her into the dealership for the service. Audi owners have been reporting paying upwards of \$2900 for this service, so I guess it was worth the time since I didn't have any other way to earn or save that amount of money over the weekend. Now she's running great with new brakes, a new ABS control unit, new exhaust, and new timing-belt and related bits. In my humble opinion, she has more than earned her 15.5% appreciation, though I have no intention of selling her. Call me a long-term investor.

If only I could find evidence that racecars were similarly increasing in value, I might just be able to convince Mrs. R. that now is the time to invest in more of them. Then peace and harmony would reign in the land of milk and honey that I refer to as our humble depreciating asset.

Vegas an a Mini (concluded)

(continued from page 8) twice because the first time we visited there, the lead characters had already left for the day. Too bad because I had my "Chumlee for President. He's my kind of idiot" T-Shirt on. We did catch the "Old Man" the next day and were able to get our pictures taken with him. Sandy wound up purchasing an Amethyst ring from the store as well for a very good price. We also made friends with the head of security, Andy, who just moved out there a year ago from New York City. We promised to send real Bagels and Rye Bread out to them. The other strange but interesting location we visited was the Atomic Testing Museum. This was fascinating and creepy all in one. I think I just wanted to see some mushroom clouds but I really got an eerie chill when I read all the material as well as watched a few videos on how serious and frightening the times were when the nuclear era had started. On the brighter side we now have a Miss Atomic Bomb 1957 magnet for the fridge.

My first impressions with the Mini were it was small (hello, its called a Mini) and a little cramped. Once I settled in, I found a groove and started to like the car. It drove well, handled nicely, and it had reasonable power. The two position convertible top was a great feature as well. We wound up putting the top down at night just due to the intense heat that Vegas has in August. Overall, we enjoyed the car and Sandy even said "I wouldn't mind one of these" - I think I would still rather have an e30 Convertible for the added trunk space. I still can see why so many enthusiasts are buying Minis and why they have the following they get. It's a fun car with a little character, which is the reason why we rented it in the first place.

JT Burkard

Send comments and suggestions to jtburkard@comcast.net



NJ Chapter Calendar

October 2010

Wednesday, October 20th

Monthly meeting to be held at Morristown BMW, Ridgedale Avenue in Morristown. Start time - 6:30pm. Check our website for updated information.

November 2010

TBD

Whack Your Turkey Rally. Check our website for upcoming details. This is always a fun time.

December 2010

Tuesday, December 7th

Monthly meeting to be held at Deutscher Club in Clark, NJ. Annual elections will be held. Pinewood derby, good food, company, and fun are guaranteed. Start time - 7:30pm. See you there.

Welcome New Members

Troy Anatra
Nickolas Andreychak
Christopher Andreychak
Matthew Baratz
Avery Baratz
Olof Bergqvist
Roger Bigger
Dennis Brown
Stewart Carey
James Dale
Vito Depalo
Austin Don

Baldwin Don
Gamal Elshahawi
Samy Elshahawi
Robert Engel
David Engh
Laura Fino
Carlisle Grant
Giuseppe Grillo
Theodore Haussner
Robert Klemme
Donald Lebentritt
Carla Lebentritt

Alison Leung
Truman Liang
Eileen Meighan
Jacquelyn Menser
Max Moehlen
Michael O'Connor
Carlos Ojeda
Peter Perreault
Stephen Plavin
Laurie Prinz
David Sazan
Tatiana Sazan

Pete Scala
Laurence Smith
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MEMBERSHIP MEETING INFORMATION and LOCATION

The New Jersey Chapter's monthly membership meetings begin at 8pm and are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Deutscher Club of Clark. However, special topics often force a different date; please check the calendar of upcoming events (or the website) carefully.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

All membership applications, renewals and address changes can be done via the BMW CCA National website: www.bmwcca.org or can be sent to: BMW CCA National Office, 640 South Main Street, Suite 201, Greenville, SC 29601
800-878-9292 (Mastercard or Visa)

Annual BMW CCA and New Jersey Chapter dues: \$48.00.

New Jersey Chapter Dues and Bulletin Subscription ("dual citizenship" for primary members of other chapters): \$15.30.

Please do not send applications, renewals and address changes to the newsletter, the PO Box or any of the club's officers; contact the national office! Members of other BMW CCA local chapters may additionally join the NJ Chapter. Contact the National BMW CCA Office for details.

Biergarten

Two weeks after we returned from our trip, the Deutscher Club of Clark held a Biergarten on Friday, September 17 with BMW cars as a featured display. JMK BMW brought a bunch of new cars for everyone to drool over as well as many of our CCA members putting their cars on display. Be it for me not to pass up an opportunity to show off our 1977 320i, which was the oldest car in attendance. We had a great turn out with a beautiful e30 M3 and 325es on hand, an e34 M5, e39 Touring, as well as several Z4's and e46's, and a real nice e36 Convertible. The infamous Red Rocket was in attendance for all to gaze at its wonder. Even our club president came out with his e30 325ix and e90 M3 and Jamie brought out his e30 race car. We had a fantastic display but that was just a small part of the evening of fun.

It is called the Biergarten and true to its name, the event was held at the picnic area at the DC with enough tables for what seemed to be at least 600+ people with traditional German food being served and of course German beer. With a plate full of good eats and a cup of golden suds the night was only getting better. There was an Accordion player walking about the tables playing German music and a fantastic live band playing everything from the usual favorites to traditional music from Germany. They even did a couple Jimmy Buffet tunes just to get everyone in the mood. Somehow I don't think Warsteiner in Paradise is going to be the next Parrothead hit though.

Everyone from our Club as well as the Deutscher members had a ball. This event is by far one of the best social gatherings besides our yearly picnic. Most of us weren't quite sure what to expect and were pleasantly surprised. Some have been in Germany for a true Biergarten and they said this is very much like the ones in Europe. It is something I encourage all of you to come and partake in next year. As the night went on, CCA members pulled out with their cars and by 8:30 there were only two sets of members left - Sandy and I with Dave and Patty, who came in the e36 Convertible. We all had a good time - until...

As we were hanging out in front of the covered dance area where the band was playing there were four people standing, and dancing, next to our e21. They were laughing and spinning around having a very good time. Sandy said to me "watch these people because they are holding their beer cups sideways and I don't want them to spill drinks on the car". A very good point indeed. I had a little faith that all would be fine until the one gentleman was spinning around and fell right over the passenger fender of our car. At that point I had to quickly shoe them away from the car display so they do not damage anything. I recently repainted the hood on our 320i because there were a few scratches and I didn't need this guy to damage my perfect paint. Thankfully, they understood my concerns and took their party over by the proper location for dancing.

Soon after we left the Biergarten stuffed and entertained fully. This event was a lot of fun and was something I am looking forward to for next year. I hoped to see a larger gathering of pre-80's BMW's so if you own one of these vintage Bimmers, blow the dust off it and bring it out. You will not regret it.

I was also surprised how many members told me they enjoy my newsletter ramblings. I have been thinking of taking my articles and starting a blog with additional pictures included as our publication has only so much printing space. Feel free to contact me for a link to this blog once its up if you are interested.

This months article bullet points - The Mini is small but fun, watch for black cows at night, and beware of intoxicated Biergarten dancers on your fresh paint.

JT Burkard

Send comments and suggestions to jtburkard@comcast.net

Photos by Doug Finley



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