

Gesundheit



Newsletter for the St. Louis Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America Summer 2010



IN THIS ISSUE...

- If the Clown Shoe Fits
- ML Hillard Tightens Things Up
- Senior Coffee



Original Thought #23:

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Gesundheit

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Get more online by going to the St. Louis Chapter website at www.stlwmcca.org

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President's Letter

My wife Debbie is somewhat of a car-person. She loves her 2007 BMW 328xi. She commutes to work every-day, notifies me when I need to repair something on her car and generally uses her car as transportation. She did one of our high performance driving schools a few years ago and she attends a few BMW Club events each year, but if she had to choose between going to Starbucks or going to a car show, she'd quickly be sipping a double-pump, light whip café mocha. Cars are not high on her priority list which is why I was a little shocked at her latest request.

It was a Friday afternoon in late July, an absolutely miserable 102-degree day. I was sitting in my office and I received a two-word text message from Debbie, "Midnight Madness?"

Hmmm, "Midnight Madness" what did she mean by that?

My first thought was that she wants to do an all-night bicycle tour? No, I think that's Midnight Ramble, not Midnight Madness.

I discounted the possibility that it could be a request for some late-night passion because we're usually sound asleep by midnight. I'd never refer to it as "madness" anyway.

What did she mean? Could she be talking about the Friday night drag races at Gateway? No way. This is Debbie. She would never suggest such a thing. I eliminated drag races as an option.

Without knowing what she was asking and being a little intrigued by the suspense, I responded to her text message and simply said, "Yes."

She called me 15 seconds later. "Great, we're going to the drag races." she said.

I didn't believe it. I had to sit down. "You really want to go to the drag races?" I asked. "You bet," she said. She explained that her boss and one of her co-workers were going to race their cars at Gateway and she wanted to go watch. I made no comments, I asked no questions, I just responded that the drag races would be "a great idea." I didn't want to give her any reason to change her mind.

Holy Cow. How many times has your wife requested to go to the drag races? In my case, never. She wanted to spend the evening at the track, go to a car-related event. Wow, it was too good to be true.

As I planned the evening in my head, fear started to set in. I was afraid that Debbie would get bored. I felt that after she saw here two friends race that it would be "time to go." The drag races continue until 2:00 am. I didn't want to leave at 9:00, I wanted to stay late.

I had to find something else to keep her busy besides watching cars race a quarter mile. I really did think she would get bored so I called my brother-in-law, Jim, to see if he and his wife Cindy (Debbie's sister) wanted to go with us. Cindy is the diversion I needed at the track. Debbie and Cindy have the ability to talk about something, non-stop, forever. They'll keep each other busy while Jim and I watch the races.

I called Jim and his first comment was, "Debbie suggested this?" He didn't believe it either and told me I was just imaging this. After convincing him that it was on the level, he became more excited than me to head over to the track. He mentioned the idea to Cindy.

Cindy refused to go. "I don't want to go to drag races, I don't want to drive all the way to Gateway, it sounds boring, uncomfortable and something I don't want to do. Anyway, it's still 94 degrees at 7 o'clock in the evening." Cindy said she would convince Jim that he wanted go to dinner and rent a movie. At this point, it sounded like only Debbie and I were headed over to Gateway.

Ten minutes later Jim called back and told us they're going with us. I don't know what he said to convince her, but Cindy agreed to go "sweat like a farm animal" and "watch the stupid cars" at Gateway. The four of us headed over to the track (three of us happy about it).

As it turned out, the 94 degree temperature felt great. There was a constant 20-mph breeze keeping everything cooled down. It was an absolutely wonderful summer evening and the breeze kept it quite pleasant... Cindy was getting happier. We hunted down the two people from work and sat next to them in the bleachers. Both decided not to race their cars (I still don't know why) and just sat in the stands and talked to Debbie and Cindy. Jim and I went to the refreshment stand and bought everybody another beer. The only thing they sold were 24-ounce cans of Bud Light or Budweiser. After Cindy finished her beer, she relaxed and started to enjoy the races.

Things were perfect. The girls were chatting away, the weather was great. This was the chance for Jim and me to disappear. We went to get our second beer and watch the races from a closer angle. We went to the starting line for a while, we walked through the pits and talked



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to a couple of the drivers, we walked down to the finish line and watched the cars at their top end. The drag races were a lot of fun.

But then we saw a second event that I didn't know they did at Gateway. They do drifting at Midnight Madness. I've seen cars drifting on TV but I've never watched it as closely as I did that night. It was awesome to watch.

Gateway cordons off a portion of their parking lot with those big concrete highway barriers and everyday folks can pay a few bucks, drive their cars inside the area and tear the crap out of their tires. It was great! What an awesome motorsports event. Jim and I spent probably an hour and a half watching the drifters. It's quite easy to tell which cars have the V-8s instead the 4 or 6-cylinder models. The V-8s were the ones that were tough to see because of the clouds of tire smoke.

You have to understand that I like all types of car events ... from Formula 1 to demolition derbies. If there are cars involved, I'll watch. Some people consider drifting a sport that destroys your car, rips it apart and eats tires. Well, I think that's true, drifting does all that , but it's still really cool to watch. Hey, I think monster trucks jumping over school busses are cool, too, so I wasn't surprised that I enjoyed the drifting.

Midnight Madness at Gateway International was a lot of fun. All four of us had a great time, even Cindy. I doubt if we'll go back very often, but I'm still happy (and somewhat unbeliefing) that Debbie suggested it in the first place.

Story by Tom Allen

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If The Clown Shoe Fits

The start of another questionable adventure

By Brent Meyer



The day started normal enough. It was the Sunday on New Year's weekend, and I was bored. What does a car guy do on a lazy weekend when he is bored? Get online and start browsing car forums of course.

The internet is a great thing. It allows for fast communications, the sharing of knowledge, and access to limitless information about anything and everything. It is also the place where 99% of my questionable ideas start. On this particular day my Internet browsing found took me to the St. Louis BMW Club's message board. Although I'm no longer in the St. Louis area, I still have a lot of Club friends there and the message board allows me to stay in touch with them, seek their advice, and harass them.

I made my way to a normal area of interest, the Track Events & Motorsports forum, where I saw a post from a friend, that like myself had moved away from St. Louis, but still frequents the St. Louis message board. This friend, Peter, had posted about a rally/TV show that was seeking participants. I clicked on it more out of boredom than interest—how was I supposed to know that one little click of the mouse was going to change my entire year?

Peter had posted a copy of the information about the *Robin Hood Rally* he had found on different message board. The idea for the Rally was simple: Amateur racers would take to racing on closed public roads to compete for a Ferrari, Porsche, and Corvette. What made the Robin Hood Rally even more interesting was that the entire series of

events are going to be filmed and produced into a reality TV show. I must admit as I read the description of the event I was excited about it. My mind was flashing with images of blasting down public roads looking like a hero on TV at speeds that would make a fighter pilot sweat.

Now when I get worked up like this I turn to my voice of reason, my wife. I showed her the post and braced for her response. To my surprise she said the Robin Hood Rally sounds fun and I should do it. Neither she nor I had any idea what I had just gotten myself into.

This is the first in a series of articles where I will chronicle my preparation, travel, and follies for the Robin Hood Rally.

The Selection Process

I submitted my application for the Robin Hood Rally and eagerly waited for a response. It didn't take long before I received an email to schedule a phone interview. I was really getting excited! The phone interview was brief, enjoyable and informative. A few days after the phone interview, I received an invitation to come to Stamford, CT for an on-camera interview/screening. This was really exciting! I had no idea what to expect.

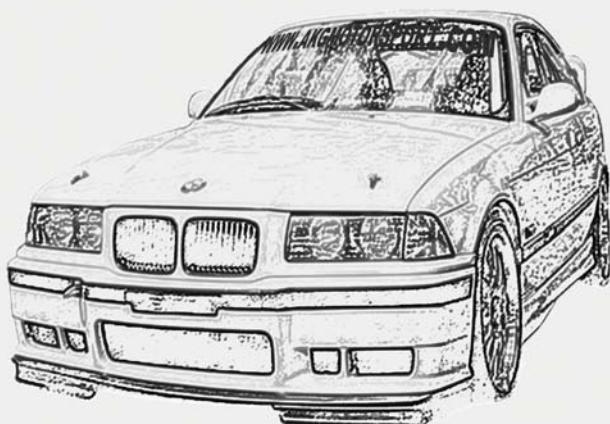
On January 27th, I arrived at the hotel in Stamford where the interviews were being conducted. I knew I was in the right place as the Taxi pulled up because there was a tube chassis classic Corvette race car in front of the hotel—



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whoa, what a cool car! As I walked in to the lobby, there were signs for the Rally and guys in race suits. I quietly slipped by them and checked into my room.

I have to admit, I was a little nervous. I decided to browse the parking garage before I checked in for my interview. As I found the level where the participants parked their cars, I was in awe! There were BMWs, Porsches, muscle cars, Ferraris, and a stunning Viper ACR. The sight of these cars also scared the crap out of me. How was I going to compete against these machines with any of my cars? This wasn't making me feel any better.

I finally mustered the courage to make my way to the interview check in. After agreeing to various non-disclosure policies and signing my life away I was greeted by several of the organizers. They were down to earth car guys. We chatted about my racing background and cars. I was beginning to relax when a guy with a clipboard appeared and started to prepare me for walking into the screening/interview room.

As the door to the screening room opened I was greeted with a scene from American Idol. There was a set with a racing seat front and center, surrounded by lights and cameras, and flanked by a panel of judges. As I took my seat in the racing shell, I felt like I was about to be interrogated, not interviewed. Someone snapped one of those black and white clapper boards in front of my face and yelled "action." I spent the next few minutes answering questions from the panel of judges. Once I had provided satisfactory answers, it was time for the judges to make their decision... I was in! I was congratulated and presented with a Robin Hood Rally hat and a Rally shirt that said "Participant" on

the back. I was ecstatic, but the realization that I needed a car to compete in brought me back to earth.

The Car

I have been road racing at an amateur level for a few years. I have a Porsche 944 Spec race car and a BMW 635CSi race car built for the 24 Hours of LeMons races. The LeMons car is a rust bucket purchased for \$300 built to compete in the LeMons series where all cars must cost \$500 or less. It's fun, but not much of a race car. The Porsche on the other hand is a great race car. It is fun, fast enough, and nimble. I was concerned that it wouldn't be enough car to compete with the likes of Corvettes and Ferraris, though. Horse power wasn't the concern, because the Rally was going to use a power to weight correction system to level the playing field. Still, I didn't think the 944 had enough suspension to really compete. There was something else to consider too—this is going to be on TV. There are over 50 competitors and I want to ensure that my car gets some air time to promote my sponsors.

I do have one car that could fit the bill: a 2002 BMW M Coupe.

The M Coupe was a rebel, not only in looks but also in how it was designed. As legend has it, the M Coupe was developed by a group of BMW engineers on napkins in a pub while consuming large amounts of warm German beer. In a state of alcohol fueled creativity these engineers had a divine vision of a Z3 converted into a fixed roof, fire breathing monster. OK, so the details about where these engineers were and what they were drinking isn't clear, but this is how I like to imagine it. (And it explains a lot about the car.) What is unique about the car is that it was

conceived and designed by these engineers. It wasn't the product of customer surveys and brand managers. It was designed for one purpose—to go fast around Germany's fabled Nurburgring.

The lack of corporate support for the M Coupe probably contributed to the low production numbers. The car, produced from 1999-2002, was only copied and sold 6300 times in the entire world. For the final year just over 300 were sold here in North America.

The M Coupe is one of the most polarizing cars that BMW has ever produced. Most people either love the aesthetics it or hate them. From the front the BMW looks like a standard BMW with the kidney grills and four headlights, but the back half looks like a cross between an MG and a Porsche. There's no doubt it is a funny looking car. It is known to both the people that love and hate it as the "clown shoe."

Drivers are divided on it too. The M Coupe doesn't drive like any other BMW. It drives more like an old Porsche 911. Despite the odd handling there is no debating that the car is fast on a road circuit. When it debuted in Europe in 1998 it could lap the Nurburgring faster than the current competing Porsche 911.

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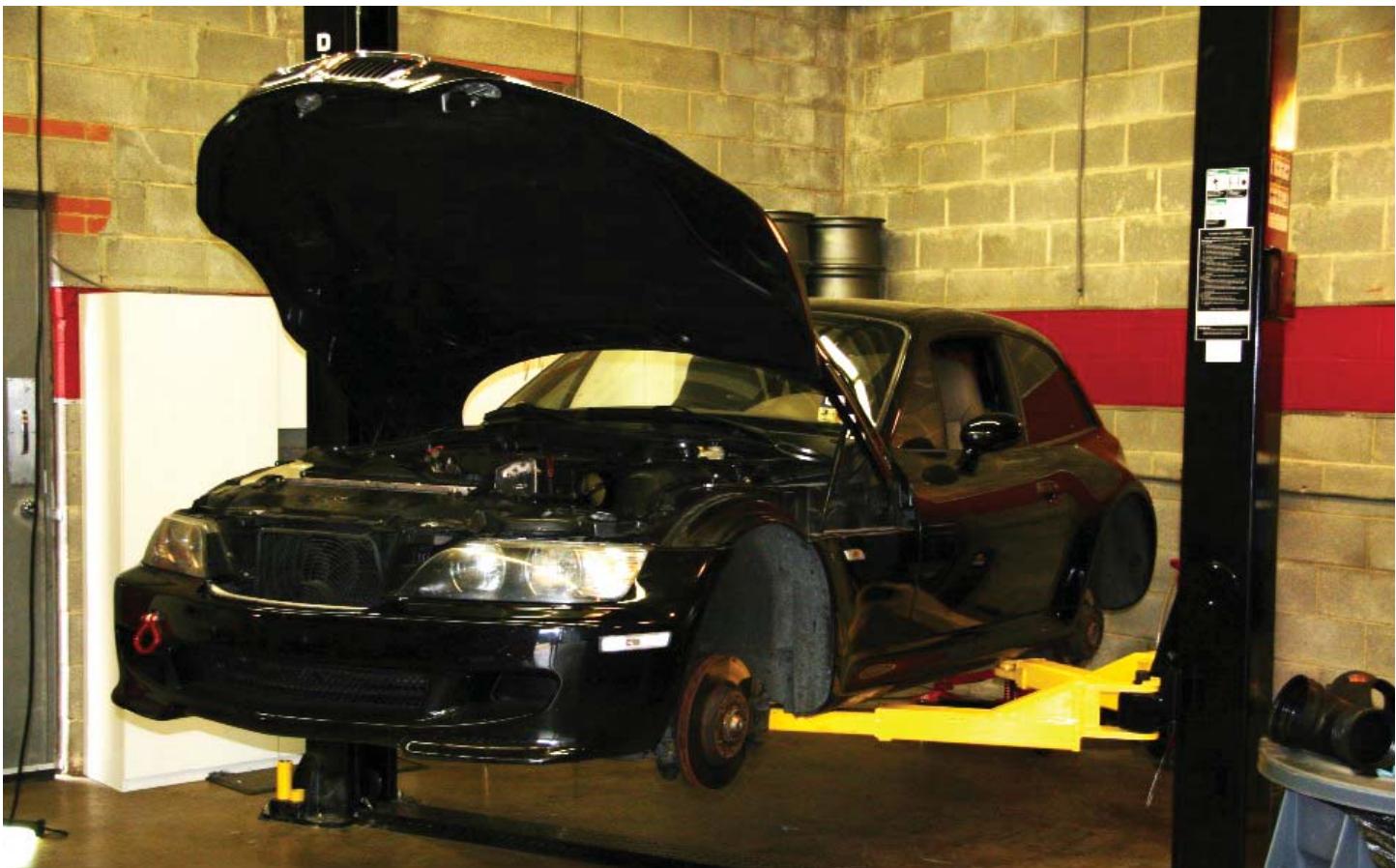
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The M Coupe is a capable car, but to truly be competitive it needs something more. To make this already great car better I turned to my own shop, Clown Shoe Motorsports, and my title sponsor, Autowerks of America. I didn't have a lot of time to complete this build, so I relied heavily on Autowerks of America's great selection of aftermarket parts to transform my M Coupe.

Knowing that additional power would just be negated by the leveling formula, I focused on handling. I selected the KW Clubsport coilover kit as the foundation of my suspension upgrades. KW isn't as well known here in the US as it is in Europe, but in Europe KW has made a name for itself for their excellent race performance. To ensure that the suspension was doing the work and the geometry was staying consistent, I firmed up the car with AKG bushings and chassis reinforcements.

The other area of performance I could change without changing horse power output was in stopping power. I didn't have the budget for a big brake kit, so I opted for Pagid RS 14 Black race pads, brass caliper guides, stainless steel brake lines, and Motul 600 fluid. The brass calipers greatly improve the feel and feedback of the stock brakes and the Pagid pads provide amazing brake torque and are resistant to fade.

The most important area of improvement was safety. I wanted to ensure that I lived long enough to be able to tell lies about how good I did, so I enlisted Izzy's Custom Cages in St. Louis to build a custom 4-point rollbar. I also installed more supportive Sparco seats and 5-point G-Force harnesses. The harnesses were especially important to me, because they are required for the use of my HANS device. In simple terms, the HANS ensures that my head stays attached to my spine if I'm in a wreck. That's good, because I'm rather fond of my head and all the crazy ideas that spew from it.

In the end, I couldn't resist adding a little power under the hood. I added a few bolt-ons that should bring the power up to the 340-350hp range. As of the writing of this article, I haven't been back on the dyno to see for sure. I will find out at the next Robin Hood Rally event, because a dyno is required for each car.

Almost all the new bits: KW Suspension, AKG Bushings, Pagid pads, Sparco seats, G-Force belts, OEM replacement parts, stainless steel brake lines, etc. all came from my sponsor Autowerks of America. I can't thank these guys enough for their support, technical knowledge, and assistance in the build processes.



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Transmission	Stock ZF Type C 5 Speed Manual AKG Polyurethane 80A Transmission Mounts
Suspension	KW Clubsport Coilover Kit (Dual Adjustable - 675# F/ Progressive R – with KW Camber plates) Ground Control E36 Racing Front Swaybar Treehouse Racing Front Control Arm Bushings\Brackets AKG Polyurethane 75D Adjustable Trailing Arm Bushings AKG Solid Aluminum Rear Subframe Bushings AST Rear Shock Mounts Stock Rear Swaybar
Brakes	Stock Calipers Pagid RS 14 Black Race Pads (F/R) Brass Caliper Bushings Stainless Steel Brake Lines
EngineFinal Drive	3.73 Limited Slip Differential (Stock 25% Lockup) AKG Polyurethane 75D Differential Bushing
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Chassis	Rear Unibody/Subframe Reinforcements Rear Swaybar Mount Reinforcement Boxed Differential Mount Mason Engineering Front Strut Bar
Safety	4-Point Rollbar Sparco Chrono Road Seats G-Force 5-Point Harnesses
Wheels/Tires	SSR Comp Wheels (17x8.5 F / 17x9.5 R) Nitto NT01 Tires (255/40-17 F / 275/40-17 R) Vorshlag 75mm Wheel Stud Kit Vorshlag 12mm Spacer (Front)
Curb Weight	3104 lbs (w/o driver, full tank of gas)

The Robin Hood Rally will begin airing this October on the Versus (VS.) cable network. Versus is available in the St. Louis area on Charter channel 45, DISH Network channel 151, and DIRECTV channel 603.

For additional information on my progress in the Robin Hood Rally visit: www.clownshoemotorsports.com, www.autowerksfamerica.com, and www.robinhoodrally.com.

Story and Photos by Brent "BJ" Meyer



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Member Connections



Each issue, we profile a member's vehicle with the objective of providing information, enjoyment and perhaps some ideas for your ride. If you are a member and would like to have your vehicle considered to be profiled, contact John at jch197@charter.net. Not a member? No problem, contact our membership chairman Alex at membership@stlbmwcca.org to learn how easy it is to join our club and enjoy all our benefits.

For your enjoyment in this issue: **Frederick Ricker**

Series:	E46
Model:	330i ZHP, 6 speed Manual
Category:	"Daily Driver"
Year:	2003
Color:	Exterior-Imola Red ; Interior-Black Leather
Performance modifications:	
ZHP option comes with tweaked horsepower and torque, tighter suspension, special wheels, Alcantara Steering Wheel. Frederick added an M3 front strut tower brace.	
Exterior modifications:	
ZHP option comes with special front bumper, side skirts, lip spoiler and rear diffuser.	

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A Product Review

This might help us enjoy our driving a bit more

By ML Hillard



Most of us get into our cars, buckle up and use the stock, three-point seat belt. And most of us enjoy “driving” our Bimmers rather spirited, as it were. There in lies a small problem, at least for me. A brief explanation and then the review.

For over 25 years now, I have become accustomed to the feel of my 6-point race harness that, when belted in, you simply do not move in the seat. You become one with the car--a great feeling. But on the street, I was limited to the 3 point factory belt crossover. Some might have a race seat in their street car, but for most of us, it's been factory stock belting. Also, in a well prepared British street car, I used an early SCCA-type, lever action race belt; but it was lap only, and in selling that car, the buyer friend wanted “those belts.” When I bought a BMW Z3, I thought of getting that lever style lap belt again, but with pulling seats, and all that extra work, I simply did not do it. Then moving into the Z4si, again I missed the extra secure lap belt feeling; especially on great roads—or just being “planted” whenever. The stock system is secure, but not planted. Now, the solution...

I came across the CG-Lock race belt “style” buckle for street application; The photo above gives you an idea. It is a simple but ingenious device that securely attaches to the current seat belt “tongue”, the little rascal that actually inserts into the factory clip at the seat’s side. The CG Lock is in two pieces, and when installed, the belt is placed on the lower half, into the “locking” devise, and it sandwiched into a roller-vise by the top half. Allen screws secure the CG Lock to the tongue [very nicely done in about 3-4 minutes—less, if you are younger]. Total installation was maybe 10 minutes considering the fiddle factor.

Getting in, you click-attach the belt in as normal. Nothing changes there. If you like it in the comfort mode, then leave

the clip alone. BUT, if you wish a bit more seat security, i.e. being more “one with the car,” then merely reach down, pull the top belt [the one coming across the chest as normal], and give it tug across your lap—as much tug as you like. You will be cinched or “planted” in the seat to your desire, much like a race harness. Want it a bit less, then just press the side lever and the roller releases the tension. It in no way hinders or tightens the across-chest/shoulder belt, but only cinches the lap for a better seat grip.

When getting out, you merely press the factory release as normal. This little CG-Lock does not change the way you clip or release the belt--that operation stays the same for you or any one using the car. It merely lets you cinch up as tight as you like--when you wish.

I installed one on Mrs. H’s new X3 and she loves it. I now have them on both seats of the Z4 for our spirited drives. The company has a quick change model for auto instructors. It would be a boon to High Performance School instructing where we are at the mercy of a stock belt, and often are “slip-slidden” in the passenger seat. Get in, use it; get out, take it with you.

I got them from BavAuto at \$49.95 [catalog shows \$39 but is a misprint they said]. And no, I am not affiliated in any way with BavAuto. I know Steve Warren of AWA [Auto-Works of America] one of our great club sponsors plans on stocking them as well.

All in all, it is a “nifty mod” that contributes to my continual driving experience. And the ROI on this is one of the few car attachments that bring a far greater return than it cost. Hope this helps someone feel a bit more secure in life. That’s always a good thing.

Story and Photo by ML Hillard

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Senior Coffee

By Tom Allen



This coming January, I'm going to have my 60th birthday. I don't think I'm happy about that. I don't feel like I'm 60, I don't act 60, I don't think 60. My body is turning 60, but my attitudes and opinions are still at least 20 years younger. It's just the way I am.

Don't get me wrong, it's great to be alive and a big part of me is looking forward to this event. The alternative of not turning 60 is not at all pleasant, so my public approach is to keep saying, "it's good to get old." But deep inside, I feel like 60 is the end of middle aged and beginning of old age, for you hockey fans, it's the beginning of the third period. You get the idea, this bugs me a bit.

I was driving to Columbia, Missouri the other day to help my son move into a new apartment. On the way there, I pulled off the highway to get a cup of coffee. I got into the drive-thru line at McDonalds.

"Good Morning, may I take your order," the young girl said over the McDonalds intercom.

"Just a small cup of coffee, please," I responded.

She told me that the total would be \$.89 and I should pull around to the first window.

I waited for the two cars ahead of me, gathered \$.89 worth of change out of my ashtray and finally pulled up to the first window to pay. The girl at the window looked at me and said, "Oh, you should have said that you wanted a 'senior' coffee. Coffee for seniors is only \$.54."

"Lovely," I thought, "Now I have random strangers reminding me of my age."

I was kind, pleasant and appreciative that this young lady saved me \$.35. I re-counted my change, paid her and pulled forward to wait for window number 2. As I was pulling away, she repeated, "Don't forget, next time just ask for senior coffee."

The young man at window number 2 was happy, professional and did his job filling my order. After I declined his offer of cream and sugar, I confided in this kid, "Man, I'm a little bummed out that I now qualify for the senior coffee. It was good to save a little money, but your co-worker at window number 1 just reminded of a milestone birthday coming up."

The kid was pretty cool. He looked at me and said something along the line of, "You're only as old as you feel. Don't let age bum you out. It's good to be alive." He handed me my coffee, I put it in my drink holder and as I was starting to pull away, the kid saved me. He stuck his head out the window, looked up and down, and said, "Hey, one more thing, dude, cool car, I wish I could drive one like that."

At this point, my emotions did a 180-degree turn. I thanked the kid for the compliment, drove away from window number 2 in my BMW "cool car" sipping my tasty senior coffee. The birthday is yet to come and there may be other "you're getting older" situations, but my thanks to the two kids at McDonalds, one saved me thirty-five cents and the other brought back my smile.

Story by Tom Allen

Photo by Mike Allen

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Club Events



This Issue's Event: **Sonic Drive-In Car Show Day**

On June 12, 2010, the St. Louis BMW Club held another Sonic Drive-In Car Show Day. We met for a few hours at the Sonic Drive-In at the corner of Big Bend and Sulphur Springs Road in Ballwin. Throughout the day we had approximately 30 cars attend. Our next Sonic Car Show Day is scheduled for the same place on Saturday, October 2, 2010 starting at noon.

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