

# *Der Sonnenfleck*

## *Sunshine Bimmers Newsletter*

*Spring 2013*

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### **BMW as Yard Art**

“He’s dead, Jim.” No, that’s not quite right. Jim said, “He’s dead.” “Jim” is Jim Shoemaker, husband of Deborah Pandeline and a race car mechanic of some note. What he was talking about was my race car, and the source of its demise was a bearing failure that likely resulted from oil starvation during the third race at Sebring at the end of April. My car was brain-dead. The body was whole but it couldn’t do anything. With that diagnosis comes the decision to repair or replace. The answer is inside....



### **Old Is Beautiful**

Since this is ultimately a car magazine, we have pictures of cars. This month’s theme is BMW’s past. On the top left is the 2002 owned by Jim Shoemaker & Deborah Pandeline, which won the People’s Choice Award at the recent All-

Florida Chapter Picnic. This photo is from the earlier Car Show at Field’s Lakeland, where they were also a winning entry. Above is a close-up view of a Bavaria taillight taken at the April Cars & Coffee event sponsored by

Chapter member Gary Meredith. No official prizes are awarded at this event, but this was certainly the oldest BMW present. Of course, there were yet older cars from the USA and other countries.

Directly to the right is a shark, a 6-series BMW that represented the pinnacle of BMW's top-forward front-end design approach, and the 635 CSi was the hottest version. Bob Lutz (yes, *that* Bob Lutz) had a hand in the design while working at BMW before joining GM. He refused to raise the height of the car in order make it easier to enter.



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## President's Column

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In the last issue, I talked about washing my own car and concluded by asking for feedback from Chapter members about their own practices. Everyone who responded said they also wash their own cars. One particularly particular member sent photos and numerous e-mails about waxing wheels. They looked good, but that was a step past where I wanted to go.

I also wrote that I never wash my wife's car, which is an "alternative" German-made brand. I violated that policy when she returned from Sarasota, where she had hosted a group of high school girls comprising the Boone Crew Team. It seems the race venue was under construction, which means it was a sand pit with dried grass. The inside of the car looked like it had been used for hauling said materials, so I was compelled to step in and

clean the devil machine. I justified this magnanimous act by telling myself I was saving my own BMW and the Audi's garage mate from being soiled. Plus, I was saving myself the cost of buying her new front wheels, because the brake dust was reaching legendary levels. This must be a general German manufacturer problem.

***The Rest of the Story***

OK, back to the story of my race car, which is a 2002 330i (photo on last page). I have been working on this car for about 14 months, which means I have done some of the work and I have paid others to do the rest. I bought it as a track day substitute for my 2009 MINI Cooper S, which was a combination street and track car.

Like most front-wheel-drive cars, the MINI was hard on front brakes and tires. I

don't think I ever made it through an entire weekend without wearing out one or both of these items. The car holds the Sebring record for the hottest brake pad temperature recorded during a test day: 1700 degrees. This is hot enough to soften the backing plate sufficiently to let the pad turn into a U-shaped piece of metal, with lots of pad on the edges and none in the middle. (Note to self: Don't just look at the edge of the pads to see whether they are good to go out in the next session.)

The problem with the MINI is that it responds very well to sticky tires. The Hoosier R6 race tires generated a lot of grip, which let me use a lot of brake pedal pressure. It was fun but expensive and frustrating. So I wanted a different car for the track. I wanted a trouble-free car. I needed a real BMW.

The solution came via a final payment for an IT consulting job I did for Boulder County, Colorado. I looked at it as found money and decided to put the money toward a track car. I bought the 330i in March 2012 for \$4,200 and started replacing parts. I got the 330i on track for the first time back in October. It was no faster than the MINI but it didn't wear out everything. So I thought I was in good shape, except for one thing.

There was a problem with fuel starvation in Turn 17, a long right-hand 180-degree corner that highlights one of the shortcomings of the basic BMW fuel tank—the pickup inlet and fuel pump are on the right side. A big right-hand turn puts all the fuel on the left side of the tank. The fix is a little fuel bucket you put next to the fuel pump. Installing this part provided an opportunity for me and Jim to work on the car, as he got to do it right the second time.

Then it was back on the track in April at Sebring at another NASA event. This time I was running time trials, which is sort of a race where the winner is the one with the fastest lap. I was first in my class in the first session, then second in the next two—and the guy who beat me set a track record.

During the third track session I noticed some of the cars I had been passing were now passing me, so I brought the car into the pits just before the session ended. That's when I heard a strange rhythmic noise. Not very loud, but clearly audible.

Going through the paddock to impound was when the oil pressure light came on. (I checked the in-car video; it was not on when I was on the track.) And that was it. I should have known something like this would happen. After all, my steel blue car was a different color from all the other cars on the track. (Trekksers will know the crew members on the away team with differently colored uniforms were the ones most likely to be killed within 30 seconds of beaming down.)

I packed all the track stuff into the car and drove it over to the Chateau Elan for the tow back to Orlando. (I didn't want AAA to think I was actually racing the car.) I rode back to Orlando with the tow truck driver, parked it in the driveway, and drove the other BMW, my 2009 328i, to Sebring Saturday night to finish my gig as driving instructor on Sunday.

I could not fight the urge to see what my street car would do on the track, so I put a set of numbers on it and took the car out for HPDE 4, which has the same driving rules as a race session: pass anywhere without a point-by. OEM brakes, run-flat tires, 100% showroom stock. It didn't take long to get used to the paddle shifters, but the tires and brakes gave up after a few laps. I was 10 seconds a lap slower, but I was on the track and was able to show my student where he needed to be in a few corners.

I don't currently plan to fix the 330i. I may sell it as a parts car for someone else to enjoy or just wait for the lottery to justly reward me and buy a motor. Hmm. Just 10 seconds slower. I wonder if my track tires and the brakes from the 330i will fit the 328i. After all, they are still in great shape.

Al Butler  
President

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## My Factory Delivery Experience

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When I was in my late teens and early 20's I raced a souped-up VW in Glen Region SCCA gymkhanas. I had a great time. The only car in my class that made me crazy was the BMW 2002. They were always a big challenge to beat. Thus started my fascination with BMW.

Flash forward 30+ years. I was the SRD at Mainland High School, and between school dismissal and the start of the football game, or the basketball game, I would load up in my patrol car and go to Fields BMW in Daytona and browse. How excited was I at the sight of the first 330i! That was faster. The 335i was a rocket-sled dream, and the 330d was so practical. And I am sure that the salesmen would be rolling their eyes and saying here he comes again.

While helping my daughter look for a car, I suggested an X3. She bought a used one. If you are keeping score that is kids one Bimmer, dad none. Then my son, a newly minted engineering grad from ERAU got an engineering job at SpaceX. He went and bought a brand new loaded twin-turbo X3. Score kids 2, dad 0.

After one of my daughters totaled my Civic I can remember my wife saying that her 16 year old son was not going to be driving around in a 225 horsepower BMW! I never did get how a 240 horse V6 Accord was acceptable. Still don't.

But now the kids were gone. They moved on with degrees and careers of their own. It was my time. I agonized. I must have used "Build My Own BMW" 500 times. I was going to get an M-sport 328i, but the M-sport bumper wasn't big enough to house the active cruise control electronics. So I settled on a 335i sport. It made perfect sense to me. I ordered it during the first week of October 2012, thus insuring November production and the updated CPU, memory, and computer graphics. My car does not park itself (please!), doesn't have the up and down sunshades, and has heated front seats, not the cold weather package. It has everything else.



Now it only made sense to me to take delivery at the BMW Performance Center. So on January 3rd, 2013, I presented my ID to the airport clerk in Orlando to fly to GSP with Patty, my 28 year old daughter. In what seemed a very bad omen, the clerk dropped my license into a crack between counters, and it disappeared. Gone! When I stood my ground it was finally retrieved and we moved on. I wasn't buying that they would do a work order and get it tomorrow.

GSP is a cute little airport. It was even better when the X5 arrived to bring us to the hotel. It still smelled new! The Marriott was very nice and the staff was friendlier than at any hotel that I have ever stayed at. After settling into our room we had the urge to explore downtown. The hotel driver deposited us in Greenville where we explored and shopped (remember a 28 year old female with me). There was a Starbucks too. (See previous note.) There is a river with a waterfall right in the middle



of town with a park, and the architecture was pretty neat, even to neophyte like me. Oh did I mention that the ride to town was in an equally new 7 series? When we were done with Greenville we were scooped up in the 7 series and whisked back to the hotel in time for our dinner reservations.



Giatu, the hotel restaurant was outstanding. We each got the romaine salad that was the size of a small houseboat, and Patty got a NY strip with a side of mac and cheese. That wasn't the way it was offered, but the mac and cheese came very highly recommended and they made allowances. I got a Cajun macaroni and shrimp and sausage and chicken dish that was also superb. The whole dining experience was great, and BMW picked up the tab! After a great night of sleep (yes I

was surprised that I slept) we returned to Giatu for the breakfast buffet. I do not overstate when I say that it was the best breakfast buffet that I have ever seen. Again, BMW picked up the tab.

We rode to the Performance Center in vans, after being duly warned that the college kid in our presence thought that he and dad were just coming for a driving school, and had no clue that dad had bought him an X1.

Once at the Performance Center we deposited all of our suitcases and gear at the front desk where it was guarded for us. We had a briefing in a classroom which was basically good morning everyone, congratulations on joining the BMW family and let's go drive the heck out of BMW's cars.





We were split up into groups and placed into the same model car that we had purchased. Patty and I settled into a 335i. Our first adventure was to the handling course. It was a twisty, turny, uphill, downhill, course and was well marked for the neophyte. I went first and the instructor had to keep slowing me up to keep distance between me and the car in front of me. Then he figured out that I would space myself and just let me go. I had a good time. Patty thought that the end was near. I was just having fun! Patty took her turn and was getting noticeably faster and more comfortable when we moved on to the braking course.

There we faced a narrow chute created with cones that forced us to turn to the left. When you hit the first cones, you floor the brake, and steer to the left (avoiding the fictitious object to the front). This is to teach proper antilock brake usage. For me it was old hat. I kind of made a mistake and went 60 on one of my 50mph runs. Still no problem at all. Patty was timid

at first, and then turned all smiles when she nailed it. I have that on video.

Then to the skid pad. I went first. The stability control was ceremoniously turned off and we went around and were commanded to floor it. Of course I fought it and regained control. We did it a few times and I asked do you want me to lose it? Yes he did. I stopped fighting and started spinning. Then the stability control was engaged and no matter how you floored it the car (computer) did the fighting and you just kept driving around in circles.

I remember at one point the instructor saying, "Floor it! Floor it!" I said, "It is floored!" The point taken is there would have to be a really critical reason to ever push that button off...ever. Then Patty did it. For her first floor it sequence, she did a 720. Yes, two complete and connected 360's. E ticket ride. That is on video too. Everyone was laughing, cheering, and clapping. She took a bow when she exited the car to more clapping and cheering.



Then there was the "Hot Track." The hot track was professionally driven in

an M5 with no desire to beat a clock, just to get sideways and have fun. It was a ball. I told Patty that she couldn't do this on the way home. I swear there are three people laughing on the video. You finish in the skid pad where the driver does a 360 ending up pointing at the exit and guns it out of there. It was a lot of fun. As we left the skid pad, Patty wanted to know if we could do it again.



By now they had figured out that I was a retired deputy and the reserve deputy Product Specialist delivered my car to me. I think that he spent about two hours adjusting and setting and explaining and I had a pretty good idea of how to make it go. As an example of his thoroughness, my key opens all four doors when I put my hand on the handle, figuring that I could handle anyone trying to jump in (plug your ears), while my wife's key only opens that door that she touches.

Lunch was another culinary delight. Potato & cheese soup caught my eye and was excellent. I also got some sausage. Picking up a German car it only makes sense to go the whole enchilada, potato soup and sausage. South Carolina being in the South insured a steady supply of sweet tea. There were choices for everyone. Take what was displayed or they would cook for you. Salad bars, and topping bars for those who got burgers and well, right on par with breakfast. Candy bars, and granola bars, fresh fruit, oh my. Meanwhile

the college kid is still clueless. After lunch it was his turn to get his car delivered. We all watched. Patty asked the dad if he would consider any adoptions.



Since the factory was closed for Christmas break, we went out and did the off-road course in X5's. That was fun. Through the water, up the hill, stop balanced up on two wheels, down the hill with hill descent engaged. Yeah, it was all fun.



Then on to the Zentrum Museum in our own cars, with an X5 in the lead. They waited for the sidewalk to clear and then drove us right up the sidewalk to the door, pointing out the best location for photos with the car before we left. At the museum we were on our own, and free to leave when we were ready. That is a museum that you don't want to rush. When the time came we took our pictures, and hit the road.



As we motored through South Carolina, without using the cruise control, flooring it, or revving over 4000 rpm, Patty turned to me and said, "Dad". I said "Yes," and she said. "For my whole life this is one of my top ten days ever." I pondered on how great a day it had been, and wondered why anyone would get a Bimmer any other way, except maybe European delivery, hmmm....

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### *The President's 330i*



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## **Report on the BMW CCA South Atlantic Region Congress Atlanta, Georgia, March 8-10, 2013**

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BMW CCA conducts an annual Chapter Congress to get the chapters working together and in a consistent manner. It is also an opportunity for extensive discussions between the National Office, Club leaders, and the chapters. On alternating years, CCA conducts the Congress at a national level and a regional level.

George Poelker and I attended this year's event, which involved only the chapters in the South Atlantic Region. (Patrick Spikes was also there for the concurrent Club Racing Forum.) The agenda was wide ranging. We wanted to share the experience with all our Chapter members so you would better understand

the direction we are trying to go. This report provides the major points of the Congress:

- We must build value into the membership experience and manage expectations in order to build loyalty. Loyalty, which means the Chapter becomes the member's expected source of automotive camaraderie, is required to retain members. Our competition is not other social organizations and car clubs but other activities that require time commitments from our members.
- Membership retention in the first two years is the key to membership growth, as it takes two years to develop loyalty. After that, 80%-90% of members will



renew regularly for many years. BMW CCA loses about the same number of existing members as join each year, with most of the losses being first- and second-year members. We don't have a problem getting new members. We have a problem keeping new members. It is not our goal to just grow.

Membership retention is a measure of Club performance. Keeping members is a sign the Club is meeting their expectations; i.e., they are satisfied.

- New members join with much higher expectations for their participation than they actually have time to achieve. Typically, the members who fail to renew never attended an event.
- Building the brand is a continuous process. Each bad experience is described to 11 people. Each good experience is shared with 3 people. Predictable events conducted in a consistent manner lower the risk of membership. **Action Item:** We need to develop a how-to guide for conducting common events so new leaders know what to do.
- **Action Item:** We need a written protocol to follow for engaging new members. A **Membership Committee** may be useful to retain new members. Committee members would be responsible for preparing the new member package and directly contacting each new member. The Committee may also be useful to contact first- and second-year members in the month before renewal in order to get feedback on membership experience and encourage renewal.
- There is a basic generational difference in how members relate to the Club and to each other. Older members (baby boomers, 48 and older) join committees, like structure, plan for events, and normally act the way the Club expects. Gen-X and Gen-Y (under 48) are less likely to join, prefer little or no structure, and are more spontaneous. Compared to older members, younger members

make few long-term commitments; don't like paper; are poor users of e-mail but major users of texting; expect to be asked their opinion but don't necessarily expect it to be followed; and see environmental and social issues as more important. They prefer events and meet-ups with little lead time. CCA admitted that the need for spontaneity was in conflict with insurance regulations (e.g., 30-day advance notice) for chapters to actually be spontaneous. For example, we cannot just decide to go on a driving tour after a dinner because the tour requires insurance coverage.

- CCA provides a uniform chapter landing page on the Club's website for each chapter with access through a map interface. **Action Item:** We must increase our utilization of this webpage, which is intended to meet the contractual obligations of each chapter. All named Chapter officers have administrative rights to alter the page's content.
- **Action Item:** We must have a better Chapter website. Our current offering does not meet the minimum standards of the Club, nor does it provide the level of interaction required by younger members. We need to post the Chapter Newsletter, our Bylaws, the Regional Newsletter, and event photos on our website. We have solicited proposals from qualified local contractors and expect to get the new website in place by July.
- **Action Item:** We need a stronger newsletter. This issue is an example of where we want to go, with more content and hopefully more frequent production.
- **Action Item:** More content and increased frequency of newsletter publication and website updates mean we need more people providing it. Members have to contribute articles, photos, and stories to both the

newsletter and the website for these products to remain interesting.

- We have a lot of new BMW car models to accommodate among our members. Where BMW made nine models 15 years ago, they now offer more than 60. What do we expect people who own an X3 or Z4 to do? What events do we offer people who don't do the stuff we have always done? **Action Item:** We might think about doing stereotype profiles on the Chapter website and list the Chapter activities the person might like. Our idea about a sunrise to sunset weekend driving tour got good reviews during the chapter event brainstorming session.
- CCA requires each chapter to use a Post Office box as their permanent address. I complained about the post office box requirement as being "old school" and a costly expense. All other chapters said they never get any mail through their post office box address, but CCA insists that it is needed in order to provide a permanent address. They could not, however, explain why we needed a permanent address. What they could do is tell me that our present arrangement is not compliant. It has to be a real post office box in a real post office. They did say we only had to check it once a month. So, I went rogue and turned in a chapter report recently that lists a street address as our permanent chapter mailing address. They did not reject it. In fact, they updated CCA's website to show this address. **Action Item:** We will keep the drop box address a little longer to see if anyone notices.
- **Action Item:** We should offer members the option of listing additional e-mail addresses for receiving Chapter correspondence. This will require some work, as we presently get a single member e-mail address from CCA each month. Perhaps we can do something on the new website.

- **Action Item:** I plan to add content to our future website that describes how we operate, like our main source of funding coming from a \$15.30 rebate per chapter member.
- CCA wants us to solicit member feedback after every event. CCA itself will soon start conducting polls of our members to see what the level of satisfaction is with the chapter experience. Poor performance will result in sanctions after the first year.
- We are required to secure CCA insurance coverage for every event sponsored by the Chapter and get each participant to sign the insurance waiver. This applies to car shows, tours, and any other events involving driving as a component. (CCA has clarified that merely driving to the event as a means of personal transportation does not justify insurance and waivers.)
- **Action Item:** We need to find sub-chapter contacts for various parts of our geographic area. We cover a lot of ground. (BTW, I intend to create a chapter map for our new website.) We need to have an event leader in Brevard County, Ocala, and other population centers away from Orlando to conduct more local events. A **Social Events Committee** should be formed.
- **Action Item:** The Chapter should host a Street Survival new driver training school and other track-related events.
- **Action Item:** The Chapter should work with others in the South Atlantic Region to revive Winterfest at Roebing Road Raceway for 2014.

Please contact me to volunteer to help on any of the 12 action items or to join one of the listed new Chapter committees. Your participation in Chapter activities and operation is the only way we can have a successful Club.

AI Butler  
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## Sunshine Bimmers Mission Statement

The mission of the BMW CCA Sunshine Bimmers Chapter is to promote our members' interest in motoring and touring activities and to generally promote safe and skilful driving.

## Vision Statement

To be a reliable source of information to enhance the BMW ownership experience.

## Values

Provide a diverse, friendly, transparent, and safe educational and social environment for members.

## Goals

1. Member satisfaction, recruitment, and retention -
  - a. 20% retention of new members past 2 year point.
  - b. 90% renewal rate for members past 2 year point.
2. Effective communication -
  - a. Live call to each new member.
  - b. Timely newsletter; use e-mail communications for events.

- c. Follow-up email to all renewing members.
- d. Email to all non-renewing members inviting them back and soliciting feedback.

3. Diversity of activities to appeal to a broad range of member interests.
4. Provide educational opportunities to members relating to operating and maintaining their BMW automobiles.

## Description of Chapter for BMW CCA Website

The Sunshine Bimmers Chapter is one of 16 in the South Atlantic Region of the BMW Car Club of America. Membership consists of enthusiasts from the central Florida area. The mission of the BMW CCA Sunshine Bimmers Chapter is to promote interest in motoring and touring activities and to promote safe and skilful driving. We attempt to enhance the BMW ownership experience through camaraderie, education and social interaction. Members can choose from a variety of events, such as on-track driving schools, adult and teen car control clinics, social gatherings, tech sessions, wine tastings, car shows, dinners, tours, open houses, and a variety of other activities.

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**NOTICE:** *Der Sonnenfleck* is a publication of the BMW Car Club of America Sunshine Bimmers Chapter and is in no way associated with BMW AG nor BMW NA. The mission of the Sunshine Bimmers Chapter is to promote an interest in motoring and touring activities, and to promote safe and skillful driving. BMW CCA and this Chapter are not-for-profit organizations. Reports, ideas, suggestions, and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not of the BMW Car Club of America or the Sunshine Bimmers Chapter. The Club assumes no responsibility for any of the information contained herein. Modifications to vehicles within the warranty period may void the warranty.

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**BMW Car Club  
of America  
Sunshine Bimmers**



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## Upcoming Events

Teutonic Tuesday at OLV World Café, Orlando on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month; contact Al Butler for information.

Check the chapter website, [www.sunshinebimmers.org](http://www.sunshinebimmers.org), for a complete calendar of events.