



THE
HEART
of
DIXIE
BMW CAR CLUB
NEWSLETTER

BMW IM HERZEN DES SUDENS

BMW IN THE HEART OF THE SOUTH

TIGERS FOR TOMORROW FUN RUN

So there he sat, Furry, peering from behind his rock to see if we were of interest. I suppose Furry sees plenty of people and not even the BMW club was all that interesting. Our guide, Wilbur ran up the hill to the higher side of Furry's cage to see if he could get a response. Sure enough Furry was glad to see our guide and came bounding out to greet him. As Wilbur ran down the hill, toward us, I was struck at how fast an African Lion could be and I'm sure Furry wasn't even pushing his limits. Furry, named for his luxuriant black mane, stopped by the fence, only 3-4 feet from us and let out a greeting that Wilbur knew to be that of a friend. He and Furry have known each other for a long time and apparently have a good understanding of each other.

That was how it went for most of our visit to *Tigers for Tomorrow* just outside of Gadsden. *Tigers for Tomorrow* at Untamed Mountain offers shelter to many exotic animals that should never have been kept as pets, plus retired show animals. All are free to live out their existence in comfortable surroundings and are well separated from

(continued on page 3)



Our guide, Wilbur demonstrates that turning his back to an aggressive tiger triggers an attempted attack.



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It is the first of March as I write this and this year looks like it will be fun for HOD members. We've got some fun events to attend and two of them are new to us. I attended a dinner meeting at the Barber Museum where they covered the new events for 2010 and one was a total surprise.

Of course number one is the IRL race in April and here are a few things you need to know. The crowd is expected to be BIG! If you haven't gotten your corral pass you better do it soon. Parking is going to be limited so you could end up riding the bus from the Birmingham Dog Track if you are not careful. We'll be emailing a map of the track so everybody will know where to go. It is different this year and we will not have a tent like we have in the past, but we will have a couple of pop-ups in the corral area.

Number two, and the big surprise, is the *Legends of Motorsports* event to be held at Barber on May 21-23. This is the premier for the event and is a gathering for owners (and admirers) of historic race cars. There will be corral parking for club members and a hospitality tent for all club members. Details will be sent out as we get more information and schedule info. You can find info at their website: www.legendsofmotorsports.com.

If you've attended any of the Walter Mithey events at Road Atlanta I think this will be similar. The entire event is run by Bobby Rahal's organization and they signed Mario Andretti as the Grand Marshall for the weekend. We'll keep everybody up to date as we obtain more information. An email will go out to all our members as soon as we have the date for ticket sales.

The very next weekend after the *Legends of Motorsports* event is our Memorial Day DE. Very fortunately we'll have another racing school this year for all you aspiring club racers or for those who want to experience what a race would be like but have no intention of every being a club racer. All the forms and details are available on the club website (www.albmwcca.org) under the DE section. Registration is available at: www.MotorsportReg.com.

Ron

**ARE YOU RECEIVING EMAIL UPDATES FROM THE BMW CLUB?**

If not, then we may have an incorrect email address on file for you. We communicate details and updates about our events by email. Many emails bounce back as undeliverable. If your address, phone number, email information has changed, then please update it with BMW CCA National. You can do this online at www.bmwcca.org or call 864-250-0022.

TIGERS FOR TOMORROW FUN RUN (CONTINUED)

their predator neighbors. It is an unusual experience as Untamed Mountain is a farm atmosphere and not a zoo. All the exotic animals are only a few feet away separated by a chain-link fence. Wilbur told us who was friendly and who only saw us as another tasty tourist treat. Among their residents are lions, tigers, cougars, lynx, wolves (don't call them dogs), foxes, black leopards and more.

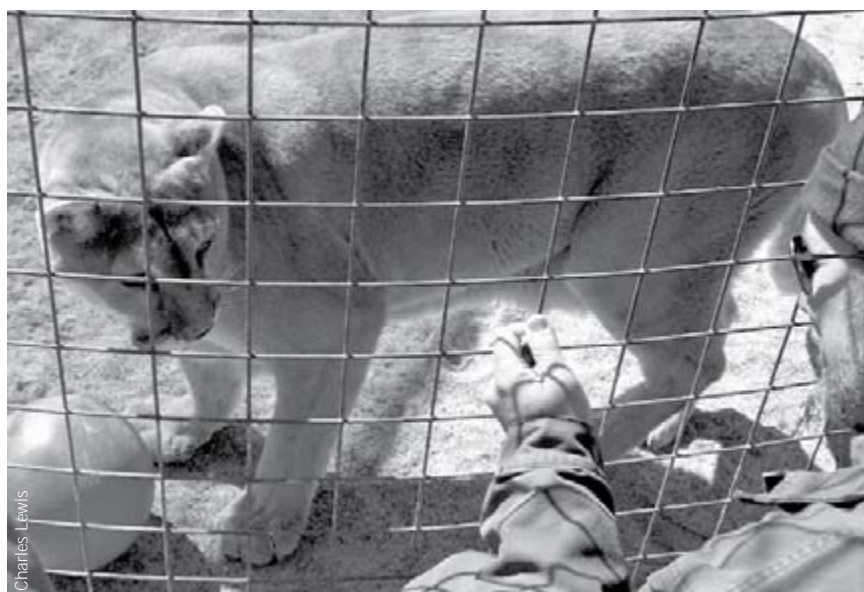
Wilbur took us from cage to cage to view the animals and had plenty of interesting information about them. For instance, the throat bone that enables big cats to roar, in house cats and cougars makes a purr (to the delight of cat lovers). To demonstrate how wild tigers think, he turned his back to one of the more aggressive cats. That seem to flip a switch in the tiger's brain and he immediately attempted to attack Wilbur, stopped by the fence.

If you are in the area go by and see the big cats and other critters up close. It's definitely worth a couple of hours. Information and hours of operation are available on their website at www.tigersfortomorrow.org.

From Untamed Mountain we headed for Gunter'sville and a late lunch at Wintzells

on the edge of the water (www.wintzellsoysterhouse.com). Despite my best efforts and a lot of GPS mapping we managed to find one stretch of dirt road. "Welcome to Sand Mountain" came crackling across the two-way radio. I'm not sure which one of our group that was but thanks for the warning! Being in the lead, and the lowest slung car in the group, I figured if I could make it so could everybody else. Okay, I plowed a bit of dirt in a few spots but nothing that couldn't be washed off once we got home. I think the most surprised person was the girl in the Honda Civic coming down the hilly dirt road as a bunch of BMW's came sailing past in hopes of getting off that stretch of road ASAP.

It was a great trip other than the one dirt road surprise. Go see the exotic animals if you can. *Tigers for Tomorrow* is only possible thanks to the hard work of a single family that maintains the animal sanctuary, and the generosity of many donors. They maintain and staff the farm 24/7 so it is a labor-of-love for them. Donations are gladly accepted in addition to the entrance fee.



A friendly cougar named "Big Toe" demonstrated his purr for the crowd. The ability to purr is shared among house cats and cougars, but none of the other big cats.

HOW'S YOUR NOCKENWELLENSTEUERUNG WORKING?

by Ron Drenning

Well, mine was shot and thanks to some good websites, I found a quick solution. To us German-deficient Americans it's your VANOS system, clever widget that varies your cam timing as engine speed and load characteristics demand. It sits right at the front of the I-6 engines, doesn't look like much and has a significant impact on your engine performance.

From what I've been able to find you can bet it's getting weak if your car has more than 80K miles (probably less). There are several tell tale signs including an obnoxious drop in idle speed on the M52-TU engines but only when cold. Basically, it consists of two hydraulic pistons that move a set of spiral gears that connect the cam gears to the camshafts. The problem is the O-rings that give the pistons their sealing capability. It appears (from what I've read) that the O-rings are Buna-N a relatively inexpensive elastomer that loses its capabilities with time and temperature.



Above, Dual piston VANOS shown disassembled. Note: spring goes on the right as shown.

Once the seals get brittle they can't hold the oil pressure and won't move in their cylinders. You would think somebody at BMW might have thought about this since valve cover gaskets only last about 60K miles and appear to be made of the same material – it's not rocket science.

So what is one to do? Well you can buy a replacement VANOS unit but in 60K miles it will be in the same condition. A better answer is available from several aftermarket vendors that you can find at these URL's:

- **www.beisansystems.com:** O-rings and VANOS rattle fix with do-it-yourself repair.
- **www.drvanos.com:** rebuilt VANOS units ready to install.

So the question is – should you do this yourself? If the thought of removing your valve cover gasket doesn't give you the pucker factor I'd give it a shot. I did mine and it went fairly easy. It's a good time to replace your valve cover gaskets too since they are probably shot anyway. Read the complete procedure and how to diagnose the problem at the **beisansystems.com** website. They have a well thought-out website that explains exactly how to do the repairs. If it doesn't appear to be intimidating—go for it.

I can offer this one thing to keep in mind. I installed the VANOS rattle repair too and if you don't have access to an air-impact gun you will not be able to remove the threaded caps in each piston assembly. I'd go with the rebuilt unit in that situation. I can say that the improvement is immediate and significant. My rough (cold) idle was gone immediately and the engine power output was improved.

At left, removing the access plugs from the VANOS system. A dual VANOS is shown. If you have a single piston VANOS, you'll need cam jigs to hold the cams in alignment while making the repair.



Above, on piston assemblies, O-rings need to be replaced to fix the VANOS.

2010 KICKOFF PARTY HELD AT SOUTHERN MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

by Ron Drenning

Most of our kick-off parties have been automotive-related but this year we thought something different might be fun so our club treasurer, Dale Sitton did some looking around and found the Southern Museum of Flight. SMF was only too happy to host a car club gathering and we were very happy to have location with a good AV system to boot. Plenty of our members are pilots too so it was a good selection.

The SMF is located on the edge of the Birmingham airport and has a good selection of aircraft on display; everything from a Wright Flyer to the Blackbird is there for your viewing. They asked us to hold a car show there on another date and we're keeping that option open.

We were fortunate that Mike Renner (BMW Performance Center) and Steve McGuire (past Peachtree BMW CCA President) came to show us a summary of their wild adventure doing the *One Lap of America*. Some of you who are old enough may remember this event in its previous glory as the *Cannonball Run*. That event got pretty wild so they toned it down so now it only happens on

selected tracks, including our own TGP track just outside of Talladega. Even with that change it is still a week-long marathon driving across America and gathering at various tracks to see who accumulates the shortest overall time. Mike and Steve made it sound easy, but I'm sure it wasn't.

Mike brought us a gift certificate for a One-Day M School (\$1300 value) to give away and our new Club Chairperson, Pam Smith, won it. Of course that left her husband Roger wanting to go too and darn if Pam didn't find a great deal on some additional tickets so she and Roger will be going together. For any of you that picked up some of those discounted M-School tickets be sure to thank Pam for finding that bargain.

There was some positive feedback that this was the first place we've held a kick-off party where folks could actually hear and see what was going on. We'll be making an extra effort in the future to find locations that are more crowd friendly. Please feel free to suggest places for the 2011 event as we're always looking for something new.



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JACK DANIELS 2010

On March 20th, the Club made its annual trip up to Lynchburg, Tennessee for a stop at Falls Mills Falls, lunch at Miss Mary Bo-Bo's Boarding house for some good southern eating, and then on to the Jack Daniels Distillery for the tour. This is one of our most popular rides, so if you haven't gone before, consider going next year.




CHALLENGE YOURSELF

**HEART OF DIXIE
BMW CCA
DRIVER'S EVENT**

May 29-30, 2010
(Memorial Day
Weekend)

Barber
Motorsports Park
Birmingham, AL

AT THE BEST TRACK IN THE COUNTRY



www.HeartofDixieDE.info

2009 FINANCIALS

Heart of Dixie Chapter—BMW CCA Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Equity—Unaudited As of December 31, 2009

ASSETS	Dec. 31, 2009
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
100 · Regions Checking	2,714
105 · Regions CDs	23,924
109 · Regions Money Market	23,318
110 · Compass Bank Money Market	504
Total Checking/Savings	50,460
Other Current Assets	
200 · Inventory	215
210 · Barber Track & Damage Deposit	7,000
211 · Deposits-Other	200
Total Other Current Assets	7,415
Total Current Assets	57,875
Fixed Assets	
300 · Equipment	75
Total Fixed Assets	75
TOTAL ASSETS	57,950
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
215 · SAE Ticket Assistance	420
Total Other Current Liabilities	420
Total Current Liabilities	420
Total Liabilities	420
Equity	
500 · Fund Balance	52,164
Net Income	5,366
Total Equity	57,530
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	57,950

Heart of Dixie Chapter—BMW CCA Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements—Unaudited January through December 2009

INCOME	Jan.-Dec, 2009	EXPENSE	Jan.-Dec, 2009
600 · Membership dues	7,392	800 · Newsletter costs	2,525
605 · Nat'l Rebates	257	805 · Postage	55
610 · Sponsor/Advertising Receipts	2,985	810 · Insurance	2,107
615 · Driving School fees	35,221	815 · Driving school expenses	32,575
620 · Autocross fees/CCC	5,577	816 · Track Damage	0
625 · Other event fees	1,020	820 · CCC/Autocross expenses	5,084
630 · Merchandise sales	105	825 · Meeting expenses	2,412
635 · Interest income	916	830 · Merchandise purchases	66
650 · Misc./Other	10	835 · Other event expenses	2,549
Total Income	53,483	841 · Web hosting/development	323
		842 · Travel & incidental expenses	96
		850 · Misc./Other expenses	325
		Total Expense	48,117
		Net Income	5,366

HEART OF DIXIE CHAPTER
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HEART OF DIXIE BMW CCA UPCOMING EVENTS

IRL AND GRAND AM RACE

*Friday, April 9 - Sunday, April 11
Barber Motorsports Park*

It will be one great weekend, with the Grand Am and the Continental Challenge on Sat., and the IRL Race on Sun.

WINERY FUN RUN

Saturday, May 1

It's not Sonoma County, but Alabama does have some wineries scattered out there in the countryside and we're going to visit a few. Check the website for details; register online at motorsportsreg.com.

LEGENDS OF MOTORSPORTS

*Thursday, May 20 - Sunday, May 23
Barber Motorsports Park*

Racing legend Bobby Rahal, partner in Historic Motorsports Productions, brings his newest venture to the Barber Motorsports Park for its inaugural event. Over 15 races, featuring a variety of the most popular historic race cars. No registration with the club necessary. Purchase your tickets through www.barbermotorsports.com.

To register for events: www.motorsportsreg.com
Club website: albmwcca.org

THE HEART OF DIXIE DE AND CLUB RACING SCHOOL

*Memorial Day weekend
Saturday, May 29 - Sunday, May 30
Barber Motorsports Park
HeartofDixieDE.info*

Our annual Driver's Education Event is our club's big event of the year. If you want to know what it's like to drive on a world class track, this is the event for you. You will be assigned an instructor who sits in the passenger seat and gives you direction as you're driving. We will also be holding our second Club Racing School. This class is for those with experience on the track who want to go to the next level.

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE FUN RUN

Saturday, June 26

We will have lunch in Franklin, then tour one of the many historic landmarks in the area. Check the website for details; register online at motorsportsreg.com.

SOCIAL DINNERS

Birmingham	Huntsville
<i>Tues., Apr. 20, 7:00 pm</i>	<i>Thurs., Apr. 22, 6:30 pm</i>
<i>Tues., May 18, 7:00 pm</i>	<i>Thurs., May 20, 6:30 pm</i>
<i>Tues., June 15, 7:00 pm</i>	<i>Thurs., June 17, 6:30 pm</i>