

BMW Car Club  
of America  
River City Bimmers



# Der Fahrersitz

The Newsletter for the River City Bimmers

Winter 2016



## Bimmers Drive the Tail of the Dragon

The Dragon, A Novice's Run Page 6

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**On the Cover** - Bimmers Drive the Tail of the Dragon

Photo by Jane Absalom

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# President's Message

Eric Ireland

A new year is in full swing now, and I am excited to follow in the footsteps of Juan Larin, who contributed considerably to this group as chapter president over the last two years.

I'd like to start by thanking Juan for all of his hard work, which was often behind the scenes and enabled the club to successfully host all the fun activities for us to participate in. I want to thank everybody for their confidence in me being able to fill his shoes! I am happy to report that Juan will still be with us serving as treasurer so all his energy and attention to detail will continue to benefit all of our members moving forward.

I am excited to serve the club and work to keep up our momentum of increased participation, number of events and increased financial standing. We are already working on another trip to the tail of the dragon for 2016 and hope to secure a warmer time slot. This is one of the larger events the club has undertaken in some time, and was a huge success in 2015.

The board is always looking for suggestions on events or input on how we can improve our chapter and keep our events benefiting all of you. Please don't hesitate to let us know your thoughts, or if you would like to volunteer to help in any way. I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting everyone in our chapter so please feel free to reach out to me directly with any input, ideas, or just to say hello.

Eric Ireland

[e\\_101@hotmail.com](mailto:e_101@hotmail.com)  
319-213-6898

# Editor's Note

Tom Coughlin

Congratulations to all the new board members and committee members. I know these folks will be working diligently to continue the growth in membership, activities and participation.

## What do you want now?

Watch your mailboxes for a membership survey coming your way soon. The club has increased the membership and the participation in all the activities over the past couple of years but there are lots of members who don't join us regularly, and some not at all. We'd like to know why and to know what kinds of activities all the members would like us to pursue. The survey will be short so please take a couple of minutes and answer the questions so we can make sure all the members wishes are being met - well. at least the wishes related to their BMWs.

## Help!!!!

There are two areas where I'd like to ask for your help. First, when you get the survey I mentioned above, we will ask if there are activities you would like to help plan, organize or operate. Please think about where you can contribute to the club's success and give us a hand.

Second, we can always use new ideas for newsletter articles. If there is something you would like to see covered or you would like to write an article, let me know. This is especially true for John Scheidhauer's column. John comes up with great topics but he wants to address your questions.

## Remember to keep in touch with us at:

Website: [www.rcbimmers.org](http://www.rcbimmers.org)

Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rivercitybimmers/>

Like Our Page:

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# Calendar of Events

April 21, 6:30 p.m. - Dinner Meeting, My Favorite Place

April 30, 8:00 a.m. - RCB Autocross at MIR

July 2, 8:00 a.m. - RCB Autocross at MIR

August 20, 8:00 a.m. - RCB Autocross at MIR

**Check our Facebook page for all the updated event information**

## Welcome New Members...

Maxwell Adler	Columbus, MS	Donna Loden	Belden, MS
Rick Barr	Franklin, TN	Mike Maraziti	Maumelle, AR
David Brumfield	Collierville, TN	Michael Medlin	Cordova, TN
Donnie Carter	Saltillo, MS	Jonathan Nichols	Jackson, TN
Vishal Chawhan	Germantown, TN	Wayne Ogozalek	Collierville, TN
Eric Haecker	Cordova, TN	Craig Parrish	Oakland, TN
Mary Elizabeth		Mark Pettersen	Bryant, AR
Hartsfield	Little Rock, AR	Robert Ponton	Collierville, TN
Andres Larin	Horn Lake, MS	Alan Scott	Memphis, TN
David lee	Memphis TN	Beverly Taylor	Memphis, TN

# The Dragon, A Novice's Run

By Adam Wilde Photos by Jane Absalom

It was a crisp autumn morning and, as I waited for the other members to show up, I lit up a cigar to cope with the anticipation of the drive ahead. I knew it was going to be a long drive ahead and hoped the route we chose was enjoyable for all.

The members slowly funneled into the parking lot and as the last one arrived we quickly went over the route before we headed out.



As we pulled out of the parking lot I had to resist the urge to speed so as to not lose anyone who was following me. My only concern at the time was whether or not the first leg of the drive was going to be too long for gas and, of course, restroom breaks.

As we wound our way down Highway 64 headed to Natchez Trace Parkway everyone seemed in high spirits. After our first pit stop we ventured onto Natchez Trace, a drive from Highway 64 to Nashville that I would highly recommend, and then onto I840 to bypass most of the traffic around Nashville. From there we made a quick stop in Lebanon for another pit stop and lunch. As we headed out, refreshed, the traffic picked up and the group got a little spread out, but some good planning and a lot of luck allowed us to stay close.

We eventually all arrived at the top of the dragon just in time to make our first run, a lightly spirited run just before sunset. That first run allowed us to get acquainted with this infamous road that we intended to tame the next morning.

We arrived at the resort just after sunset and everyone was weary from driving but in high spirits for the run we were going to make after breakfast the next day.

I was enthusiastic at the turnout from the other chapters that had made the trek and arrived before us. Sleep came that night with a bit of a fight.

The following morning started with breakfast, most had a light on due to excitement. As I stepped outside for the first time that morning I was accosted by a chill, 35-40 deg., which would put a damper on the drive until our tires warmed up a bit.

We started out towards Deals Gap, the starting point of our runs for the day. After everyone arrived we broke off into groups of around 6 cars and I released the first group. You could hear the cars rumble to a start and off to the corners they went. It was a sound that resonated throughout the valley and I'm sure a few law enforcement personnel were uneasily awake. The second group was released a few minutes later with the same results.



I was leading the third group and lined everyone up to get ready. After a few minutes to allow the second group a gap we headed out. My nerves

were all over the place. First was I going to be able to provide a good driving experience for those that were following me and secondly, and most important to me, was I going to be able to stay on the road. The second was worrying me most of all, after all who wants to damage their car and more importantly leave a piece of it on the Tree of Shame.

As we made our way around the corners I could hear the squeal of tires and the roar of engines. I really was able to see how good and bad my car was. It handled the corners with ease; the acceleration out of them was where I noticed the turbos lagging a bit. My brakes were holding up nicely and the tires hugged the cold road like it was an old friend they haven't seen in years. I tried to look at the gauges but the corners would not allow me to take my eyes off of them for fear of sliding off the road.

The road seemed to be eaten up in front of me as each corner brought us closer to the end of the run. I found myself not worrying about my speed but more worried about which direction the next corner was. No longer was I worried



about shifting, allowing the car to do that for me, but more worried about staying on the road. Both my hands were on the wheel, making sure I had control of the car so as to not cross the yellow lines and bring my trip to a halt.

As the last corner melted from under us we slowed down and pulled into the turn around. Each one of us stopping our cars and getting out with grins across our faces that even our mothers couldn't wash off. Each one of us got out and looked over our cars to make sure we didn't have to call the trip short in order to make an impromptu repair or, worse, limp back home.

After a few moments my nerves settled and we all started talking about how much of an exhilarating drive it was. No one was disappointed and all could not wait to make our second attack. The only thing holding us back was waiting for our brakes to cool down a bit!

Next year, the Dragon will go down quicker and hopefully more of us will be there to slay it. It truly is a road that must be driven at least once in your life.

With that being said I wish I had another day there to explore all the other roads in the area. You could spend a week there and never drive a boring straight road. The area has every type of road one could want, from tight twisty roads to long sweeping ones.

Hope to see all of you there next year!

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### Taking It to the Track

With apologies to the Doobie Brothers, I need to comment on stories I heard about some drivers 'taking it to the street' too fast during the Dragon's Tail drive. In one case, local authorities threatened to kick our group off the road if they kept going too fast and furious.

Forty-one people have died while driving the dragon's tail in the last 20 years. Died! Dead! Got it? There were only 2 years without a death in those 2 decades.

Don't get me wrong. I love to drive fast - and not in a straight line. But - and it's a big, Kim Kardashian level but - I've learned to take it to the track, not the street.

Between DEs and autocrosses, we have plenty of opportunities to take to the track. Don't be stupid and try to turn any street, anywhere into a track.

If you insist on playing boy-racer on the street, don't do it in a BMW. You embarrass us! *Tom Coughlin*

# Pflege fur Bimmer - OOPS!

by John Scheidhauer

I see lots of cars that have either aborted repairs from overzealous do-it-yourselfers or improper repairs as a result of poor workmanship or inferior parts.

Everyone wants to think he/she can grab the old tool box and get his/her hands dirty, have some fun, and most of all save some money. Right?! Maybe. Truth is, some folks, while extremely intelligent and most adept at their chosen profession, are woefully ill-equipped to tackle repairs particularly on modern BMWs.

Most good technicians have a minimum of 2 years of automotive training and a slew of brand specific training both in the classroom and online. They are constantly exposed to new technologies and explore new problems as they encounter them to better understand their craft.

Search your heart on this one and only proceed if you are VERY confident in your ability - or your best friend's ability. I can't say that our relationship won't suffer ever so slightly if, after I have quoted you for a repair, you've made an unsuccessful attempt at the work, then towed your vehicle back to my shop to finish or redo the job.

Still determined to replace this valve cover gasket all by your lonesome??....My "A", number one, top of the list, most important suggestion is RESEARCH!

If possible, locate a factory repair manual for your specific year and model vehicle. Refer to any online

instructions you can find but DO NOT CONSIDER ANYTHING YOU READ IN A FORUM AS GOSPEL!!! Armchair quarterbacks will get you in over your head just for kicks!

Next, always use the highest quality OEM parts. A surefire way to tell if your parts are OEM or not is to simply purchase them from a dealer.

News flash - part manufacturers don't just make the parts for new cars and dealers then stop the assembly line! They make a royal ton of those same parts and sell them to aftermarket vendors and, if you shop carefully, you can sometimes purchase the same exact part for a lower price, but not always. Check all sources for OEM parts then give the dealer an opportunity to match or at least close the gap between their price and the aftermarket vendors' price. Never hurts to ask, eh?! Either way I am a strong supporter of the idea of patronizing local businesses. Keep our local economy strong!

So, you've spent your last 5 evenings studying the repair procedure, dug up a bunch of tips from on-line buddies, purchased your required parts from the dealer and you're all set to go? Let me see what else is there? Oh tools!

This part follows the "\$2 dollar helmet for a \$2 head" rule. Buy the best tools you can afford. You'll need every known metric socket and wrench as well as a complete set of standard and inverted Torx sockets, small and

large ratchet, small "dead blow" hammer, complete screwdriver set, a good size 1/2" drive breaker bar, a few 1/2" drive sockets, a 3/8" drive torque wrench, a nice flashlight, and a flexible or telescoping magnet. You will likely need a few more items but this will get you started.

Now you are ready. Maybe consider whipping out that smartphone and taking a few pictures as you go just in case you get interrupted during the disassembly or reassembly process.

Work slowly and carefully. If it takes a bit more time to remove an item or a bracket that will make accessing the part you are going for easier, then take the time now instead of breaking something and increasing the cost of this repair later.

When removing "gasketed" parts like the valve covers, slow and easy is the name of the game. If a small prybar or screwdriver is needed to loosen the cover, always check at least twice but maybe even 3 times to be certain you have removed all the bolts.

Once you have removed a part, always cover any exposed engine areas to prevent dropping small parts inside or dirt contamination of engine internals. Clean, clean, clean, and then clean all parts again. You cannot clean parts that will contain internal engine lubrication too much.

(Continued on Page 10)



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# Driving the Tail of the Dragon

**Photos by Jane Absalom**

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## OOPS - Continued from Page 8

If you are working on engine cooling systems always look very carefully at every cooling hose and replace any that are swollen or show any signs of wear or external oil or fluid deterioration.

When it comes to lubricants I follow the same rules for OEM parts. We buy all of our engine oil and coolant from the local dealer. I could save money buying those items in bulk but this is not an area to go cheap. That would be akin to “discount bungee jumping” and you can count me out!

I have enjoyed working on and repairing things from age 5 when my dad got me my first tool set. He tells the story of coming into our kitchen a few weeks after Christmas when I got my tools to find a kitchen chair completely disassembled, bolts, nuts, screws, all in a heap. He couldn't help but laugh but then he just looked at me and said, “OK smarty pants put it back together.” And I did. Maybe all the hardware wasn't “torqued to spec” but all the parts were in the right places. Sometime shortly after that, my dad was no longer allowed to work on anything mechanical around the house, that was my job!

If you choose to make your own repairs hopefully some of these tips will help you. Take your time, have fun, get your

kids involved if possible, go into the office with a little grease under your fingernails and be proud of your accomplishments!



**Editor's Note** - John has a wealth of knowledge of all things BMW and he would love to pass some of that knowledge along to our members. To help John help us, tell us what topics you would like him to cover.

- Have a specific upgrade you are considering? John can help guide you.
- Got a question on maintenance routines? He can help there.
- You name it. If it's about repairing, maintaining or upgrading your BMW, John can and will help.

Email your questions or topics to us and we'll get them to John.

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Eric's email here

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tc4bmwcca@att.net

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j.larin@att.net

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Tom Coughlin

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E-mail: [questions@bmwcca.org](mailto:questions@bmwcca.org)

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River City Bimmers

P.O. Box 342593

Memphis, TN 38184

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