



New Jersey Bulletin

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Daytona



Photo and Article by Larry Engel

Matt Bell and Bill Auberlen appear in victory lane after winning the January Koni Challenge race at Daytona in their Turner M3. Bill held off a couple of very fast Mustangs to take the win, and Matt qualified the car third and held his position during his starting run to allow Bill to work his magic. In victory lane, Bill said that Matt is one to watch as a future star. It was Matt's first professional win. (Article on Page 11)

NJ Chapter January Meeting By Jeff Burgess

Ah, what a great way to break up a mundane boring week at work! No, I'm not talking about calling out sick, I'm talking about this month's NJBMWCCA meeting, held once again at The Deutscher Club of Clark. You can't say enough nice things about this place, plus where else around here are you going to get a Yuengling draft for a buck fifty?

Of course this is not the reason we attend these great meetings. I love catching up with friends who I may not have seen in a while, see who bought this and who sold that. Sometimes one member's that is another member's this! And of course the club always does it's best to bring great speakers and presentations to every meeting. This one was no exception. Our speakers for the January meeting were on the cover of the Roundel! I am speaking of Ross Karlin and Dave McIntyre. Ross and Dave have entered the Targa Newfoundland race in Canada for the last few years. This is not a normal rally race, not even close. After watching Ross and Dave's in-car videos, it is quickly apparent why a race like this could never take place on US soil! It takes place on public roads, not just highways and major local roads, but through the center of small towns and on back ally roads that I may question driving down if not in competition. Have you ever seen "COPS" when they are chasing someone thru a quiet neighborhood? It's kind of like that, but legal and with more turns than an autocross in the front lot at Commerce Bank ballpark.

Ross and Dave provided great commentary-often quite humorous-to go along with the in-car video clips from the different legs of the event. Warren Brown, who handled the repairs and maintenance of the yellow e36 M3, spoke of his experience as well. The Roundel has a great article about the now famous "c-clamp diff repair" that I highly recommend reading if you have not already. We also heard from Brian Morgan, a staff journalist of the Roundel and also an avid member of the New Jersey Chapter. He explained to us his view of this experience as an embedded journalist.

We had a great turnout at the meeting this month. There were plenty of new members, which is always great to see. Some of our members advertised some great parts and vehicles for sale. And what is my favorite part of our meetings? Well, anyone who knows me knows the answer to that question is food! And better yet the food is very good and very free! A big thanks to Ross, Dave, Warren and Brian for their presentation and, as always, thanks to everyone who came out to the meeting. Hope to see all of you, as well as some new faces at the next one!

- Jeff

Larry Engel has the floor

Photos by Jeff Burgess

Ross and Dave talk about Targa Newfoundland



Brian Morgan tells the real story



The Cone Catcher



We've just had one of those delightful little winter storms. It started out as snow and ended up with a quarter inch of ice covering everything. Now that I've shoveled two walks and a double driveway and I've had the chance to observe traffic on a moderately busy suburban street, I'd like to talk a little about winter driving, peoples' ideas of the perfect winter vehicle, and the common misconceptions about what's safe and what's not when the roads get slippery. I think most of you will agree with me on this, and as enthusiasts, I think we owe it to society and our families to fight the dangerous misconceptions about safe winter driving whenever possible.

A couple of things set me off this morning. The first was watching the SUV masters of the universe here in suburban paradise barreling down the road at five over with the completely mistaken impression that they were driving the ideal winter vehicle. The other was a report on the morning newscast. It was the typical post-storm man-on-the-street interview, and the interviewee said the same thing we hear after every storm - "You shouldn't be out here if you don't have four-wheel drive."

I have one response to this comment - BALONEY!!!!!! There's no question that all-wheel drive helps your vehicle get going in slippery conditions, but we all should know that getting started isn't the biggest problem associated with winter driving. It's STOPPING. When it comes to slowing down, the extra weight of an AWD system is more likely to hurt than help. My three kids drive two-wheel drive vehicles, and I view the lack of AWD as a critical safety system. If they can't get their car moving, they shouldn't be on the road! This safety feature is also important for most adult drivers - too many of whom have no idea how to handle a vehicle at the limit. I'm not against all-wheel drive. It's a huge help for people who have to travel in winter conditions, but drivers need to understand when it helps and when it doesn't. Judging by what I saw on the road this morning, too many drivers don't have a clue.

My favorite winter vehicle is my E46 328i. It's the best 2WD car I've ever driven in winter. Unless there's deep snow that would cause the low front air dam to act like a plow, I prefer it to our X3 for winter driving. I'm on my second set of Blizzaks - and the combination of good winter tires and a modern stability control system turns a summer autocross and track specialist into an almost ideal winter vehicle. Because of the tires, the DSC, and the lighter weight, it stops and turns much better than most any SUV with all-season tires.

Over the years, we've had an Explorer, a Durango, two MDXs, and our current X3. Of the five, the X3 is by far the best in winter because it's so wonderfully balanced. I'm still more comfortable in the 328, which probably weighs 700 pounds less, and has better tires. If I ever buy an X3 instead of leasing it, I'll buy a set of winter tires for it - they do make a big difference. In every one of our other SUVs, you had to hold your breath every time you applied the brake with even moderate force in winter. This was due partly to their sheer mass, but all of them had a tendency to dramatically shift all of their heft to the front wheels. Combine this charming trait with "all-season" tires that are usually biased toward quiet highway ride, and every snowy trip around the corner becomes an adventure. I did buy proper snow tires for one of the MDXs, and they helped quite a bit - but you just can't escape the physics of a big, nose-heavy vehicle. In my mind, most of these

tanks are a lot less safe than the public perceives them to be. Some of them are plain dangerous, particularly in the hands of a novice driver. Personally, I think it's nuts to buy one of these things for your children to drive. They'd be much safer in something more nimble and neutral-handling.

Nimble and neutral-handling describes two of the traits that make us love our BMW's. It's a shame that so many people mistakenly think all BMWs are bad in snow. This may have been somewhat true 25 years ago, before modern stability control systems were developed. Winter driving with summer performance rubber equipped sport package cars probably also contributes to the myth. (If you put summer performance tires on a Jeep, it would probably drive worse in snow than most Bimmers.) When it comes to a properly shod modern BMW, whether it's a xi or not, you've got a competent and safe winter weather car. Good winter tires are miracles of modern science. If you've never put them on your vehicle, you don't know what you're missing. Nothing's better than AWD and winter tires, but if I had to choose one or the other, I'd go with the tires. Even if you buy a set of dedicated winter wheels, they're usually less expensive than the AWD option, too.

I've already almost run out of space, and I haven't mentioned the most important safety feature of any winter vehicle. It's the stuff between the ears of the operator. As with most other things in life, there's no substitute for good judgment, experience, common sense, and well-developed skill. Many of our club's activities are all about developing these attributes in our members. If you haven't joined in the fun, why don't you give it a try? You'll probably have a ton of fun, and you're sure to become a safer and better driver.

Until next month, keep the cones standing!

Larry Engel
larry_engel@njbmwcca.org

Epilogue: One week after originally writing this column, Karin and I had to take our daughter Elizabeth back to school at George Mason. Our drive started at 7:45 Sunday morning, and it was snowing. We took the X3 because we needed the space. Local roads were completely snow covered, and the Parkway and Turnpike were wet to lightly slushy. The temperature was 26 degrees. I was able to drive at the limit in the right lane, but I couldn't believe the number of people who must have been doing 70 or more in those conditions. Almost all of them were driving SUV's in the left 2 lanes. Fortunately, none of them had to stop suddenly.

I was curious how much these things weigh, so I checked. I wanted to compare them to my 4012lb X3. Here are the results - the MDX weighs 4548 lbs., the Explorer 6 cylinder is 4632, the Tahoe is 5524, the Sequoia is 5680, and the Expedition is 5805. BMWs aren't exempt from the two-and-a-half ton club - The 6 cylinder X5 comes in at 4916 lbs! Imagine how difficult it would be to bring one of these to a sudden stop on an icy road - yet they're the ones that seem to be driving fastest in the snow! Be careful out there - the flying AWD projectiles make it dangerous! (LE)

Welcome New Members

Yousri Abdou
Elizabeth Bailey
Benjamin Bailey
Jackie Bauza
Raoul Biniarishvili
Matthew Bonder
Stania Cortright
David Darius
Tom Elashmawy

Mitchell Engelmeyer
Lawrence Frankel
Jean Gagnon
Adam Grzech
Scott Harold
Dwayne Hausman
Jason Herskovitz
Kristina Jordan
Gary Kull

Vincent Lullio
Dimple Malavia
Bruce McTavish
Robert Miranda
Oleg Ozeriansky
Yong Park
Gene Picone
David Reich
Peter Robertiello

Gregory Romero
Sapan Shah
Swati Sharma
Ben Tam
Randy Troast
Ameet Vora



2009 Autocross School

By Larry Engel

Our 2009 Autocross School will be held at Commerce Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater on Sunday, April 19th, beginning at 8:30.

This is a great opportunity for those of you who have never autocrossed and may have been a bit intimidated by the idea of jumping in to a competitive event right off the bat. The school will be a little slower-paced and much more instructional than our regular events. It's perfect for anyone who's curious about autocross or who just wants to see what their car can do!

The day will start with a classroom session that covers basic vehicle dynamics and lessons on how to maneuver your car quickly through an autocross course. We'll also have a session on safety rules and flagging. Of course, there's no substitute for actually practicing your skills, and students will have plenty of time behind the wheel. You'll get intensive instruction from one of our experienced autocrossers, and you'll feel the thrill of handling a car at the limit! You'll be amazed at how much your skill level will increase in just one day!

The school is designed for members who are licensed drivers age 18 or older who have never autocrossed or have very limited experience. To apply, email Larry Engel at larryengel@njbmwcca.org using the title "Autocross School". Provide your name, member number, age, and phone number. You will receive an email response that you have been provisionally accepted to the school. At that point you will go to our website and download the Autocross School registration form, fill it out, and send it according to the instructions along with a check for \$65. (Do not send the form until you receive the email confirming your provisional status.) Your acceptance will be final when we receive your check and application form. Space is limited to 25 students, so make sure to apply as soon as possible! Last year this event filled up in a few days. Contact Larry Engel if you have any questions. Our 2009 Autocross School will be held at Commerce Bank

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2009 Driver School Schedule

By Jeff White

For 2009 the Driver School Committee is pleased to announce the most exciting and varied driver school schedule that we have been able to offer in many years with schools running from the beginning of April to the end of October! Equally important is that, for the second year in a row, we have held registration fees constant for each school. Finally, we are again offering a series of promotions designed to make participating in multiple schools more affordable.

We start the year with our combined Driver School/ Instructor Training School at Summit Point Raceway on the Main Track on April 2-3 (Thursday-Friday). This school is limited to students who have previous driver school experience, since we need to maintain a flexible schedule for the ITS candidates, but it offers more track time than any of our other schools. The new pavement has been repaired and the track is again a pleasure to drive. This school offers advanced students the opportunity to truly hone their skills.

Our next event is a full day at Lime Rock Park on Friday May 15. Once again we are fortunate to have a full day just for our event participants at the track where the NJ Chapter began driver schools 35 years ago. The later date will give us a beautiful Spring day at one of the most scenic tracks in the country. Lime Rock also underwent a full repaving last year and so the bumps and concrete patches are finally gone! This will be a traditional driver school with 3 student run groups. Given Lime Rock's new business model, the theme of this event will be the 2nd Annual Last Chance to Drive Lime Rock.

Our traditional June combined Club Race and Driver School to benefit the Westlake School has returned to the calendar for this year but now will be held at Thunderbolt Raceway at New Jersey Motorsports Park on June 8-9 (Mon-Tues). For those of you who attended our Joint Event at Thunderbolt last year, you know that Thunderbolt is an exciting track to run and is now a venue for multiple sanctioned professional racing series. Because this will be the first BMW CCA Club Race held at NJMP and will follow the Grand-Am race to be held in May (see the Corral promotion described in this issue), we anticipate a large number of racers. This means that we will likely only have 2 student run groups. Be sure to register early

as this school will fill quickly.

In July we will be holding our annual combined Club race and Driver School at Summit Point Raceway on July 25-26 (Sat-Sun). This is always a well-attended event featuring close racing and a barbeque at the track on Saturday evening. We will then try to follow our success in August last year with a Joint Event at NJMP but this year we will be on the Lightning circuit. While this will again be a 3-day event (Aug 21-23, Fri-Sun), DelVal will now be holding a Club Race so that school participants will have the additional fun of being able to watch the racers go wheel to wheel. Once again we anticipate that this event will sell out quickly. Registration is being managed by our DelVal colleagues so please refer to their website for registration details.

In September we will be returning to West Virginia to hold a weekend school on the Shenandoah Circuit at Summit Point (Sep 19-20). This is really a tremendous school that is slowly building a faithful following of attendees. There are generally fewer students per run group and we have use of the skid pad for both days (the only school where that is possible). Shenandoah is a track that rewards driver skill and will make you a better driver.

To finish the year we have a brand new school that we are calling An Introduction to the Track. This school is specifically targeting students who have never been to a track and want to try out a school. We will be holding the event on Monday October 26 on the Lightning Circuit at NJMP. To encourage students who are new to track events to attend, we are offering: (1) a dedicated run group just for "First-timers" so that both classroom and on-track instruction can focus on their needs; (2) a \$50 rebate off the usual registration fee for First-timers making the fee for these students only \$125; (3) an extended skid pad session for First-timers before their first on-track session so that students can get a better feel for their car before they are on the track; (4) our Loaner Helmet promotion so that you may (no promises on this one) be able to borrow a helmet and avoid that cost for your first event; and (5) by holding the event at NJMP, hotel rates are low and students who live in southern NJ could even get up early and be at the

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2009 Driver School Promotions

Once again we are offering a series of promotions to enable students to attend multiple events this year. The goals of our promotions are two-fold. First, we want to encourage members who have never participated in a track event to come out and give it a try. Find out how your car was meant to be driven and become a better, safer driver in the process. Second, we want to reward those students who attend multiple events. The only way we can maintain our schedule is to fill our schools and we want to do what we can to make that possible. The promotions are:

Promotion	Benefit
Register and pay for Lime Rock and Shenandoah by April 17 @	\$100 off combined registration fee for both events (\$515 total fee for both)
Attend Lime Rock School	\$50 off registration for Shenandoah#
Attend Summit Point DS/ITS event	\$50 off registration for Shenandoah#
Bring a friend, as a student, who has never been to Lime Rock	\$50 off for you and your friend to your next school*
Attend any 4 schools *	Receive a free school in 2010*
Attend Lime Rock, Thunderbolt, Summit Point or Shenandoah^ as a First-time student	\$50 off registration for Shenandoah# or \$50 off your next school in 2010*
First-timer rebate - October Lightning school	Attend the "Introduction to the Track" as a student who has never been on the track and receive a \$50 rebate on your registration fee

@ Must attend both events to receive discount

Cannot be combined with the combined Lime Rock-Shenandoah registration promotion

* Excludes August Joint Event at NJMP/Lightning

^ Shenandoah First-time students only entitled to 2010 discount

Promotions can be combined for even greater savings. Please e-mail the registrar to be sure you are properly credited.

Loaner Helmets: Program designed for students who are coming to one of our schools as a "First-timer" (never been to the track before) and have concerns about the costs. If you don't have a helmet to use, we may be able to help! We have helmets that we can loan to you for the event (limited

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2009 Driver School Schedule

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track in time for the event. For our "seasoned" participants, we will still have the usual 3 student run groups but we will be limiting the number of participants per group. Skid pad sessions will also be available for these run groups as well. This will be a fantastic school and great way to cap off the season.

Beyond our events, we have been working closely with our friends in the DelVal chapter so that our combined schedules offer schools that are

spaced apart well. Moreover, between the two chapters we offer events at 8 different tracks run in 9 configurations all within a half-day's drive, or less, of our membership. There is nowhere else in the country that offers this variety.

Registration is now open on the website with event descriptions and registration instructions for all events. We are again accepting payment either electronically via Google Checkout or by check. In the meantime, get your car ready, order new brake pads and we'll see you in the Spring.

School	Dates	Location
Driver School/ITS	April 2-3	Summit Point Raceway, WV
Lime Rock Driver School	May 15	Lime Rock Park, CT
Driver School/Club Race (Joint with DelVal)	June 8-9	NJMP- Thunderbolt Raceway, Millville, NJ
Driver School/Club Race	July 25-26	Summit Point Raceway, WV
Driver School/Club Race (Joint with DelVal)	Aug 21-23	NJMP Lightning Raceway, Millville, NJ
Shenandoah Driver School	Sep. 19-20	Summit Point Raceway, WV
Introduction to the Track Driver School	Oct 26	NJMP Lightning Raceway, Millville, NJ

Finish Lines

By Thom Rossi

Here's why the CEOs of the big three auto companies should run as fast as they can from any thought of accepting government bailout money to help them, even in the short term.

Sure, these companies have challenges, maybe even fatal weaknesses. Their sales suffer from a declining share in an overall declining U.S. automobile market. Their hemorrhaging balance sheets coupled with stock prices that make raising money on the public markets expensive makes it difficult to cover their operating losses. They have killer labor contracts that guarantee those operating losses for years to come. Their shaky suppliers may go out of business before the car companies. The U.S. Congress is sort of maybe willing to bail them out, but at the cost of having a "car czar" appointed by the administration to "help". Their dealer networks are based on an obsolete model of distribution, but are very costly to shut down. Consumers can't get loans to buy their product.

But if you think the car companies have problems today, just wait until they have to suffer the pain of the federal government being part of the solution! Of course, there is certainly much that the government can do to help the car companies. For example, they could let them go bankrupt and get out from under their labor and dealership contracts. They could also get off the "green" energy thing and stop forcing the car companies to invest dollars they don't have into developing cars that nobody wants and that can't be operated as cheaply as conventional gasoline and diesel cars. They could have held firm on not allowing states to regulate automobile emission standards individually, thus preserving the production and design efficiency possible when the same exact car can be sold in all 50 states. They may even have delayed the implementation of higher fuel efficiency standards. But of course, that's not the way bureaucrats think. Once the automobile companies got on their knees and begged for government bailouts, they became fair game for the geniuses in Washington. Let's start with the irony of the big 3 CEOs being skewered by congress for flying their corporate jets down to D.C. Does anybody remember that the first thing Nancy Pelosi did when she was elected as The Speaker of the House was to complain that the speaker's private plane, provided free of charge by the U.S. Air Force, wasn't big enough for her? She actually wanted a plane of the same size as Air Force 1. Yet, the CEOs of three companies which the government presumably believes are so important to the U.S. economy that they can't be allowed to go bankrupt are expected to drive hybrids down to the circus. What an egregious and shameful example of political grandstanding and hollow populism, and what a bad way to start what should have been a serious discussion.

Next came the idea that Uncle Sam should appoint a Car Czar. Huh? I thought we were living in a free market democracy. I thought a revolution was fought on our behalf to get rid of royals. Who the heck wants a Czar anywhere in our government? And what would the Car Czar do? On what basis do we believe that a government employee will have the experience, insights, and incentives to lead these car companies to success when their "overpaid" CEOs have been unable to do so? The answer of course, is that there is no reasonable expectation of the government leading the companies to success. The bailout is designed to preserve jobs. UAW jobs to be specific. That is a different, but more politically important, goal than leading a profitable enterprise, and restoring an industrial sector to long term productivity. In fact, it is better for the Washington Wunderkinds in charge of our brave new world if the automobile companies never achieve profitability. This would ensure that every UAW worker would now and forever vote for the political candidates most likely to keep these companies on life support and running at a loss indefinitely. How long will it be before these companies are burdened by hundreds of overpaid political patronage jobs? How long before the Car Czar gets his own staff, his own office, his own building, his own plane?

What are the roles and powers of the Car Czar? I'm sure one of the essential roles of the Car Czar will be to provide careful oversight of how these companies use the bailout money. Soon, the Czar will figure out that it makes no sense to allow destructive competition between these emerging public/private partnerships. Why should the government give bailout money to one company, only to allow it to design and market new models of cars that will compete with, and possibly take market share away from, another company which is also using bailout money to fight the first company? No. What is needed is central planning. Then all the

companies will be on an equal playing field. Of course, we've already experienced the results of centralized planning in the design of an automobile. Does anyone remember the Yugo? It was introduced to the U.S. market in 1985 (about the same time as the e30 series BMWs). Built and imported by Zastava, a Yugoslavian manufacturer, it remained on the market until 1991. If you were around back then (I was) you remember these as incredible P.O.S.'s that weren't even worth half their low purchase cost. Their sheet metal was so thin it could be punctured with a well directed stab of a pencil. Somehow, in the closed market of communist era Yugoslavia, when people had no choice but to buy the car their central planners decided they should have, Zastava was able to continue operations, though not profitably. But here it is, 25 years later, and the Yugo is nothing more than a quirky historical footnote in the formerly free market of the USA, while BMW was able to build on the success of the e30 and become a major competitor and strongly profitable organization by offering more expensive cars that people actually wanted to buy (and BMW did it without the help of a government planner). Go figure. Maybe government planning isn't all that it's cracked up to be.

The ultimate irony and relevance of the story of the Yugo is revealed by comparing one more historical fact to a very current event. The genesis of the Yugo was actually old Fiat tooling and design. Yes, when the state run Zastava Company decided it wanted to expand its operations from the production of military vehicles to providing the right car for its comrade customers, the brainstorm they came up with was to purchase the design and tooling for Fiat models that even the impoverished Italians didn't want to buy anymore. Why is that relevant to the future direction of our American automobile companies? Exercising its power as a major new investor in GM and Chrysler, Uncle Sam has let it be known that he just may not give them any more allowance unless they can demonstrate to him that they have put their companies on the path to sustainability (interesting choice of words, Dear Uncle, why not "profitability"?). Chrysler has chosen to do so by establishing a new partnership with, you guessed it, Fiat!!!

The terms of that partnership boggle the mind. Chrysler has given Fiat a 35% ownership stake in return for, you guessed it again, access to Fiat design and technology for small-engine cars. Just the kind of cars that Uncle Sam thinks we should be driving (even though I don't hear too many people clamoring for a new Fiat). And Fiat may back out if Chrysler doesn't raise at least a couple of billion more dollars to start manufacturing those Fiats here. If I were a shareholder in Chrysler would I be happy? Hell no! I would have just suffered a 35% dilution of the value of my shares. And I could look forward to further dilution as Chrysler finds a way to raise another \$2 billion to seal the deal, possibly through the sale of company equity.

This brings me to one more problem created by Washington's over-reaching into private companies. Given the dim prospects of sound business decisions being driven by the beltway bureaucrats, why should I invest in these companies? Washington is already demonstrating it has no ability or desire to protect the shareholders of these companies (just as it has done much to demolish share prices in the banking sector as a result of its bailout efforts there). So the double whammy for companies accepting a government bailout is that doing so pretty much destroys their ability to raise money on the public stock market. In the end, this only serves to make them more deeply reliant on a continued flow of bailout money as their only means of raising capital.

And how will they get that steady flow of bailout money? Through effective lobbying, not sound business management. If you weren't around to witness the Yugo like I was, you certainly were here to witness the recent failures of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, two public/private partnerships that used lobbying effectively to keep the government on their side as they laid the ground work for the financial catastrophe we are currently experiencing. We all got the short end of the stick on that one, but the politicians who benefited the most from these two companies suffered not at all. Two of the biggest recipients of political contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were Barney Frank and Chris Dodd. In the brave new world in which we now live, these guys are alive and well despite their roles in our financial collapse. So, you see, there is no down side to the politicos for sticking their noses in where they don't belong, and the upside is a rich

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My Addiction

by JT Burkard

I have a problem, an addiction if you will. I am a car guy. Being a car guy, I like cars...lots of them. All kind of cars too. I have to buy them in multiple quantities as well. BMW's obviously are towards the top of my list but I have no limit to my quest for different brands, styles, eras, etc. I've owned a lot of cars in my 19+ years of driving. I couldn't even tell you the amount of cars I actually bought plus the number of cars I came across that I "almost" bought would quadruple that.

I've had all sorts of automotive machines too. A quick rundown of the diversity would include a 1932 Pontiac Sedan, 1984 Porsche 944, 1968 VW Beetle Convertible, 1978 Trans Am, 1970 Chevelle, 1991 Dodge Ramcharger "mud truck", a pair of 1969 Mustangs (one fastback one coupe), a 1978 Chevy C30 tow truck, a 1975 Datsun 280Z, probably 50 or so cars that have passed through my hands. I still own my high school car too. That one is not for sale at any price. This is my prized possession, my 1980 Firebird Formula.

I am on the hunt again. I have wanted another e30 convertible since I sold my last one a few years ago. This month the search got to a serious level. The problem is, while searching for a drop top BMW, I wound up getting side tracked with others that interest me. This week alone I went well across the board on my search for a new vehicle to buy and enjoy for the summer. I started out looking at e30's, then Jeeps. Mostly Wranglers and CJs. From there I checked out a 635i, a couple e36 Convertibles, a bunch of e34's, a 48 Chevy truck, a 1960 Ford 4x4 Pick up, a bunch of motorcycles and a then another car grabbed my attention. This was a 1970 MGB. Yes, this is another car that I have secretly wanted to own for many years now. I had driven one from Virginia to the end of North Carolina shortly after I graduated high school and the experience stayed with me.

I set an appointment to see this car in person. Over the phone the car sounded promising but what can one expect for \$2100. My hunch was confirmed when I went to the sellers house. The MGB was tucked in his three car garage along with a 1987 Corvette Convertible covered in dust and boxes piled on top as its garage mate. The MG was indeed in need of repair but if it was a fairly solid car, we might have a winner. As I started to look over the car I found it to be in less than ideal shape though. The owner suggested we push the car outside so he can start it with a jumper battery since the one in the car was shot. Here is a tip, if your battery is not good, try buying a new one when trying to sell your car. It doesn't leave a good impression.

Back to the inspection, the trunk look like it was repaired at some point and not well, as there were spaces between the floor pan and the frame rails where I can see ground between the gap. The quarter was shabbily repaired. The wiring was atrocious. These things already have a bad rep with Lucas Electronics, no need to make things worse. Every corner of the car had home electrician style wiring nuts connecting wires to all the lights. Looking at the underside reviled more wire nuts and more poor wiring. On the phone he said, "it might have a couple light bulbs out". I guess he was blind to the orange and yellow plastic pieces holding the wires in place? He put the hazards on to show me these lights that were out and curiously, the headlights flashed as well. I told him and he quickly turned the hazards off as if to say "yeah, you didn't see that did you". The original carburetors were removed and a Webber carburetor on top a Pierce intake was installed. The choke plates were removed from the carburetor for some reason so he put a t-shirt over the top to act as a choke. I can see we're dealing with an ace mechanic. It actually did run well so that was one saving grace. The floors were also solid which was surprising. The car included a box and trunk load of spare parts, none of them in original boxes to identify what they were.

He revealed that he is a flipper. One who buys cars then sells them for profit but is not a dealer. I also buy and sell cars but I at least use and enjoy my cars before selling them. He told me the MG was donated and was at a friend's junkyard. He bought it from them. He said he just sells cars as they are without doing any work to them. This was blaringly obvious. He didn't even bother washing the car since it was still covered in dirt from sitting at the scrap yard and the windshield still had its writing on it. This car needed some simple prep to make a better impression but he failed to do the basics. A weekend of cleaning, a new battery and a working choke could have gotten him the money he was asking, or at least close to it. With all

horrors I found, I decided to pass without even making an offer. I couldn't afford to take on someone else's abandoned project that was being sold by someone who knew nothing about the vehicle he was selling.

In a strange twist of events, Sandy's Acura was involved in an accident, and not to her doing either. We dropped it off at the dealer for service and it was hit from behind while, get this, the LOT ATTENDANT was road testing it. Not the mechanic. Why are we paying for dealer labor rates if a certified and Acura trained tech is not diagnosing the car??? There is another part of the story, the woman who caused the accident ran too! Yup, the woman whacked the car then took off. The police got her an hour later. Our reaction from this and what transpired after this will take up the entire newsletter to get into so we'll just leave it as we were are still not quite satisfied with the total outcome. The damage was enough to keep the car in the shop for two months between insurance companies making claims, the repairs to be done, and us battling the dealer for some kind of compensation for damaging our car while it was in their possession with a non-qualified personnel at the wheel. When it was all over Sandy said to me "Maybe I'll sell the car we will buy something else" - Music to me ears. This would actual give me free reign to search for all sorts of stuff! There is a light at the end of that tunnel!

Right off the bat, I hit the computer and started searching Porsche Boxsters, e46 Convertibles and Z4's. The dealer next to mine has a nice 2001 Boxster S with service records and clean history. Sandy said its real nice but not the most practical car for her, but who needs practical when you're driving a Porsche? She also said the same about the Z4. Drat! I figured my truck has 4 doors and a six foot bed to put stuff so how much more practical of a vehicle is that? Seating for five and enough room in the back for a week long camping expedition and great towing capacity to boot. She just gave me that look that says, "Get real". I got back to searching and checked out some e46 3-series coupes, sedans, and convertibles as well as a hand full of e39's. The decision to buy a new car for Sandy is still up in the air but I am still hopeful.

So in the mean time I am back on the search for an e30 drop top and... oh look, here's a nice little 1971 Datsun 240Z....

JT Burkard

Send comments and suggestions to JTFormula@aol.com

Finish Lines

(Continued from page 7)

source of political contributions, giving them an unassailable war chest for campaign spending.

This is why I believe Ford, the only one of the big three NOT to have accepted government bailout money, has chosen the right path. Yes, they went a begging in the beginning. But somebody there has a brain and the cojones to say no to Uncle Sam's bucks. Maybe Alan Mulally (Ford's CEO) has picked up on the eerie resonance of the government's efforts with those of the economic planners in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged, and he doesn't fancy himself in the role of a real-world incarnation of James Taggart. If so, more power to you, Alan, I'm on your side.

Or maybe Ford is the only company of the three to recognize that in the long run, these businesses will survive only if they can make a product that people actually want to buy and that they can sell at a profit, and that government assistance makes that future less, not more, likely. (BTW I love my F350).

Ford's "go it alone" decision may just allow it to emerge as the only relevant car company based in the U.S., even if it means that a painful bankruptcy and reorganization is the pathway to get there.

God speed to Ford.

Thom can be reached at thomrossi@gmail.com

SHADE TREE GARAGE

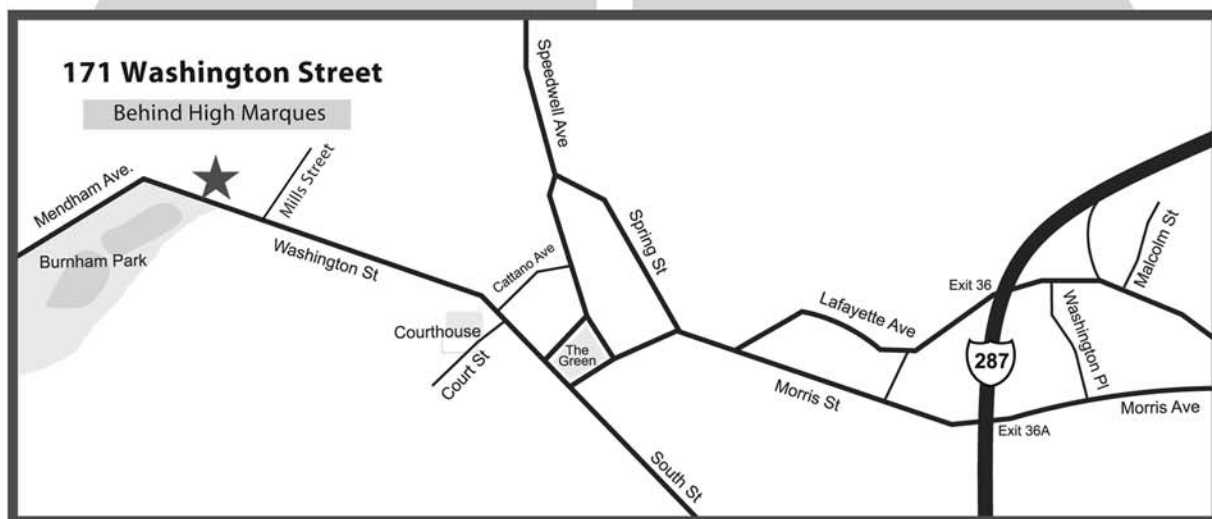
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NJ Chapter Calendar

February 2009

Wednesday, February 18th

Monthly meeting at Shade Tree Garage in Morristown. Marge and John of Shade Tree Garage have again been gracious and willing to host our February, 18th. 2009 monthly meeting at their shop in Morristown. They will enlighten us on shocks and struts past, present and upgrading issues. "Maybe those shocks on sale at Strauss aren't as good as they sound for my M3"

Saturday February 28th

Club Banquet at the Grand Colonial Restaurant and Banquet Center in Perryville, NJ.

March 2009

Wednesday, March 18th

Monthly meeting. Details to follow.



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For information on advertising, or for an advertising contract, please contact the Bulletin's business manager, Paul Ngai. Send advertising artwork to the *Bulletin's* PO Box. Send classified advertisements to Chet Marfatia, Classifieds Editor. Please do not send membership renewals or address changes to the Chapter.

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: \$40.00.

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 by sending \$15.30 to the National BMW CCA Office.

Annual NJ BMW CCA Club Banquet

Enjoy great Fun - Food - Music- Prizes

Where: The Grand Colonial Restaurant
83 Route 173 West, Exit 12 I-78
Date: February 28, 2009 (Saturday)
Cocktail Hour: 7:00-8:00 PM
Dinner & Social: 8:00-12:00
Cost: \$55.00 per person

To register send your check (checks payable to NJBMWCCA) to:

Al Drugos, PO Box 6754, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Directions:

From the East:

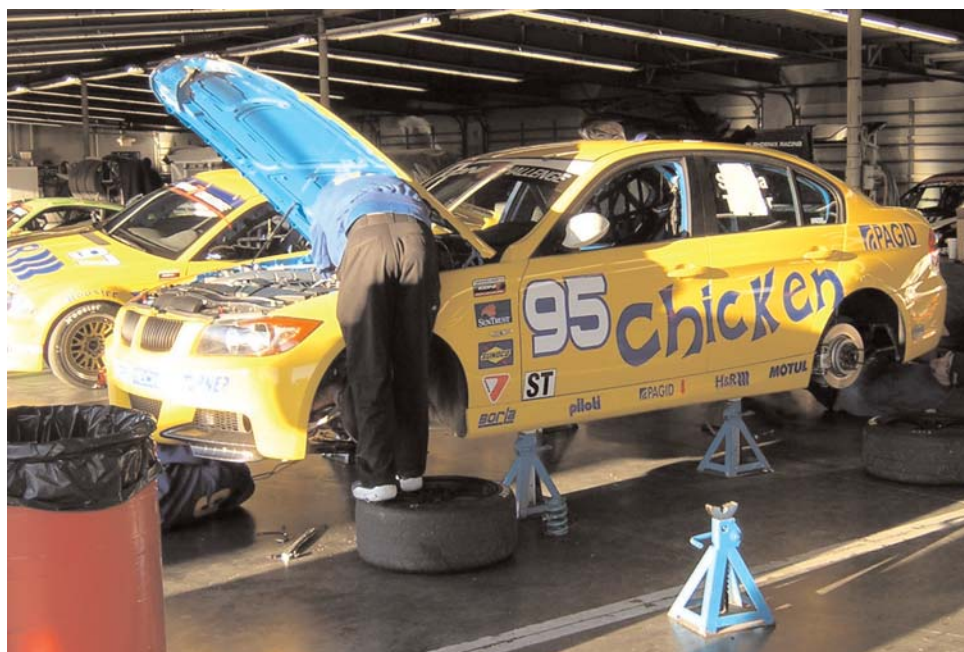
Travel West on I-78 towards Penn. Exit off I-78 at Exit 12. Make a left in front of the truck stop. Go thru the light past the Exxon and Liquor Store. The Grand Colonial is on the right ¼ mile from the light (173 West Service Road to I-78).

From the West:

Travel East on I-78. Take Exit 12. Make a quick left at the end of the ramp and another left at the light. Pass over I-78 and make a left at the next light by the Exxon. The Grand Colonial is on the right ¼ mile from the light (173 West Service Road to I-78).

Rolex and Koni Series Coming to NJMP

By Lary Engel



The Turner Motorsport E90 328 "Chicken" gets prepped prior to the January Koni Challenge race at Daytona. It was driven by former NJ Chapter champion Don Salama and team owner Will Turner. Contrary to rumors otherwise, the team's motto is not "It takes a tough team to drive a tender chicken."

The Grand-Am Rolex and Koni Challenge series will be coming to New Jersey Motorsports Park on May 1st to 3rd, and we have arranged special ticket packages and an infield car corral for BMWs. If the January races at Daytona are any indication, this is going to be a "must see" event for racing fans.

On January 23rd, the 2009 racing season got off to a pretty good start for BMW fans - Bill Auberlen and Matt Bell won the Koni Challenge Fresh from Florida 200 at Daytona in their Turner Motorsports E46 M3. Joey Hand and Chris Gleason also had a top ten finish in the other Turner M3. In addition, three time New Jersey Chapter champion Don Salama and Will Turner scored a satisfying top ten finish in the ST class, driving their new E90 328i. Instead of the familiar Turner graphics, this car was emblazoned with the word "Chicken" on the driver's side. Don explained that the car was still under development, and they were reluctant to put the Turner graphics on it. They might have reconsidered if they'd known it was going to finish so respectably.

The race also featured two E92 M3s, but both of them were sidelined by incidents. It looks like they're going to be pretty fast once they get some more track time. Hopefully, more of the new cars will come online by the Thunderbolt race.

Of course, the main event of the Daytona weekend was the Rolex 24, and it was perhaps the most exciting endurance race ever! David Donohue in a Brumos Porsche held off Juan Pablo Montoya in a Ganassi Lexus powered car to win the race by .167 seconds. There were four cars on the lead lap after 24 hours, and they were nose to tail for much of the time. Unfortunately, the three Dinan BMW powered cars didn't fare so well, but the Level 5 car finished 19th overall and ninth in class.

Come join us on May 2nd and 3rd for the BMW Corral at NJMP. You'll love the race action, and we hope to fill a large portion of the infield with Bimmers! Two and Three day ticket packages are available with a 10% discount off the regular prices of \$55 and \$65, and include general admission, paddock access, and Saturday and Sunday infield parking in the corral. Make sure you mention the code "BMW" to get the discount and corral access. If you've never been to a major sports car race, you shouldn't miss this one - it's going to be a great weekend! The racing action in Grand-Am and Koni Challenge is unbelievable! For more information or tickets, go to NJMP.com or Grand-Am.com.

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