



New Jersey Bulletin

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA
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BMW Club-Race car on display at Cub Scout Soapbox Derby



See Page 11 for Banquet Announcement

Article and Photos by
Marc Thomaes

When I received a call from Jim Puleio, cub master of Pack 88 from Pompton Lakes N.J., he asked if I would be willing to display my race car at their yearly Soapbox Derby. It only took me a minute to decide.

Jim is Sal's Puleio's brother - we all know Sal - the owner of Rennsport Motor Works in Hackensack and longtime New Jersey chapter member and instructor. James felt it would be such a thrill for the kids (and their parents) to have a real racecar sitting right there at the starting line.

The yearly event takes place at Hershfield Park Place in Pompton Lakes, where the street is blocked off for half a day. After a rain-out on Sunday September 27, we got it all together on Sunday October 4.

To make it even more interesting for the kids, we let the three podium finishers sit in the driver seat. We revved up the car and they got to play with the gas pedal. The winner ended up with a BMW CCA Club Racing class winner flag, and each of the three top finishers was given a large

picture of the car in action at Summit Point.

For the adults I had prepared a fact sheet on the car, with information about BMW Club Racing, the venues where we race, and the safety requirements we have to abide by.

I was amazed at how well some of these young kids were informed. A six-year old asked me to open up the hood and started asking questions about the engine. He also wanted to know if I had to change the brake pads after every race.

One of the kids told me he was so excited because "it was the first time he shook hands with a real racer".

I don't know who had the biggest kick out of the event, the kids or me... I am still smiling.

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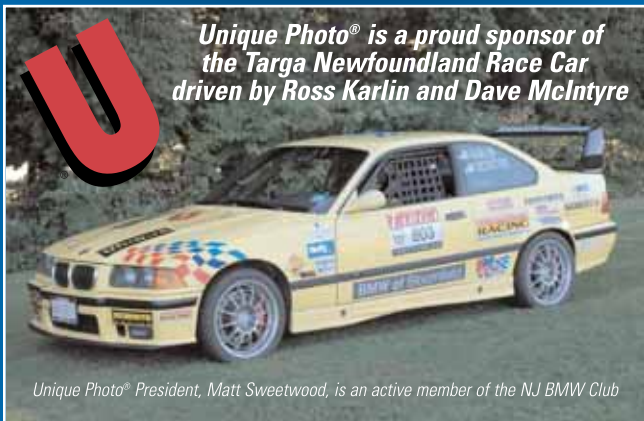
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The Cone Catcher



by Larry Engel

Another month has flown by, and here I sit wondering if I can summon the creativity to put 1200 scintillating words on paper. It's Thanksgiving week, and I'm taking a vacation from my day job. I'm mostly catching up on the Honey Do list and working some car stuff into the mix. We're getting the house ready for our usual Holiday feast. We think we have 30 for dinner on Thursday, but we're never sure until we sit down. Today I'll be doing airport runs to collect members of the far-flung family.

The BMW club has become a much bigger part of my life this past year, so it's appropriate that I give thanks to the people who have made my job a lot easier. This includes everybody on the Board, as well as numerous people who are always around to lend a hand. I'm still amazed at how smoothly most things run, and it's because of smart, dedicated volunteers who mostly keep it simple and get the job done. It's been a pleasure working with everyone, and I look forward to another year of fun.

Speaking of next year, we're already trying to fine-tune certain aspects of what we do. As much as possible, we're going to improve the communication about meetings and other events; particularly with regard to the amount of time we give you to put these things on your calendar. We know it has been hard for you to plan for some of our meetings, and we'll try to improve the lead time.

One thing that went extremely well last year, particularly in light of the slow economy, was the driving events program. Jeff White is already well on the way to setting the dates for next year's track events. This job has become increasingly complex over the past few years, given the number of new tracks and car clubs competing to use the facilities. We need to schedule events so that they are convenient for our members and instructors. Our Chief Instructor, Barry Stevens, has a tough job trying to find enough instructors to satisfy the demand. In addition, Vic Lucariello and his Tech Staff are always challenged to process so many cars before each event.

We were very pleased to see such a huge turnout for our Introduction to Track School at Lightning Raceway in October. Judging by the smiles on the faces of the "newbies" after this event, it looks like we've got a new crop of track junkies in the making. We hope to see many of you back at the track next year!

For those of you who don't want to invest the time or expense required of a track event, Autocross offers the chance to exercise and explore the performance envelope of your Bimmer. Elihu Savad is putting the final touches on the schedule, and we hope to see more of you out there next year. Autocross is inexpensive, doesn't require a lot of time, and provides a tremendous bang for the buck. You can't imagine how much fun you can have in second gear if you haven't tried Autocross. Many of us also think it's a great way to become a better driver. It really teaches you the limits of your car and gives you a first-hand understanding of vehicle dynamics. Frankly, I think it should be required of all drivers. There are also plenty of instructors who are willing to ride along with other drivers and offer their advice. The adrenaline rush comes as a bonus at no extra charge.

The other thing that I'm really thankful for is our proximity to BMWNA Headquarters in Woodcliff Lake and our special relationship with the people that manufacture and market these addictive cars. My first visit to Woodcliff Lake was years ago at one of the famous June chapter meetings conducted by Rich Brekus and the Product Line Managers. Rich was a CCA member before he worked for BMW. His meetings were often part "company line", part car nut talking to other car nuts, and part Don Rickles stand-up comedy. They were always entertaining and a highlight of our schedule.

Last year Rich was promoted to National Sales Manager, so we were a little concerned that the meeting would lose some of its appeal. We needn't have worried. Longtime friend of the club and current M Brand Manager Larry Koch has taken over responsibility for keeping us rabble-rousers entertained, and the June meeting was as fantastic as ever! By the way, we know Larry reads the Bulletin, because I received an email from him the other day which discussed possible meeting plans for next year (stay tuned), but also to clarify something that was written in a recent Bulletin

article. For the record, the V8 engine in the E9X M3 is 22 pounds lighter than the E46 M3's six. (Note to Jeff Burgess: Larry loved your article on the meeting at Open Road - and I'm also thankful for you and everybody else that helps make this publication so interesting.)

We've also been fortunate to have Martin Birkmann, BMWNA head of Product Planning and Motorsport Manager, join us at some of our events. Among other things, Martin is the guy at BMWNA responsible for the Rahal/Letterman ALMS GT2 M3 effort. He's frequently interviewed at races, so most of you have seen Martin on TV. I wonder if his Red student at Lightning knew their instructor's credentials!

All this talk about our special relationship with BMWNA leads me to remind club members of an important understanding between NA and the Chapter. Every once in a while, we get a peek at something that isn't meant for general public consumption. In these cases, we need to keep this information to ourselves. We are very fortunate to be in BMWNA's back yard, and we must respect their desire to keep certain things out of the public eye. If you want to get an occasional glimpse of something new, you'll just have to join us at the meetings - and keep the secret!

I dropped by JMK BMW last weekend to attend their grand re-opening and check out the new showroom. They had the new 5 series GT on display. It was the third time I've seen this car in person, and the more I see it the more I like it. This is a car that looks much better in person than it does in photographs, and it combines BMW driving dynamics with a spacious cabin for four (or five) and a handy hatch for cargo carrying. For me, it has the potential to be a more enjoyable alternative to the typical SUV. I probably wouldn't buy it with the twin-turbo V8 being offered in the launch version because I've already got one gas hog in the fleet, and I figure the M3 is better at going fast in the twisties than the Fiver GT. I'd be a more likely buyer if it had a diesel and X-drive.

The 5 GT might be a little too big and too expensive for me, anyway, so I'm looking forward to a 3-Series car in a similar configuration. I've seen rumors of such a car in press reports, and I hope they're true. I'd love to have a car that cruises comfortably and efficiently and has the utility to haul things when needed. Although the M3 is a wonderful car to drive on the road, it doesn't get any more than 22 or 24 miles per gallon on the highway. The environmentalist in me yearns for a car that can cruise comfortably and get near 40 mpg.

The current 335d seems ideal from an efficiency/performance perspective, and I hope the next generation 3 has a similar offering with a hatch and X-drive. I understand that the X5 diesel is selling fairly well, but the 335d hasn't been as successful so far. I hope they have the patience to develop the diesel line here in the U.S. I'm also hoping that two or three years from now I'll have the best of both worlds - the M3 for the boy racer in me and an efficient, quiet, comfortable cruiser/hauler for those times when my middle-aged, eco-conscious suburbanite persona dominates. (I hope Woodcliff Lake is reading right now. This is kind of my long-lead Christmas list.)

Well, once again I've rambled long enough to fill my allotted space. Have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season! Until next time, keep the cones standing!

larry_engel@njbmwcca.org





Philes' Forum

by Vic Lucariello

Hello, Bimmerphiles! This time out I have a NJMVC inspection saga that I think will interest almost all of you.

I still wish to receive copies of your NJMVC emissions-inspection reports. You can either mail a photocopy of your report [preferred], or simply email the test data. [Include your name, too, if you want to be famous and be mentioned in *Philes' Forum!*] Please include both the test results and the pass/fail criterion for each pollutant along with your model and year, transmission type, and mileage. If you know at what mileages your oxygen sensor and spark plugs were last replaced, include that as well. Please indicate what, if any, modifications have been made to your motor [aftermarket chip or software, intake, exhaust, etc.] and your exact model number [e.g.: 328i, not 3-Series]. Note that there is no need for you to send in reports of passed OBDII inspections [This is where they simply connect a scanner to your car and do not actually test emissions.], as such reports contain no information other than the fact that you have passed.

Recent Bimmerphile submitters of inspection results are driver-school instructor and Tech worker Jim Anderson, NJ Chapter Prez and Tech worker Larry Engel, new Tech worker Doug Feigel, and driver-school Chairman [and erstwhile Tech worker] Jeff White. In addition to all four gentlemen being connected with our driver-school program, they all submitted test results from their E30s! Thanks, guys!

Speaking of inspection results, back in June I received the following missive from NJ Chapter Club Racing Godfather and North Atlantic Rep to the BMWCCA National Driving Events Committee Ross Karlin:

Dear Mr. Phile's [SIC]

Karen's car [2001 E46 325xi, 96000 miles] was due for inspection, but the "service engine soon" light [AKA: Malfunction Indicator Lamp, or MIL] was on. I took it to Rick's [Rick Kiceniuk at Kiceniuk Automotive in Annandale] and he read the code to be a [problem with the engine's electrically-heated thermostat]. He replaced the thermostat and cleared the code. Then he told me to drive 60 miles to allow the computer to reset.

After driving 75 miles, I went to the Paramus Inspection Station and failed for emissions because the computer had not done its thing.

Yesterday, I went back (having put a couple hundred miles on it since the [code clearing], and passed.....Yay!

Enclosed are copies of the paperwork.

Enjoy!

Ross

Ross' experience is fairly common since the NJMVC converted to computer scanning in lieu of an actual emissions test on OBDII [On-Board Diagnostics - Level II]-compliant cars. I thought you might be interested in the reasons for this situation. But first, a brief [I promise] primer on OBD II. Pay attention, Alphonse, dere vill be a quiz at der endt!

Prior to the advent of OBD II regulations, there was, among the different car manufacturers, a smorgasbord of differing communication protocols, connector designs, connector locations, fault-code definitions, etc. OBD II standardized for the most part the design and location of the diagnostic connector used to access the ECM [Engine-Control Computer, AKA "DME" in BMW patois]. Moreover, trouble-code designations and engine-data-parameter definitions were also standardized. For example, if one reads Code P0120 [P stands for "Powertrain"], on a Yugo or a BMW, the code tells you something is wrong with the throttle-position sensor. OBD II requires that the same scanner can be used to extract OBD II information from any OBD II-compliant vehicle, using a standardized underdash connector.

Any US-spec, gasoline-fueled Bimmer 1996 and newer should be OBD II compliant. One of the features of OBD II is that the ECM is sophisticated enough to infer when tailpipe emissions have exceeded specs by 50% or more [This is why NJMVC discontinued actual emissions testing on OBD II vehicles.] and/or when the engine is misfiring. OBD II also runs tests, called monitors, to establish whether the evaporative-emissions-control system and secondary-air-injection [air pump] system are working properly. Other monitors check on the oxygen sensors and other sensors that are vital to engine management. Some monitors, such as the Misfire Monitor and the Comprehensive Component Monitor, run whenever the motor is running or when the ignition is on, as applicable. Others, such as the Catalytic Converter Monitor and Evaporative Emissions Monitor, only run when certain ambient and vehicle conditions are satisfied, or run once per so-called "drive cycle".

And herein lies the answer to why Karen's E46 failed inspection even though the MIL was off and the original thermostat problem had been repaired by Rick; resetting the trouble codes also resets the monitors. Usually, a 75 mile drive under mixed driving conditions will be sufficient to get all the monitors to execute. But not always.....

The vehicle inspection report for Ross' failed inspection indicates that, of the 8 monitors applicable to Karen's Bimmer, two had not yet run, even though Ross had driven 75 miles from Rick's to the inspection station. The Secondary Air Injection Monitor and the Evaporative System Monitor were shown as "Not Ready", meaning [in OBD II parlance] that the vehicle and operating conditions required for these monitors to execute had not been satisfied. The other applicable monitors were shown as "Ready", indicating that they had executed. Having a monitor "Not Ready" is grounds for rejection at NJMVC.

Since the Secondary Air Injection Monitor usually runs after a cold start, when the air pump is running, I suspected that Ross had driven from Rick's to the inspection station without the car cooling off. Sure enough, Ross confirmed this.

The Evaporative System Monitor, which checks the integrity of the fuel tank, lines, vapor canister, purge valve, gas gap, etc to ensure that hydrocarbon vapors are not escaping into the atmosphere, is likely the most complicated OBD II monitor in that it will only execute under very specific conditions. One of the conditions is that the fuel tank cannot be near full or near empty! So I was not surprised 'o see that this monitor had not run during the trip from Rick's in Hunterdon County to the inspection station in North Jersey. However, Ross and Karen did put on about 400 miles between the failed inspection and the subsequent passed inspection, and it was about 2 weeks, a number of start-stop cycles, and at least a tankful of fuel between the inspections.

So, if you have read this far, my advice is that you should drive the car through a couple drive cycles and put some miles on it prior to going to inspection after trouble codes have been cleared. Indeed, some shops do not reset trouble codes after doing a repair. Instead they tell the customer to drive the car until the MIL extinguishes prior to going to inspection. After a problem is corrected, when OBD II does not see it for several drive cycles or monitor executions, the code will be erased and the MIL should extinguish. In Ross' case, I bet that the MIL would have gone out after a couple cold starts/warmup cycles. Most shops, however, do just as Rick did and reset the Codes/ MIL after the repair, and advise the customer to put some miles on prior to inspection.

If you liked this column and would like to me to write more about NJMVC inspections, let me know.

And for those of you who only view Philes' Forum for the photos, the lone photo this month is of our newest driver-school Tech worker, Doug Feigel. Doug made the mistake of telling me he will be taking the New Jersey Professional Engineer Examination, and immediately got conscripted to be a Tech worker! Anyhow, one of the duties of our **(continued on page 7)**

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Life in the Electric Lane - What are the broader implications?

Regardless of whether the electric Mini is the "right" vehicle, as it is currently engineered, or not, it is clear that the very near future will have some mix of all electric vehicles on the road. Moreover, the number and variety of liquid fuel (gasoline or diesel)/electric hybrid vehicles is increasing every year and next year will include models from BMW. Given this trend, I thought it might be fun to speculate on what the broader implications of electric vehicle development might hold for automobiles as a whole.

One inescapable fact of electric vehicles is that batteries are heavy. In the case of the Mini-E, the battery pack weighs in excess of 550 lbs. That's like having two NFL defensive ends riding around in the back seat all the time! To paraphrase the late Colin Chapman: To add performance, add lightness. The concept of reducing weight to increase performance is a fundamental tenet in racing, but the concept also applies to *distance*. The lower the load imposed on a battery, the longer the charge will last. Thus, one way to add range to an electric vehicle is to decrease the weight the car has to push around. It is no accident that the Tesla designers chose the Lotus as the base on which to construct their vehicle - minimal weight as a starting point yields high performance as well as reasonable range. Clearly, one path to reducing weight is development of new battery technologies that use lighter weight components. Lead-acid batteries are giving way to lithium-ion, including lithium polymer, technologies but what will we see next? Any technological advance in batteries will be applicable across all vehicles since weight reduction is always useful.

What about more radical options? Current electric vehicles are being designed around current body styles and production methods. Future vehicles need not be so constrained. For example, vehicles in which small electric motors are used at each wheel can also incorporate more creative uses and layouts of interior spaces. The BMW EfficientDynamics Concept car introduced this year was reportedly a "clean sheet" design philosophy with the goal of creating the performance of an M car but the fuel efficiency of a hybrid. The drive train is a full hybrid combining a 3-cylinder turbo diesel with a pair of electric motors (one per axle). The result is a vehicle with 350 hp, 590 lb-ft of torque and an average fuel consumption of 60+ mpg! Who of us would not like to have that as our Driver School vehicle? Will we return to an M3 that weighs 2900 lbs?

Similarly, lightweight and extremely strong composite materials are now being used to build aircraft. Might we see use of these materials in vehicles in a manner analogous to the carbon fiber roof of the M6 and M3? How long will it be before we see a joint venture between Boeing and Ford to develop composite body panels or General Electric (a company that knows a thing or two about both electric motors and composites) and General Motors to cooperate on vehicle design or perhaps Siemens and BMW? Strong, lightweight, composite body panels might coincide with a return to body-on-frame vehicle design with the frames comprised of aluminum, lightweight steel and carbon fiber. It is interesting to think about BMW's GINA concept vehicle in which fabric was stretched over a moveable frame and what effect the lessons learned from that exercise might have on new vehicle development. It is also interesting to consider whether a return to body-on-frame construction might lead to lower insurance costs. As anyone who has had body damage can attest, the labor charges for repair generally exceed the cost for parts required. If replacing the part simply meant bolting on a new rear quarter panel, the consequent reduced costs could yield lower coverage rates. Such panels would also be dent resistant and the progressive reduction in the use of steel would make corrosion, and its prevention, a thing of the past. Carbon fiber brake rotors and composite wheels are also logical next steps to reduce weight.

One other aspect of electric motors is that they are very quiet. In fact, this has become a significant pedestrian safety concern such that manufacturers are looking at adding sounds to electric vehicles to let bystanders know they are coming. However, one side effect of this quiet operation is a reduced need for heavy, sound deadening material. Again, new technology can add lightness.

LED lights are being used in greater numbers in vehicles and that trend is likely to continue. LEDs are lighter weight, consume less power and provide greater output than conventional options and so fulfill all our criteria for "adding lightness" (no pun intended). And, with their long life, no more

worries of failed inspections or random traffic citations for burned-out light bulbs.

Might the development of all electric vehicles usher in a world-wide set of vehicle safety standards such that a true "world vehicle" is feasible? We are seeing some compromises already. European pedestrian safety standards have changed the front-end profiles of new BMWs and Minis. Similarly, CAFÉ and other fuel consumption standards spell the end of normally aspirated engines as gas guzzler taxes are phased out and cars must either meet the standards or not be sold here. As a broader range of vehicles is developed, penetration of a particular vehicle into any one market will be smaller and so development costs must be spread over a wider number of markets. Ask any of our friends at BMW NA why we can't have individual interiors or the newly announced M3 GTS, the answer is almost always that the cost to have that vehicle certified for sale in the US is not cost effective. With government mandates from all over the world dictating increased fleet efficiency from manufacturers, it will be in the interest of those same manufacturers to lobby governments for a set of standards that are applicable across all markets so that new vehicle sale prices can be in line with reasonable affordability.

Finally, in a more nightmare scenario to those of us who enjoy driving, fully electric vehicles (or vehicles that are under full electronic control) could result in the development of fully automated vehicles. Power, braking, and steering can all be controlled by electric motors. Absolute vehicle position can be determined by GPS (no need for in-road sensors) while relative position can be determined by "active" cruise control systems. Traffic lights or stop signs can control traffic flow via short range radio frequencies. It is easily conceivable to envision the ability to get into your car, use voice commands to tell it where you want to go and then let the car take you there. No more distracted drivers causing accidents, no more drunk drivers causing fatalities, no more "rubber necking delays" in the case of a mechanical failure, you can now drink your coffee, talk on your communication device and surf the Net while you are taken to your destination. Your car has now become the equivalent of a train but with the flexibility of individual transportation. However, the Microsoft "blue screen of death" when your computer system locks up could now have a more dire association. Let's be careful what we wish for.....

Please let me know your thoughts on what other changes we might see in the next generation of cars. And, we haven't even begun to discuss alternate fuels.

Happy holidays to you all and may the New Year bring you health, prosperity, mechanical reliability, and open roads ahead of you.

Jeff White

See Page 11 for Banquet Announcement

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Finish Lines by Thom Rossi

I suppose the highlight of my past month's efforts in this hobby must be the three days I spent on track at Mid Ohio. It was my final outing for the season. My goals were to learn a new track and to be competitive, hoping for at least a second place finish within my class during each of three races. All races were given 150% points weighting as this was a National event, and the weekend was packed solid with 3 points races, two sprints and an enduro.

The Buckeye Chapter hosted a great racing weekend on October 23-25. This was my first visit to that venue, and I had the pleasure of the companionship of both the Atkinsons and Del Val chapter member David Weaver. After a long tow out on Thursday, Friday greeted us with a day of heavy rain. As I prepared to get out on the track, I went through my normal start up routine. Harness secure, helmet strapped, gloves on, oil pressure ok, water temp ok, and check the battery and system function for the electronically activated fire suppression. On this last check point, I was chagrined to find that when I pressed the system check button, the system indicated "not functional". Hmmm.

After a short warm up session on track, during which I became passingly familiar with the basic course layout and explored the traction available on the wet line, I pulled into the paddock and checked the fire suppression tank, only to find it had been fully discharged somewhere between the time I raced at the Glen in September, and the time I arrived at Mid-Ohio. Most of the rest of Friday was spent running around trying to find someplace that could re-charge my SPA tank, but with no success. It turns out that these

systems can only be re-charged at the factory, and it also turns out that a replacement tank cannot be sent overnight express because the pressurized tank is considered hazardous. Hence there was no chance to get a replacement unit sent to me from Indiana in time for race qualifying on Saturday. Racing rules require a functional fire suppression system, so I was a bit desperate to find a solution to my problem. That's where True Choice Motorsports came in. Based in Powell OH, they were the nearest retailer of SPA fire suppression systems. Not only did they have a new tank in stock, but one of their guys was willing to meet me at his house on Friday night with the replacement tank to save me about an hour of driving. Problem solved and lesson learned. From now on a spare, fully charged tank is one of the things I will definitely be traveling with.

Saturday morning I was able to start with a car that fully met all safety requirements and passed tech inspection. Unfortunately, an unrelated mechanical failure caused me to miss the first practice session. The subsequent qualifying session was my first chance to drive the track in the dry, and due to a racing incident early in the session, I only got 6 laps in. Still, I was able to qualify second in the KP class, sandwiched right in the middle of my other two competitors (both of whom claim Mid-Ohio as their home track) but well off the pace of the class leader, John Negus. This result anticipated the outcome of the first sprint, where Negus easily won the class, I came in second and Jim Gintner brought up the rear. Our second sprint was run in the rain, and cut short to a little over half a dozen laps. This time I was 3 seconds per lap faster than Negus, but I started well behind him and when we crossed the finish line I **(continued on page 8)**

Philes' Forum (continued)

(continued from page 4) techs is to staple two-sheet Tech forms together so that they do not become separated in our records. In the photo you can see Doug posing proudly, wearing his NJ Chapter Tech Worker Shirt and holding a stapler. [In the right of the photo is Tech Worker Jeff Caldwell. Jeff is on the job while Doug is mugging for the camera.] Doug actually brought his own stapler! This was a first in the annals of the New Jersey Chapter driver schools! Thanks Doug. All kidding aside, you did a heck of a job at Lighting in October. Especially in the dark on Sunday night. Good luck on that P.E. exam. And yes, I brought a stapler when I sat for my exam.



That's all for now, Bimmerphiles. See you next time!

Anyone wishing to contribute to *Philes' Forum* should contact me at vic.sr@njbmwcca.org. I'm interested in tech tips, repair /maintenance questions and/or tips, repair horror stories, emissions inspection sagas, product evaluations, etc.

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Finish Lines

(continued from page 7) was on his bumper and needed another lap to get by him for a victory that was never to materialize. Yeah, yeah, I know, every racer claims "I could've won if I had one more lap". The final race was an Enduro, and this time I qualified last in the KP field. This made for an exciting start. The green flag was dropped on the back straight heading into a turn called "China Beach". I started behind Gintner and I knew from our earlier runs that I had a slight speed advantage on the back straight. My goal was to pass him before we got to China Beach. Gintner knew I was behind him and anticipated that I would try to pass him on the right, to take the inside of the turn, so he dodged right as we approached the braking zone. This gave me an opening to stay on the throttle and brake late, taking the outside line into China Beach and heading into the uphill braking zone for the next section of the track (named "Madness"), a blind, sharp left hand turn whose apex is more or less at the peak of a steep hill.

Having set myself up for the inside line on Madness, I saw Gintner get hung up in the heavy traffic on the normal racing line and was able to put quite a few cars between us. For the next few laps I tried to keep Negus's tail lights within striking distance and came close to overtaking him a couple of times in traffic, but no cigar. By lap 5 we were clear of traffic and Negus pulled steadily away from me, while I maintained a constant gap between me and Gintner in third. After pitting at about the 35 minute mark, I lost sight of Gintner and figured I had about half a lap on him. It was a good thing I had gapped him, because I soon got caught in a battle with a spec e-36 driver and when I tried too-bold a move going into Madness, I found myself on a landscaping expedition as my car edged off the track onto the wet grass. After nearly spinning to the right, I was somehow able to dial in a correction and power down the soggy embankment without getting bogged down in the swamp. I managed to get back on the track without losing position, but I had lost about 15 seconds and for the remainder of the race I could see Gintner in my mirrors about 200 yards behind me, trying to close in. I breathed a sigh of relief when the white flag came out indicating one more lap, and knew all I had to do was drive a decent lap without any further misadventure to secure a second place finish. The checkered flag came none too soon.

All in all, the weekend held a lot of good, clean racing and I was both satisfied with my results and very pleased with the chance to make some new friends at the Buckeye Chapter as well as to learn a new and outstanding track. I was able to steadily reduce my lap times and I'm confident that with another shot at the track next year, and after a few mods to my car in the off season, I'll be in a position to be more competitive with Negus, maybe I can even hope for a shot at a class win there next year.

Now my attention is shifting to the off-season and the many things I'd like to do to get ready for next year. First on my list is to work on horsepower. I had my car dyno'd and had the chip tuned at VAC just before heading out to Mid-Ohio. In the process, I was able to gain about 10 HP. But I still have about an 18 HP deficit compared to Negus, according to our dyno sheets. Now I know those shy little ponies are hiding someplace in that M20 motor, and I'm going to make a serious effort at bringing them out to play. I'll let you know how that worked out after I've taken a crack at some motor work with Steve Vicari's help - all class-legal you suspicious types.

Also on my to-do list is to improve my towing rig. I've been looking for a good deal on an enclosed gooseneck trailer for about a year. I finally found a box that I liked, at a price I was willing to pay, and purchased one last week from a sprint racing team in Farmingdale NJ. My goal on this one is to first apply a little TLC to erase some of the wear and tear you might expect to find in a trailer used for half a dozen seasons by a professional racing team, then to set it up to my exact liking. I really enjoyed staying at the track in Bill Van Ocker's camper this year, so I'd like to get the front end of my trailer set up with the basics for comfortable camping. This is another project I'll update you on as it comes further along.

Thom can be reached at ThomRossi@gmail.com

See Page 11 for Banquet Announcement

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We didn't heed the warnings though. Sunday morning the alarm clock went off. Sandy shut it off and went back to sleep. The time was 6:20am. Not quite the ideal time for a Sunday wake up. Next thing I remember is springing up from a dead sleep at 6:58am.

We had to get on the road by 8am at the latest and one hour to get ready was cutting it close, at least for Sandy. We rushed out the door and into her Acura. What's that you say? An Acura? Isn't this a BMW club? Oh yeah, that's one of the other warnings signs. I dropped our black 1977 e21 off for some needed paint touch up at the body shop two weeks before the rally. They managed to get all the repair work done and paint on the car by Friday but it would not be completely finished for the rally. I didn't have the confidence in our other 1977 320i, in Sierra Beige; that we had just put on the road for the distance we were going to be traveling.

Want other warning signs? I didn't sleep soundly as I woke up at least 6 times during the night. Excitement, anticipation, maybe the diner food we ate that night? I wasn't sure. Sandy spilled her beverage all over our glass dining table in the morning making a mess. She forgot her earrings (all the women are gasping in unison at this notion) and I have a picture of a black cat on my cell phone. We were doomed from the start.

So we blast out of the house, onto the Parkway and arrive just as the drivers' meeting started. Not bad, not bad at all. A bit more than one and a quarter hours to get there including a fuel stop. We had a good feeling we were going to do very well. False inklings of euphoria. We were car #32, the last car. Another warning sign? That doesn't bother us as we wind up passing and re-passing other club members along the way. The less people around, the fewer clues we will give away.

We started off missing the very first clue. No big deal right? Maybe another warning signs of things to come? We ignored that. Off we went grabbing clues like pros. Sphinx here, Steakhouse there, Wanaque Reservoir, No Outlet, a bathtub, eggs, etc. We only missed a couple and even had answered bonus questions. We had confidence and were working together like a fine oiled machine. We had about two pages of clues left and over an hour to do them. This was in the bag.

That was until we found the infamous baseball clue. In the instructions it states "left at 'T' unless otherwise noted in the rally sheet." OK, fine. We got our clue "who's at bat" - #1 batter on a mural on the baseball field. 100 feet up the road was a T. The instructions state after that clue "Make first Right" - Sounds like we make a right. Left at T unless stated "Make First Right" seems like the logical "otherwise stated" - This is where it all went to heck. We make the right. Down the road we go following the reservoir. Miles have passed. No clues, no... well... nothing. Sandy suggested we turn around as we are probably going in the wrong direction. I ignored this as I am of fittingly stubborn German decent or just a man, whichever one you want to choose. We wound up 10 miles away, and pulled over at one of the previous clues from the beginning of the rally. We needed to figure out what is wrong here. I swallowed my shallow pride and placed a call to Ross Karlin, Rallymaster, who filled us in on the error. We were not supposed to make the right at the ball field but the left at T then make the right. Now we have to go back.

Well, the mishaps were not over yet. Getting back to that wrong turn location proved more challenging. We completely missed the road we turned off of. That meant another 5 miles or so the wrong direction again. Both Sandy and I were completely confused at this point. Where did we go wrong now? Water, water everywhere and not a drop I need! Then I remembered the other road and headed back again. 30 minutes wasted of the hour we had left. This is going to suck. At that point, we knew we were fubared.

We eventually got back on track. We entered the park at Skylands Manor. What a gorgeous estate! Lots of clues here so I hope we can get back on

the ball. We didn't have much time so any thing we can do to pick up more points and time will be needed. That's where the final nail in the coffin occurred.

As we came around the top of the hill, the traffic was horrendous. Don't these sightseers realize we have a timed rally to complete? Pedestrians, buses, cars, and SUV's were seemingly in suspended animation as our blood pressures were rising and our vocabulary went from PG to PG-13, NC-17, R then off the charts. Oh yea, truckers and sailors would have been offended at the things coming out of our mouths. Our level of frustration was elevated to new heights never achieved before. Sandy said at that point to forget the rally and just park at the Manor and let's take a tour of the estate. Our time was almost up and we were very late. There was no chance of winning anything, so what's the difference now. I refused to give in and raise the white flag. We are the returning rally champs! We can't just give up! NEVER GIVE UP!

Then more problems - we made ANOTHER wrong turn in the park. Instead of going left and towards the exit, I misunderstood the directions and went right, all the way to the other side of the park with no way out. ARGH! I think steam was shooting out of my ears. Sandy was ready to jump out of the sunroof. We need to find a way out and fast. Back down the road again but this time we went out the way we came in. That wasn't right either. A K-turn later and back up past the Manor, the sightseers and everything else that caused anguish. Sandy again pleaded we just park and salvage what was left of this horrible day.

I pressed on - reading and re-reading the directions. At this point even if we wanted to bail out of the rally, we still had no clue where we were, how to get out and how to get home. Alas, I succeeded to read properly! Aggravation doesn't help for clear thinking.

Back on the right road and finally, after over an hour of sheer frustration, confusion, and marriage-testing situations, we were actually back on track. We finally made our way back to the end point. We got out of the car so fired up, we needed a minute before we could enter the restaurant. Upon entering in the establishment solo (Sandy needed more time to cool off), I got a roaring ovation as we were the last car to arrive, quite late mind you. I was consoled by several of the club members and even treated to a well deserved stiff drink! I wasn't a scotch drinker before but I started that moment. Oh yes, I needed a double! I handed the rally sheets in, a gesture to say that we started this rally and ended it. Even if we had no chance of any prize but in my mind I knew I completed the rally, start to aggravating finish.

So what happened to Sandy you ask? She finally calmed down after placing a call to her mother (or maybe a lawyer?) and she joined the rest of us. It turns out that most of the participants made the same errors and even the winner, Jon and Doug, wound up doing the same exact mistakes we did. They were able to recover a lot faster than our fatal downfall.

All in all this was the most challenging and frustrating rally to-date we have done. When the smoke cleared (food and drink helped that) it was quite an experience. It comes down to rule #1: The Rallymaster is always right, even when he is wrong.

Razzing aside, I would like to thank Ross and his wife Karen for a most challenging and stressful day. I really understand that running one of these events is a large undertaking and I thank them for holding this rally in a new location. It definitely gave us something to talk about. I would also like to congratulate all of the winners as well as thanking the various sponsors. Without them, we could not have had such a great array of prizes. Please make sure you thank them for supporting our club.

I think next year, I will get my revenge and donate a Do it Yourself Divorce kit for the last place winners. The Whack Your Turkey Rally in a word? ARGH!

JT Burkard

Send comment and suggestions to: JTFormula@aol.com

NJ Chapter Calendar

January 2010

Thursday, January 21st

Monthly meeting at the Deutscher Club. We are privileged to have Klaus Schnitzer, who will present his photos of the BMW CCA. You won't want to miss this meeting. Meeting starts at 7:30pm

February 2010

TBD

February Monthly meeting.

Saturday, February 20th

Annual Club Banquet. Held at the Grand Colonial in Perryville, NJ.



Welcome New Members

Carly Anderson
Jamie Arkley
Nicole Barra
Roberta Bierman
John Boyd
Michael Chang
Hong Cheng
Steven Cohn
Edward Colandra
Steven Desimone

Omar Elrabie
Mohamed Elshikh
Jeffrey Goodfriend
Andrew Gray
Tyler Green
Tyler Hardy
Kyle Hasslinger
Brandon Hasslinger
Huitse Hsiao
Steven Huang

Matthew Johnson
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Leah Klasman
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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
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Annual BMW CCA and New Jersey Chapter dues: \$48.00.

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. Contact the National BMW CCA Office for details.

BMW Club-Race Car on Display



Race car line-up.

Article and Photos by
Marc Thomaes



Winners.




Future club racer?

Klaus Schnitzer at January Club meeting

Klaus Schnitzer, photographer for Roundel, Bimmer, and many other automotive publications, professor of photography at Montclair State University, and long-time New Jersey Chapter member, will show his work, including images from upcoming stories, at the January monthly meeting at the Deutscher Club. Please make note of the special night; the meeting will be held on Thursday, January 21 at 7:30 PM.

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