



New Jersey Bulletin

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
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We're almost there. Fond memories of NJ winter.

Photo by Ross Karlin

Newletter of the NJ Chapter
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The Cone Catcher



by Larry Engel

Last month I told you about my accident with the iX, and I'm happy to report that it has been repaired and it looks better than it has at any point during my stewardship. As usual, I managed to complicate the process – but in the end it turned out well.

At first I thought I would scrounge around for used parts and do the work myself. I collected an inner bumper, grille, and fender from former Chapter President and iX aficionado Neil Gambony. After trying other sources, I ended up buying a new bumper cover, shock absorbers, and mounting hardware from JMK. Thank goodness for the club discount at JMK. It saved me quite a few bucks, although I had to make two trips to Benn in the parts department when I realized that I'd need side markers and rub strips.

The fender Neil sold me needed a little work, and I figured I could repair the rust and have a local body shop paint the fender and the bumper cover. I was anxious to fix the car and took the fender out on my deck to remove the plastic flare and assess the rust damage. I figured the easiest way to remove the flare was to cut off or drill out the clips from behind and visit Benn again to get new clips for reassembly. I proceeded to cut off the end of the first clip with my Dremel tool and tried to tap out the other end with a hole punch and a few light blows of the hammer. I realized this was a bad idea when I looked at the other side of the flare and noticed the cracked plastic on the exterior face.

It turns out that iX fender flares are also attached to the car with very tenacious two sided tape. Realizing that I was in over my head and that I had ruined a previously pristine fender flare, I started thinking about Plan B. (It should have been Plan A from the start.) I stopped by my local body shop with the car and the list of parts I had accumulated and asked the question – “how much to make it right?”

I knew the answer would be painful, but I didn't have much choice and I couldn't bear to look at the wounded E30 any longer. Between the parts and the body shop bill, the total cost was within a few hundred bucks of what the car cost me in the first place. Oh well, I guess that's the price you pay to keep an old car looking good and running well. I've had the car a year and a half, and the total cost has about equaled what the lease payments on a new 3 series would have been. The iX has become my pet project, and it seems to run better all the time, rewarding me for the TLC I've given it – and forgiving me for the injury I inflicted.

As much as I enjoy the iX, it's quite possible that I'll have to find a new home for it in the near future. Our oldest son Greg and his wife Alicia are expecting a baby boy this summer, and I realized that we don't currently own a vehicle that suits grandparents who need to travel to northern New England with toys and gifts to spoil a little tyke rotten.

When the kids flew the coop, Karin and I both selected cars to suit our personalities and didn't consider the need for practicality. (My M3 is a sedan, so we weren't completely impractical in our choices. OK, I admit, the reason it's a sedan is because I have a very narrow garage and feared that I'd be unable to open the longer door of a coupe without hitting the garage wall.) Karin loves her Mini Cooper S, but I find the Mini's exhaust noise tiring after a while and I couldn't see making frequent trips to Burlington Vermont in it. The M3 is great for this trip during the summer (except for the gas mileage), but the road conditions can be challenging from November through April in the North Country, and I don't have snow tires on my car. In addition, we stay with Karin's sister and her family in Morrisville Vermont, and they live on Elmore Mountain. To get to their house, you have to drive three and a half miles down a dirt road and turn up their quarter-mile long driveway, which is deeply rutted and filled with protruding rocks. I've had the M3 there a few times, and I hold my breath whenever I climb up their drive.

Hmm....., what to do about the need to travel to the North Country when you don't have a vehicle that meets the need to get there with lots of stuff in all weather? You guessed it – I had all the ammunition I needed to rationalize the purchase of a new X3. I placed the order last week, and we're hoping to pick it up in May at the factory in Spartanburg during the

week we'll be down there anyway for Chris' graduation. If that can't be arranged, I'll take delivery as early as I can and begin enjoying it sooner. It will become our primary long distance travel car, and I'll be able to preserve the M3 for other purposes. I'll also use about 35% less fossil fuel in the process, have enough room for lots of stuff, and not worry about driveways that look more like streambeds. I've said before that I miss our leased '07 X3, so the new one will fill the utility gap in our fleet.

This brings me back to the iX. If Chris returns the E46, Elizabeth will use it as her daily driver and we'll have a surplus of vehicles. I'm afraid the iX will be the odd man out. I'll be looking to sell a BMW for the first time in my life. I've become pretty good at buying them – selling is another story. I'll probably try some way to keep it in my family. Otherwise, I'll have to find it a good home with someone else. There will be an extensive interview process, and full background checks of intended purchasers will be needed. LeMons combatants need not apply. I'll let you know when and if I start taking applications for adoption.

Until next time, keep the cones standing!

Membership Update

I want to take this opportunity to let you know that I'm Neil Gambony and am currently serving the Club in the capacity of Membership Chairman. My job is to handle any membership questions or issues you may have and would be willing to act as liaison for you with the BMW CCA National Office if necessary. I also welcome our new members to the Club and am in charge of distributing the Chapter's official decal. Please see me at any of our monthly meetings if you would like some. In the months ahead, I will be updating you of any membership contests or membership benefits as they are presented to me.

While we are on the subject of updating, are you moving or already did and are still reading this? It's important that you notify either the BMW CCA or myself if you prefer of your new address and more importantly if you have a new e-mail address. Your e-mail address has become an important way for the Club to have the ability to contact you regarding last minute meeting changes or important upcoming Club events.

Understandably, if you don't want me to have the information, you can deal directly with the BMW CCA Office at questions@bmwcca.org or you can call them at 864-250-0038 to notify them of your changes. Our BMW CCA Executive Director Frank Patek has assured me that your e-mail address is not shared by anyone outside of the Club.

I just want to leave with this small reminder that if you are planning to buy a new car or a CPO (certified pre-owned) vehicle and want to take advantage of the BMW CCA Membership Reward Program, you must be a member for at least 12 months. A 1-day lapse in membership will disqualify your eligibility for the program. The rebates and rules for eligibility are outlined in the Roundel every month.

Neil Gambony
neilgambony@njbmwcca.org





Philes' Forum

by Vic Lucariello

Hello, Bimmerphiles! I hope you are all busily preparing your Bimmers for our first driver school of 2011! April 11 & 12 at New Jersey Motorsports Park. Be sure to sign up and join us.

I recently looked at a 2002 530i [E39] with the M54 six. It was making a SCREECHING noise as if a coven of kittens had their tails caught in the accessory drive belt. The noise was emanating right from the alternator, or so it seemed, but the alternator was shiny new. I sure hope that the alternator had not been replaced to address the screeching.

Further investigation revealed that the source of the noise was the idler wheel [BMW calls it the "deflection pulley"] for the serpentine accessory-drive belt. When I noticed that said belt looked as new as the alternator, the idea for this month's Philes' Forum was born.

During the 1990 model year [USA cars], the M50 sixes were introduced in the E34 525i models. The M50s evolved into the M54s. The M50 replaced the venerable M20 six that had served so well for years in E30s and 5-Series. The M50s, with their chain-driven, double-overhead-cams and hydraulic valve lifters, were quite a technological advancement over the M20 motors, which have timing belts and require periodic valve adjustments. Another significant difference between the two motors is that the M50 uses a so-called serpentine [AKA "multi-V"] accessory-drive belt where a single belt drives the water pump, alternator, and power-steering belt. The M20s use one old-style "V"-belt for the water pump and alternator and two other similar belts, one each for the power-steering pump and air-conditioning compressor. The advantages of the serpentine belt are that the use of such a belt reduces the length of the motor and that these belts are usually self-tensioning, as opposed to requiring periodic retensioning as do conventional "V"-belts. Moreover, the serpentine belts seem to last longer than did the old-style belts. Anyone who has replaced a serpentine belt and "snaked" it around all the pulleys, tensioners, etc is painfully aware of why these belts are called "serpentine"!

If one makes a sketch of the belt routing or refers to the Bentley manual, changing a serpentine belt is quite easy. All you need to do is apply the appropriate tool to the tensioner [see below] to release the belt tension, and while keeping the tension released slip the old belt off the various pulleys. If you take your time, you don't even need to remove the mechanical cooling fan; just carefully feed the belt through the fan blades and finally remove it. OF COURSE, while you are doing this, the ignition key or fob should be in the next STATE. Installation is, as the proverb goes, the reverse of removal, but before you S N A K E that new belt through the fan blades and into position, take a few moments to check the wheel on the tensioner and, if equipped, on the idler. Both wheels should spin freely and noiselessly with your fingers, and neither should exhibit any "wobble".

On the 65,000 mile E39 in question, the idler wheel was frozen and would not move with finger pressure, and the tensioner wheel was a bit noisy and did have a bit of wobble, so I replaced them both.

See Photo #1, which depicts the tensioner [lower] and idler wheels on a typical M54 motor such as you will find in E39s, E46s, and some E53s, E60s, E83s and E85s.. The single bolt securing the idler is shown partially withdrawn, and you should attack the idler first as it



Photo #1 - M54 Idler And Tensioner Wheels

Photo #1 - M54 Idler And Tensioner Wheels

obstructs access to the tensioner. Although it is possible to do this job with the fan and fan shroud in place, it may be easier simply to remove the fan and move the shroud out of the way. On the car in question, the radiator, fan and shroud had been removed for photo purposes.



Photo #2 - Belt Tensioner Assembly

Photo #2 - Belt Tensioner Assembly
With the idler removed, you get better access to the tensioner, shown in Photo #2. [The raised 16-mm hexagon on the tensioner is where you would apply a socket to release the belt tension. Note that older tensioners may not have this hex and you will have to improvise.] And this is where things get just a bit complicated. The tensioner shown is the old-style "mechanical" type which uses an internal spiral spring to apply tension to the belt. If you try to get a mechanical tensioner from BMW, you will likely be told that it has been superseded by an "improved"-style, "hydraulic" tensioner, and that the old-style tensioner is no longer available. While the new-style tensioner must be better, the bolting is a bit different, so ensure you get the proper bolts to install it if you choose to go this route, and be sure to get a new wheel with the tensioner. [Some sources may provide the new-style tensioner without the wheel.] A known advantage of the new tensioner is that its wheel is available separately from the tensioner assembly, so in the future the wheel can be replaced when required. Although the old-style tensioner is still available from aftermarket sources, I have not been able to find its wheel alone, so the whole assembly must be replaced. I happen to think this is a good idea regardless of which tensioner style is on the car.

Photo #3 shows the new mechanical tensioner in place [a simple two-bolt affair] together with the new idler wheel, both anxiously awaiting reinstallation of their serpentine belt. Note the plastic caps on both wheels. Be sure to procure and install these if yours are missing. I have seen many cars where they are.



Photo #3 - New Tensioner And Idler

Although the photos are of a 2002 M54 motor, that very same mechanical tensioner is listed as fitting a multitude of six-cylinder Bimmers, starting with the 1990 525i and going right up to some E85 Z4s. The earlier cars do not have the idler wheel, making the job that much easier.

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

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

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NJ Chapter of the BMW CCA Board Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2011

Board members present: Larry Engel, Mark Mallory, Jeff White, Paul Ngai, Jamie Kavalieros, Ross Karlin, Al Drugos, Colin Vozeh, Doug Feigel and Deb Kolar. Board members absent: Dave Allaway and Jerry Faber. Others present: Barry Stevens, Blake Smith, Brian Morgan, Neil Gambony, Vic Lucariello and Elihu Savad.

President

Larry Engel called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM at Alfonso's in Somerville. Al Drugos motioned to waive the reading of the February minutes and Paul seconded (carried unanimously).

Larry communicated to National that if we are to conduct an O'Fest Drivers School at Lime Rock Park it will have to be run under our control and in accordance with our school rules and procedures. National confirmed that this would be the case. Representatives from National will be visiting the track next month to assess whether LRP is the correct venue.

This year, Highpoint is interested in sponsoring a Drivers School as well as donating \$500 for Tire Rack Street Survival. Neil Gambony and Chris Graff will run TRSS. Mark Mallory and Doug Feigel will also be volunteering. Registration opened on MotorsportReg yesterday and there are already six students.

Bob Isbitski and Larry met with a person interested in running an event that would include a show and shine with prizes, a swap meet with vendors, a food vendor, a disc jockey, an official photographer, a mobil dyno, and a fund-raiser such as whack-a-car. He is looking for help with promotion, as well as obtaining liability insurance. At the last event he ran, attendees signed a waiver. There would be charges for vendors and for showing a car. As regards profits, Larry suggested a contribution to the BMW Foundation. Since this person's preferred location is the Lehigh Valley, Bob will be contacting the Pocono Chapter to see if they are interested. If we were to be involved it would need to conform to our chapter rules and guidelines. It was pointed out that portable dyno's can be problematic and potentially dangerous. This type of event should attract younger attendees who may not currently be BMW CCA members. Mark suggested renting a booth at one of these events in order to promote our club, rather than being a co-sponsor. Larry agreed and will inform the person that our website is a public forum where non-commercial events can be discussed and promoted. It could be on our schedule as long as it is clearly stated that it is not a BMW CCA event. We should also request that he obtain his own insurance and that we are named on that insurance.

Vice President

Paul Ngai informed us that the March 16th meeting will be at Bloomfield BMW with a speaker discussing BMW Performance Parts. Bloomfield BMW requested a count of attendees. The April meeting at Deutscher Club will be an "Ask the Experts" round-table including Vic Lucariello and Ray Adam. Other expected panel members are Don Fields, Phil Eng, and possibly Rick Kiceniuk. For the April 23 NY Auto Show preview, members need to purchase tickets online and send an email. The May meeting will be on Tuesday, May 17th at the Vulcan Motor Club and feature exotic cars. We will be participating in the June 3 Biergarten at the Deutscher Club. It was requested that we show at least five cars. Based on the great time had by all at last year's Biergarten, Larry suggested that we make it a club show with a larger number of cars. The traditional June meeting at BMW NA is on hold pending discussions with new management. Paul asked if we would like to increase our presence at Lime Rock Park Labor Day Weekend. Also, would we like to do anything Memorial Day weekend at NJMP? Paul will investigate a tour of the BMW Vehicle Prep Center in Jersey City.

Treasurer

Mark Mallory distributed a year to date income and expense report.

Social Events

Al Drugos reported that the banquet on February 26th was a success with great food and prizes and a concert pianist. Barry got a hand for bringing the most people.

Newsletter

Jerry Faber sent an email reminding people of the newsletter deadlines, requesting an article on the Tire Rack Street Survival school, and letting us know that photos are always appreciated. Ross will discuss the club race issue with Jerry.

Website

Colin requested updated drivers school forms and any other documents that should be posted to the website. Vic and Jeff will be forwarding a document on E36 power steering hoses, as well as frequently asked questions for drivers schools and tech. Doug asked that everyone check their website sections to make sure they are up-to-date and accurate, since he references the website when talking with sponsors. Larry thanked Colin for the smooth transition.

Business Manager

Doug distributed a proposal for adjusting advertising rates. This represents an approximately 4% overall increase. Barry asked if there was any data comparing our chapter's rates with other chapters, adjusted for number of members. Doug will look into this. Ross suggested that we increase rates at least 10%. Larry suggested that members place business card ads and stated his intention to do so. Doug sent thank you letters to everyone who provided door prizes for the banquet.

Driver Schools

Jeff White reported that the switch to MotorsportReg.com seems to be working well. It will benefit us by providing detailed accounting on a per school basis. We need an additional 25 students and 20 instructors for the April event. There will be an additional charge for guests at drivers school/club race banquets this year. This has been added as a separate charge on the registration. Jamie will be providing Colin with info on drivers school promotions to be added to the website.

Ross reported that our Thunderbolt club race will be a premier event, which may encourage attendance by racers competing in points races. There will be an additional charge for second drivers in one car. Ross is actively seeking sponsors. He sent a note thanking the sponsor who donated the prize he won at the banquet and recommended that everyone do the same.

Ross reported that Unique Photo is not available for the instructor seminar. Ross will be working on a replacement venue. It is a regional event, so we will get some support from National and there may be representatives from National in attendance. Joe Marko and Bill O'Neill will be presenting.

Autocross

The first autocross of the season is scheduled for May 1st. Elihu Savad has arranged for coverage by the Finderne Rescue Squad. The Edison Squad will cover Tire Rack Street Survival. We will be making contributions to the squads. Elihu is looking into whether we need to have an ambulance on-site.

New Membership

Neil Gambony reported that sixteen new member letters went out prior to the banquet.

Old Business

Deb Kolar distributed samples of other chapters' Facebook pages. Larry wants to ensure that any information on Facebook is also available via our website. Colin and Deb will investigate this.

The financial report is due to National. The revised logo requirement was mentioned in News from National. Jeff will forward it to Larry.

New Business

Larry will send out a blast email this weekend with info on the March and April monthly membership meetings, the April Drivers School, the NY Auto Show, and Tire Rack Street Survival. Jamie will contact potential Spring Rally Masters. Sunday, May 22 is a possible date.

The next board meetings will be Monday, April 11th at NJMP and Wednesday, May 11 at Alfonso's. Ross motioned to adjourn at 9:30 PM and Paul seconded (carried unanimously).

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Kolar, Member-at-Large for David Allaway, Secretary





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Finish Lines by Thom Rossi

Every science has its immutable laws: Newton's laws of motion and conservation of mass for physics, Maxwell's relations for thermodynamics, Schrodinger's wave equation for quantum mechanics, etc... By that measure, I suppose that building a racecar is also a science of sorts, and I am slowly discovering the laws of racecaronomy. Law number 1: nothing fits. For you engineering types, here's the mathematical formulation in two postulates. A) $V_a < V_n$ (where V_a is defined as the available volume in which to place a part, and V_n is defined as the volume occupied by the part itself) and B) $D_{maxc} < D_{maxp}$ (where D_{maxc} is the maximum dimension of the space available in your car where you want to place the part, and D_{maxp} is the maximum dimension of the part itself).

I can prove this law by examples. Example 1 – the case of the brake booster. In stock configuration, there is ample space for the brake booster to be mounted to the firewall in the engine compartment directly in front of the driver and behind the front left shock tower. But, in a racecar with a cage tied in to the shock tower by three bars (one from above, one from below, and one coming at an angle from the dash bar) there just isn't enough room for the booster anymore ($V_a < V_n!$) What to do? Many people get rid of the brake booster all together and replace the master cylinder with something like a Tilton dual cylinder and no booster. Of course, that would require replacing the stock brake and clutch pedal (at least, and possibly the gas pedal, too) with a pedal box specially manufactured to provide the right amount of leverage on the brake to operate without a power booster. But guess what; the custom pedal boxes don't fit (!). So that leads to a fabrication project that requires aligning a whole bunch of parts – put in the seat, align the pedal box with the seat, fabricate a mounting assembly for the pedal box, find a way to mount the steering wheel (because the stock column will no longer fit where originally mounted!). Luckily for me, Geoff Atkinson is on the job to help me figure out a solution. I think we found a rather nifty one, but I'll save that for a later column.

Example 2 – the case of the ABS unit. Switching our focus to the opposite side of the engine bay, you would normally find that the ABS pump and control unit fit comfortably in the space behind the front right shock tower. Again due to the cage design, the dimensions of the space now available for the ABS pump are just ever so slightly wrong ($D_{maxc} < D_{maxp}!$). The ABS unit is attached to the chassis with a wide-vee-shaped bracket that bolts to a tab on the shock tower and has a leg connecting it to a threaded bolt hole on the inner fender wall. The problem is that the leg that is supposed to go to the fender wall wants to pass through one of the cage tubes. One of those pesky laws of physics states that two things can't occupy the same space at the same time, so that leaves me with no way to use the original mounting bracket, even though there is plenty of space for the ABS pump itself. That's where a little custom fabrication comes in. I figured out that if I could extend the leg of the bracket connected to the shock tower by about two inches, I would have enough clearance for the bracket to connect to the fender wall without running into trouble with the roll cage. The only problem with that idea is that the shock tower has been boxed out with reinforcement and it is no longer possible to fit a nut or bolt head over the original pre-threaded mounting hole for the ABS bracket. But I also figured out that if I had a piece of metal with a nut already welded onto it, I could screw a bolt in from the bottom and make everything fit just right. And that's what brought me to discover what may be the second law of racecaronomy: before you can do the thing you want to do you have to do something else. Engineers and math enthusiasts will recognize that this fits the well known formulation $y=f(x)$, meaning y (the desired action) is a function of x (pain-in-the-neck BS you have to accomplish before you can start on the desired action).

You see, to weld a nut onto a piece of metal, I first had to plug in my welder. That pre-supposes that I had the foresight to install the right kind of electrical outlet in my garage when I had the thing built, in anticipation that I would someday possess a mig welder that needed a 240V 50 amp service line. Now, I distinctly remember telling my builder that I did indeed intend to own such a device someday, and I had lived happily with the illusion that the funny looking outlet (with the prong holes all pointing in crazy directions) he installed in the back of my workshop would satisfy my need when the time came. That mirage dissipated the moment I manhandled my brand spanking new (and heavy as heck) Lincoln Electric 180T mig welder over to the wall and picked up the plug. What the....? That plug didn't look anything like the receptacle I had. After carefully reading the welder owner

manual I determined that this might be more complicated than a trip to home depot to buy a new outlet, so I called a local electrician. A day later, I had a new line running from the panel box to a new receptacle and everything fit nice and tidy. Time to start welding, I thought. So I hooked up my brand new cylinder of CO2/Ar blended gas, cracked open the valve and...nothing! This being a Saturday, and the welding supply store being open only M-F, I then waited a few days to call in my complaint and was informed that I was the sixth person with a bad cylinder from that particular batch. That meant I had to wait on the welding project until I had time to trek back to the supply store for a replacement. Now it was time to start welding for sure. So I got myself a bunch of scrap metal, made a few practice runs, and eventually got to the point where I could weld a nut onto a piece of steel. Not an elegant weld, mind you, but one that would do the job. Do you see what I mean? $Y=f(x)$, big time.

Back to the ABS unit. I now believe I have just the right little bracket extension in hand to get this thing mounted where I want it. After a week of fooling around with welders and bits of steel, racecaronomy laws notwithstanding, I feel I am on the verge of fitting a part back into the racecar. Therefore, it is with no small amount of pride that I tell you my accomplishment for the week was to weld one nut to a piece of metal. QED.

2011 Autocross Season Opens May 1st

Our first 2011 autocross will be May 1 at Patriots Park baseball stadium in Bridgewater. This will be an open event where all are welcome.

The event will feature a built-in autocross school for novices that will be incorporated into the run groups. If you are new to autocross, you are welcome on May 1 where there will be lots of instructors available for in-car coaching.

Fee changes for 2011 will be \$45 for CCA members, \$50 for non-members.

The 2011 season schedule is:

- **May 1** TD Bank Park Bridgewater
- **June 26** TD Bank Park Bridgewater
- **July 10** TD Bank Park Bridgewater
- **August 7** TD Bank Park Bridgewater
- **September 18** TD Bank Park Bridgewater

- Elihu Savad

Driver School Schedule

Driver School and Club Racing schedule for 2011:

- **April 11-12** NJMP Lightning, ITS/ Driver School
- **June 6-7** NJMP Thunderbolt, Club Race/Driver School
- **July 23-24** Summit Point WV. Main Circuit, Club Race/Driver School
- **September 10-11** Summit Point WV. Shenandoah, Driver School
- **October 16-17** NJMP Lightning, Intro School

Driver School Registration on Motorsportreg.com

Initial Ramblings by JT Burkard

Frustration is only moments away

Now and again, I get reminders why I stopped being a mechanic 15 years ago. It wasn't the cost of tools or the constant change in the technology. No, it was to save my sanity. I generally liked my job. I enjoyed the challenge and the satisfaction of a job well done. Sometimes I was just happy to get the job done. The guys I worked with at this nationwide tire store that will remain nameless were a strange bunch. They were always there to lend a hand, as well as weld the lock on my tool box shut, put grease under the handles of my drawers, explode plastic bottles hooked up to the compressed air lines while I was under a car, and at least one time set my butt on fire with carburetor cleaner and a lighter. Oh the fond memories of being a grease monkey. I wasn't the only one to get this special treatment; everyone got equal time with the hijinks. Heck on slow days we would use compressed air to shoot paint balls through pipes at trucks and buses that passed by on the highway. Did you know that if you poured battery acid onto brake lathe shavings, you get the worst sulfur smell ever with a nice toxic cloud of smoke? Oh yes, that is something you can't learn by watching Mr. Wizard. I know at least two of you will try that this weekend.

After a couple years of being a backyard tech and 3-4 years as a professional one (well, not that professional), I got burnt out and just didn't feel the love anymore. I didn't want to fix my own stuff or help friends out on the weekend anymore. I was told long ago when the passion is lost, it's time to move on to a different career. From there I worked for a Wholesale Tire place and learned how to cram approximately 40 tires in the bed of a Toyota Pickup and then deliver them to some of the worst neighborhoods in Essex and Hudson Counties and Staten Island. I then went into the towing business for 4-5 years which I really enjoyed. Then I found my current job of 11 years as a classic car broker. Can you say dream job? Because I wasn't spinning wrenches, I have regained the love of doing my own mechanic fixes and even jump in at work and get my hands greasy with some restoration work and repair. This leads me to the main feature of this article. Did you ever start to repair something that seemed like an easy job and realized you are not experienced enough to do it? Enter the world of e36 Convertible top repair.

At my shop we have this very clean 1999 e36 Convertible with 82,000 miles. This is a really nice car, but one of the bars that connect the top motor to the actual top was bent. No big deal, buy the part, remove a few

bolts and install the new one – fixed. Easy job right? Not exactly. I went online to double check this and found there is a convertible top motor reset sequence that needs to be done. This is when you use the emergency release under the back seat to get the top up if something fails. This lever disengages the two motors that power the top and the top boot. The manual says "return to the dealer to reset". Of course with the vast World Wide Web, I was able to find this sequence, print it out and use it to set everything correctly. Or so I thought.

Installing the new bar was a piece of cake. That took a matter of 5 minutes. Then it was the top reset. I popped the top motors back into place, put the top back into the boot manually, hold the top button to up, turn the key in the accessory position and wait 12 seconds. The boot should close, then open back up again. The top will come up, the boot will close all the way and then the top will finish its sequence. Once the windows start to go up, you are done. We'll everything worked well. I even tried it again to make sure all was well. It was when I tried it the third time that wasn't a charm. It stopped working. The top started to go down but the boot didn't open up. I looked, poked and prodded and came up with nothing. I must have resynchronized the top motors a dozen times. Every couple tries, something different stopped working the right way and the issue changed from the top not going up to the boot not working right to me throwing a wrench across the lot, throwing my hands up and admitting defeat.

With the white flag waving it was time to call in the experts. It was either go to the dealership or contact Don Fields of Mr. M Car as he is close to my shop. Don graciously accepted this challenge and said "Bring it over, I'll get it working for you". This was a great relief to me as I have sworn off attempting e36 convertible top repair for the rest of my life. I think this is why I loved the manual top on my e30 convertible I once owned. No issues and the top went up in a jiffy. Today I spoke with Don and apparently, it's more difficult than I realized as even this seasoned pro, with all of his equipment and experience, was having some issues. He said to me "There is no way you would have been able to do this without tapping into the computers to see what's going on". He still has a few tricks up his sleeve and I do not doubt he will fix the top. It apparently has greater issues than I thought. Much like Charlie Sheen except we're not "Winning".

JT Burkard
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Send comments and suggestions to jtburkard@comcast.net

Driver School Promotions

We have updated our promotions for 2011. Once again, our goal is to encourage participation in multiple events. The rebate we had issued for our Introduction to the Track school is now incorporated into its price. However, we have added a couple of new promotions:

Loaner Helmets: We are continuing our Loaner Helmet program but we have far fewer helmets available as new NJ State regulations require the use of full-face helmets. This program is designed for students who are

Promotion	Benefit
Bring a friend who has never been to a NJ chapter school to the April – Lightning event	\$50 rebate for you and your friend
For students who were "First-timers" at our 2011 October Intro School, attend April - Lightning	\$50 rebate for your next school #
Attend April-Lightning event	\$50 rebate for Shenandoah or pay for both April Lightning and Shenandoah by April 2 and get \$80 rebate @
Attend any 4 schools	Receive a \$300 credit toward 2012
Attend Lightning, Thunderbolt, Summit Point or Shenandoah ^ as a First-time student	\$50 rebate for Shenandoah# or \$50 off your next school in 2012
Attend the Club Race school in June	Receive a \$50 credit toward your July Summit Point racer registration fee

- @ Must attend both events to receive discount
- # Cannot be combined with the combined Lightning–Shenandoah registration promotion
- ^ Shenandoah First-time students only entitled to 2012 discount

coming to one of our schools as a "First-timer" (you've never been to the track before) and have concerns about the costs involved. 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 number and sizes), so sign-up early by contacting Jamie Kavalieros at helmets@njbmwcca.org. Take the plunge and come on out – you'll never forget it.

- Jeff White

Rebates will be issued as a "credit" to your Motorsportreg.com account after the event.

Please e-mail the registrar to be sure you are properly credited.

NJ Chapter Calendar

April 2011

Wednesday, April 20th
 Monthly Meeting at the Deutscher Club in Clark.
 Topic: "Ask Our Experts" Our panel of experts
 will be available to answer any technical
 questions you have about your BMWs. Time:
 7:30pm.

Saturday, April 23rd

NY Auto Show - 9am (Please visit our website
 for details)

May 2011

Sunday, May 15th

Tire Rack Street Survival. Raritan Convention
 Center, Edison, NJ. 8am - 4pm.

Tuesday, May 17th

Monthly meeting at Vulcan Motor Club. They
 offer a number of driving and other special
 events with their fleet of exotic vehicles (Ferrari
 599GTB, F430, Audi R8, Lamborghini
 Superleggera just to name a few). Address: 125
 Maple Avenue, Chester, New Jersey 07930.
 Time: 6:30pm-9pm.

Welcome New Members

Jesus Alen
 Ivette Attaud
 William Berenbroick
 Samuel Bryant
 William Ellis
 Daniel Fiorito
 Joseph Fisher
 Joseph Heer

Lynne Ilgaz
 Reinhard Klemm
 Bryan Marsiglia
 Glenn Mcisaac
 Guillermo Mendoza
 Harry Minsker
 Eileen Passananati
 Paul Patton

Joseph Pizzuto
 Michael Robinette
 Mitchell Rubinoff
 Mike Servais
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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
 800-878-9292 (Mastercard or Visa)

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.

Sebring 2011 - Seeing it Live

by Larry Engel

As the race fans in the audience know, BMW scored a huge 1-2 victory at this year's 12 hours of Sebring. I managed to schedule a business trip to Florida that week and was able to see the race in person. Sebring is one of the events that every race fan has to put on their bucket list, and the Sun Coast BMW Chapter hosts a corral that makes the race easier to watch for BMW owners.

A couple of things make the Sebring race worth seeing. The first is the cars. The ALMS cars are the most technologically advanced sports cars running in the North America today. Automobile manufacturers (including BMW) spend big bucks trying to beat each other. In the GT class, BMW competes with the likes of Corvette, Porsche, Jaguar, Ferrari, and others. The RLL BMW M3s are fantastic looking and sounding cars, and they deliver performance to match.

The second thing that makes Sebring unique is the action in the infield, particularly the notorious North Paddock. I've heard that women and children are advised not to cross into this area of the track, and sometimes I wonder whether the warning isn't spoken in jest. It's one huge, rowdy party. Everybody seemed to be having a good time when I walked around late in the morning of race day. Some of them looked like they were already having too good a time. For many of them, the fun had started midweek and wouldn't end until long after the race Saturday night.

For those of you who, like me, have mostly outgrown the wild party scene (yes Vic, I guess I'm getting old), the BMW corral offers a more genteel approach to race viewing. This year it moved from its previous location at turn 17 (the famous Sunset Corner) to turn 6. This turn is a flat out sweeping right hander leading into a heavy braking area for the hairpin that turns the cars to the back of the track. It's a great place to watch the race, particularly when there's a wide screen TV with live race feed in the corral's tent. If you're interested in actually watching the race, this is one of the few ways you can do it. It was also nice to have the shade of the tent and coolers of bottled water (even if they did have to limit it). The temperature

approached 90 degrees, and I started feeling like a french-fry by early afternoon.

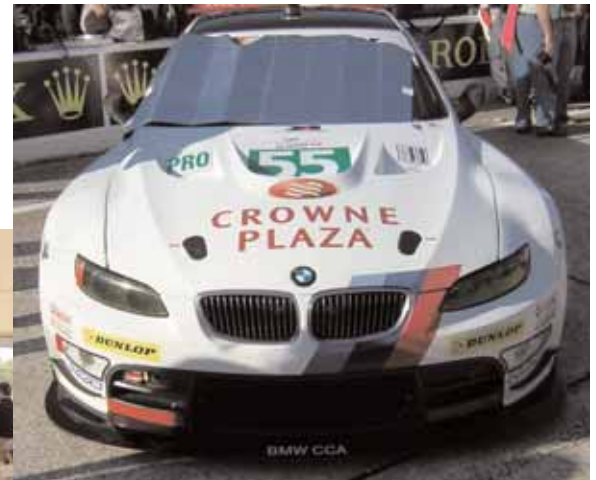
To me, the race viewing opportunities at Sebring are shockingly poor. The terrain is completely flat, so there isn't really anywhere where you can view a large portion of the circuit. I usually walk around and spend some time at several locations around the track. There are numerous viewing mounds so you can have a slightly elevated view, but they're very crowded. Grandstands are few and far between, and also don't offer much of a view. If you go, decide whether you want to be part of the party scene or spend the extra money on the corral or premium seating and actually see the race.

Despite the drawbacks with the venue, it's fun to see people you know and renew acquaintances. I had a nice chat with Scott and Fran Hughes. For those of you who don't know them, Scott and Fran have been a driving force behind many of the club's most successful programs for many years. It all started in the 1970's, when Scott was New Jersey Chapter President. He was running a beautiful 3.5csl race car in the Vintage event at Sebring. I also had chats with chapter member and Roundel reporter David Haueter, BMW PR maven Bill Cobb, Motorsports Manager Larry Koch; and said hello to Joey Hand, Bill Auberlen, Roundel photographer Jon van Woerden, and several members of other chapters who I met last year. I also met an interesting guy by the name of Bill Caswell, who actually came up to me after seeing my CCA shirt. Bill has gained some notoriety by building an E30 rally car, and he has some interesting stories to tell.

So, the start of the 2011 race season has been very good to BMW in North America. Ganassi won the Rolex 24 and Homestead, and a M3 won the Daytona Continental race, our friends from Turner Motorsport won the GT and Continental races at Homestead, and now RLL has a 1-2 finish at Sebring. Bill Auberlen and Joey Hand are having a very good year. Both ALMS and Grand-Am will be at Lime Rock this year, Grand-Am will be at Thunderbolt and Watkins Glen, and ALMS will be at a new event in Baltimore. If you have the chance, you won't regret attending these events.



BMW Motorsports boss Dr. Mario Theissen and ALMS boss Scott Atherton chat as BMW NA Motorsports Manager watches over the grid.



One of the Team RLL M3s on the grid.

Photos by Larry Engel



The BMW Corral had shade, snacks, water, and a large screen TV for race viewing.



One of the Team RLL M3s passes the BMW Corral's flag at turn 6.



The BMW Corral at Sebring was overflowing. It offered great shelter from the hot sun.

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