

# *Der Sonnenfleck*

## *Sunshine Bimmers Newsletter*

Fall 2013

Volume 17 Issue 4

### Chapter Conducts Fall Events

Our Fall technical session was held at German Motorwerks in Longwood through the leadership of Deborah Pandeline (4<sup>th</sup> from left, front row) and the extensive knowledge of Jim Shoemaker (4<sup>th</sup> from right, front row). The photo below illustrates the only time during the event that the attendees were not looking at and talking about cars and how they are made, broken, and repaired. This event was only a few days after our Oktoberfest event at Patrick Spikes house, of which there will be no photos to protect the guilty! And, of course, we held our monthly Teutonic Tuesday get together at OLV.



## Holiday Party & Annual Meeting – December 15

Our Holiday Party and Annual Meeting will be held at OLV Café on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, starting at 7:00 pm. Chef Tara has prepared a great turf and surf menu for us to enjoy. The Chapter will pay the bill for the meal and up to two drinks for each member and one guest.

## Rolex 24 at Daytona – January 25-26

Cheer on the BMW race teams at the 52nd anniversary of the Rolex 24 at Daytona. The race will serve as the debut event for the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship and will take place on January 25-26 at Daytona International Speedway. The Speedway is offering a \$25 discount on 2-day tickets for the 24-hour race. Construction at the track will prevent car corrals or Saturday morning pace lap, but there is a 2-day ticket discount (see image below from the First Coast Chapter's September newsletter). Infield parking is all sold out; parking is available as of this writing outside the track between turns 1 and 2 for an additional \$20. For tickets, go to:

<https://secure.racetickets.com/DaytonaInternationalSpeedway/ft/public/index.cfm?event=map&eventid=3596&GatewayPass=y&scr=https://host31.agsdc.net/aprimo/etrack.aspx?DSN=b9ca57b2fbe8cb42458807853387983f6a0f6be5ccdab113&FOR>



**DAYTONA**  
INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

Provide yourself a lasting memory to the **ROLEX 24**  
AT DAYTONA

**BMW Car Club of America**  
First Coast Chapter



**BMW Car Club Special:**  
2-Day Infield/Grandstand & Garage Pass: \$50  
Regular Price: \$75

To purchase or learn more information  
Patrick O'Malley 386-681-5023|  
and mention "BMW" industry price

(This is our BMWCCA Contact for Rolex Tickets)



## Sunrise to Sunset Tour Proposed for Valentine's Day Weekend

Chapter First Lady Robin Butler has proposed that the Chapter conduct a Sunrise to Sunset tour for the weekend of February 14-16. The event would start Friday night in St. Augustine, where we would stay at the Hampton Inn. Those of us who can get there by 7:00 pm on Friday (Valentine's Day) will dine at Cap's on the Water (<http://capsonthewater.com/>), which is located north of downtown St. Augustine. We will arise early the next morning to view the sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean before breakfast and our tour on less-traveled roads to Sarasota, our sunset beach destination. We are still working on arrangements in Sarasota, but the general plan is to dine at a nice restaurant and stay overnight before we leave on Sunday morning to head home. Hotel prices are in the \$130-140 range, plus taxes, per night.

If this tour is of interest to you, please contact Chapter President Al Butler at [abutler@mpzero.com](mailto:abutler@mpzero.com) so we can get an indication of the number of people who may be interested in this event. Even if that weekend doesn't work for you, we ask that you let us know if this type of event is something you want.

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### President's Column

By Al Butler

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Those of you who have been following this column for a while (thanks to both of you) will know that a frequent topic has been how to wash your car properly. Apparently, Roundel Editor Satch Carlson read those columns, too, and featured an article on the same topic in the September issue of that fine publication (Michael Byrd, "Back to Basics" pp. 76-79). He even shows the same brushes I use to clean the wheels, although he in explicably recommends cleaning the wheels last, arguing that they "shouldn't need any special care." Amazing! At least, he got most of the other advice correct.

To many of us, Fall means football. This season has been a set of highs for FSU and UCF fans and lows for UF, USF, and Miami fans. It also means the end of the pro racing season, where BMW did very well in a variety of series. Chip Ganassi Racing won the Grand-Am team championship using BMW engines. Burton Racing, driving BMWs in the Street Tuner class, won the manufacturers, drivers, and team championships. The BMW Z4 had several podium finishes in the American Le Mans Series, including two wins. All this on-track success came at the same time BMW was releasing the i3 and new diesel-powered cars in the US. Of course, the big news for many of us is the split of the 3-series model line with separate 2- and 4-door designations.

Speaking of change, I took the following series of photos at a recent Cars & Coffee event hosted by Chapter member Gary Meredith. They show the evolution of the way cars are powered, starting with the simple four-banger under the hood of a Model A to the modern electric vehicle with no engine under the hood at all. In between are a vintage Mustang and a newer version of that long-lived model that, for some of us, represented the first interesting US-made car we could afford to own.



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## Turning My Car into the Perfect Vehicle

By George Poelker, Chapter Vice President

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In last month's issue, if you recall, I decided that a station wagon just might be the perfect vehicle for my various requirements. As I looked and shopped around, I started to refine my desires. The E46 325Xi seemed like a good size. I definitely wanted a manual transmission, sport steering wheel (sorry BMW, but those four spoke things just look bad). The motor in these cars is pretty reliable, though not particularly quick, especially with the added weight of the wagon and the AWD paraphernalia. I am not afraid of higher mileage as long as the car has been taken care of. A sunroof would be nice, though not required.

A search of eBay Motors turned up several candidates and after a few calls and some minor haggling, the Hazel-Eyed Angel and I were on a plane to pick up a car in Wheeling, WV. The test drive was ok, so that afternoon we were on the road, bound for home with our "new" car. Seemed to drive pretty nice, tracked straight, no hiccups in the motor, brakes do stop the thing and the interior was nice. Cleaner than any car that I have owned for more than a year. But I did notice a "thunk" occasionally during spirited turns. We'll have to look into that.

We made it home with no problems, but I already had a list in my head of things to look into. Once on the lift it was time to take stock of what was going on under there. Hmm, seems to be a lot of surface rust that I'd like to get rid of. Understandable, I suppose, for a northern car driven on the salty roads of winter. First up would be changing all the fluids. I expected nasty stuff to come out of the differentials, but it really wasn't too bad. Needed changing, but it wasn't neglected.

The clutch seemed to be worn, so I thought I'd change that, too. This is a huge job. It requires taking the whole driveline down and removing the transmission. Oh well, this is a learning experience and I need to learn a little about how this AWD thing works. Turns out that is not too complicated, but it does make working on the front wheels a challenge because there are axles attached to them.

Figure 1 Parts all over the garage

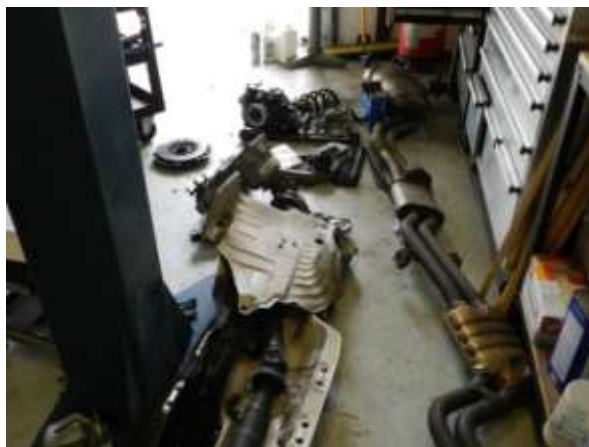


Figure 2 Success! Tranny remounted



Remember, last time, I wondered if I could stiffen up the suspension some? It turns out you can, somewhat. Polyurethane bushings all around and new Bilstein HD shocks and struts are about all that can be easily done to an AWD vehicle. If you get into changing the ride height you can really create some drivability problems, especially since there are extra drive shafts down there. Since there was rust on the rear diff and I wanted to change the bushings, the whole rear end had to come out, too. Ah ha! There is the source of the “thunk” discovered on the ride home. It turns out both rear springs were broken about 2 inches from the bottom perch. Seems this is a common issue for the E46 wagon.

Figure 3 Shiny “new” rear diff carrier



Figure 4 Workin' hard



I got all the parts dismantled from the bottom of the car, removed the rust and painted everything (POR 15 is great stuff!). Removing bushings from the rear diff carrier and the rear control arms is not a fun task. Fortunately, poly bushings go in much easier than rubber bushings come out. After struggling to remove the transmission for two days (those bolts are hell) I finally got the new clutch in and the transmission re-installed. That night, about 2am, I woke up with a horrible thought. Did I put that clutch on in the correct orientation? I wasn't sure, so I had to take the tranny off again just to check. This time it only took about 4 hours to remove and install it. You can learn by doing. And yes, the clutch was installed correctly. I also put in a short shift kit, although in retrospect that has made shifting a bit notchy. I'm not sure I would do that again. For the rest, installation, as they say, was the reverse of removal. What could be easier?

I decided to let the engine breathe a little easier and installed a new air box and filter. Research led me to change the head gasket and rebuild the VANOS. New spark plugs went in too, as well as high performance coils. The power steering system is one of the most neglected in most cars so I changed the fluid and reservoir. New brake rotors and pads went into rebuilt and painted calipers. While I was “down below” and changing rubber things I put in new engine and transmission mounts.

Believe it or not, the thing started right up after all that, and drove pretty well too. The alignment shop had trouble getting the correct camber in the fronts so I installed a set of

caster/camber plates to get a little more flexibility. Then an overheating problem showed up, so the cooling system was revamped. I also added some creature comforts, cocoa mats for looks and a Grom Bluetooth iPod adapter for tunes while cruisin'. Now the car is running great and I like the firmer than stock feel. It should be great on the next driving trip. Ahhh, the perfect vehicle, except for....

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## Sunshine Bimmers Chapter Board of Directors

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### **Breaking News...**

The Blue Bomber rides again—or, rather, is self-propelled again. After making several trips on a flatbed tow truck, the President's blue 2002 330i track car has a running engine. Our new sponsor for the car, Bimmer Tech, Inc. (Edgewood, FL), found not one, but two engines, rebuilt the best one, and put it into the track car. We were sure to replace everything dealing with the oiling system, installed those neat hinged baffles in the oilpan, made sure the head was flat, and did all those other neat things real racing teams do. I hope to get it out on the track in January.

### **More Breaking News...**

The Sunshine Bimmers Chapter is hosting not one but two track events in 2014. Through the relentless efforts of our Treasurer and Club Racing official Patrick Spikes, we will sponsor a Club Racing Premier Event at the NASA track event to be held at Sebring the last weekend in March and it will be called WINTERFEST! The Chapter will print celebratory T-shirts marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Winterfest event. We will also lead an effort involving the other peninsular Florida BMW CCA chapters to conduct a High-performance Driving Education (HPDE) event at Sebring September 13-14. These events will require many volunteers to make them happen. Please contact our new Event Coordinator Mark Rutenberg by e-mail at [mrutenberg@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mrutenberg@cfl.rr.com) to let us know you want to participate in one or both of these events.

**Happy Holidays to All Our Members and Their Families!**