

Bimmer Quips and Tips*

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Bimmer Quips and Tips* is the official newsletter of the **Green Mountain Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America. It is published solely for the edification, amusement, and motoring enjoyment of our members. The information and opinions presented are not necessarily those of the chapter officers or members, or BMWCCA. (Sometimes we're not even sure about the authors.☺) Except as explicitly noted, BMW AG and its corporate affiliates bear no responsibility, blame, or credit for anything appearing in these pages. It is assumed that readers are mature, intelligent persons, who can appreciate occasional humor, evaluate and adapt technical information, and operate cars and tools within their personal safe limits.

Editor: Ron Crawford

Address: Green Mountain Chapter, BMW Car Club of America, PO Box 9309, South Burlington, VT 05407-9309

Email : newsletter@vtbmwcca.org

Phone: 803.877.3542

The President's Column – from Sean Horton

I've been a Vermonter my entire life, but my service in the Navy meant most of my adulthood was spent in other states. From Maryland, I moved to Florida, then to Texas, back to Florida, up to Maine, and again to Florida. Finally I landed a civvy job that allowed me to return home to the Green Mountain State. A life long friend from St. Albans deserves the blame or credit for arousing my automotive desire. I lived vicariously through his dad's Ferrari 308 GTB, several of his Porsche 911s, especially the blue one that was almost identical to a poster that adorned my bedroom wall in high school. It was his trio of BMWs, an E28 535i, an E34 535i, and an E34 M5, that I could relate to. This threesome of four door sports sedans sparked my romance with the Ultimate Driving Machine. An affordable 5 series became the object of my desire while on my final Navy stint in Florida. The first and only 5er I saw in the classifieds was a 1989 535i Automatic. I discovered it, drove it, and bought it in a matter of days. Despite its age related problems, this car became the apple of my automotive eye. I spent more time and money than I should have repairing, replacing, and upgrading. In my research to do it myself, I discovered a bunch of fantastically helpful on-line sources, including the BMWCCA, which I immediately joined. I was pleasantly surprised to learn the BMWCCA was more than just a way for me to save 10% at the dealership. It had a great magazine, and there was a local chapter with folks who got together to share the BMW experience... which brings me to the subject of the newest chapter of the BMW Car Club of America: our Green Mountain Chapter.

I can't really say that I had a specific goal or vision when I set out to gather people interested in creating a Vermont BMWCCA chapter. And I can't even claim to be the one who thought of it. What I did was take the passion that I saw in a couple friends who owned BMWs, and popped the clutch. Since I didn't know the first thing about forming a chapter, I called the National BMWCCA office in March. I was directed to the BMWCCA Operations Manual, a document that any of you can view at www.bmwcca.org, which outlines the generalities of chartering a chapter. It took me a couple months to find the motivation to call Reid Douglas, our North Atlantic Region Vice President, from whom I got the support and assistance I needed to shift things into the next gear. The invitation was sent to all 160 or so Vermont BMWCCA members. We gathered at The Thrush

Tavern in Montpelier on May 10th, making the Thrush the birthplace of the Green Mountain Chapter. One can only imagine what other ideas have been sown, deals made, and organizations created at the historic Thrush Tavern, but I'm sure we are in good (*ed ie, unconvicted*) company. Now we are incorporated and chartered; we've got a bank account and a post office box; we've got officers and a board of directors; our website is underway; and you're reading the first issue of our newsletter. Well done everybody! I know I don't speak just for myself when I say that I've already made new friends, learned things I didn't know about my car, and seen new places. Join in and enjoy!



Our First Chapter Event – report from Sean Horton

The BBQ and Fun Run on July 18th was a blast.. First, thank you very much to Aran Walker and his wife Amanda for hosting all of us. They have a beautiful house nestled into the hillside with a fantastic view of the Green Mountains across the valley. And once it gets paved, their driveway will be on par with one of the gaps we drove through! We had a decent turn out, with nine cars, and 15 people. Ray Bates drove up from Newfane with Peter Warren in Ray's M5. Pat and Tom Clark drove their M3. Sharon Slattery and her nephew Jeff drove in Sharon's 1976 2002tii that she bought brand new! Inge Schaefer and her friend were in Inge's 330xi. Ron and Louise drove Chloe, their 328Ci, (or is it Daphne? I can't keep them straight). Russ Hopke, *aka* "the Drifter," drove his modified 1987 325is, which unfortunately needs another modification after it wouldn't restart and had to be abandoned at the top of the Appalachian Gap. I just talked to him, and the car is at the Automaster awaiting diagnostics. The thought is that it was an electrical problem, maybe a sensor of some sort. But Russ got his new nickname from how he took the corners going up the gap – rear end drifting out ever so nicely around each one. Aran and I had our 540s, and Reid Douglas, our BMWCCA North Atlantic Region Vice President made a surprise entrance in his Bavaria. The drive up and down the gap was lively to say the least. Or maybe

spirited is a better word, maybe uninhibited— you get the idea. Just driving in a convoy of 9 BMWs is fun to do, but then hanging them out in a convoy is that much better, especially with the scenery of VT as the backdrop, if you can afford a glance away from the road. A couple folks had to head in their own direction after the drive, so we had an intimate group of eight for the BBQ while we coordinated Russ's day without a car. Russ lives in Sheffield, and in case you didn't know it, you can't get there from here. Anyway, even Russ will agree that it was a good time, and definitely something to put on the agenda every so often.



Competition corner

(Reports coming for next issue)

Meeting summary

An interim planning meet of the Directors was held on July 6th at the Waterworks in Winooski. The discussions focused on the web site, newsletter, and logo. Afterwards the attendees posed for the camera. Seated f(rom the left) are Sean Horton, Inge Schaefer, and John Holzscheiter. Standing are Jake West, Ron Crawford, Louise Crawford, Brian Grenon, Dave West, Aran Walker, and Eliot Morrison



Upcoming events

Our next event will be a BBQ (cookout) and tech session at the Hortons' in Swanton. That will be on Sunday, August 29th. Please call or email for details.

The next board meeting will be at the Crawfords' in Ferrisburgh on August 30th at 6:00.

September looks like a busy month. We are looking at caravan tours to the Indy car and Formula Atlantic races in Montreal, the Labor Day Vintage races at Lime Rock, and the Vintage BMW Tour that will be crossing Southern VT on Sept 10th. We will talk these over at the cookout and post the details on the web site.

Letters from members

(none received to date)

The Susan Komen Drive for the Cure – Strongly Recommended Fun

The July 19th Susan Komen Drive for the Cure over at Keeler BMW in Latham NY was a definite class act. The dealership people put the Komen Foundation on center stage, and they handled their time at the podium very effectively. An attention getter for the men in the audience was the rising incidence of breast cancer in males.

There were probably about 15-20 cars that could have been available for drives. Four cars were *hors de combat*, another was in the showroom being autographed, and a couple seemed to be off with VIP's. There were no M-cars but with a 645iC. A 6-speed 545, and so on I don't think they were missed. Getting registered in advance got you rides in specific cars at more or less specific times. It was the *only* way to get the 645iC. Walk-ons, even those representing high profile pub's like *Bimmer Quips and Tips*, were handled politely with signup sheets. The course ran about 12 miles in a circle around Albany Airport. BMW donates a buck for every mile driven, probably not including wheel spin.

Some observations. The 6er convertible is mouth watering from any angle. Even the Bungled Bangle Bustle looks OK on it, a bit perhaps like a vestigial spare tire. The 7ers are nicer inside than externally, and with the revised I-Drive and bodywork will no longer excite hilarity. Same could be said for the 5ers. I drove the stick 545 Sport and was very impressed with the variable ratio steering and general handling. I would like to try it on snow or ice. The unkind comments one reads about cheap-looking new interiors are quite apt. Anyone for purple wood trim? The materials quality is probably much better than the feel. The X-3 and X-5 SUV's languished like linguini (*linguini?*) at a Weight-Watchers buffet. The sweetness award had to go to a 330iC. It still has too much scuttle shake but exuded comfort, design integrity, and quality. By far the crowd's favorite driving machine was a 330i sedan with the Performance Package. That was the only car in the fleet with the sharpness and feedback that built BMW's "ultimate" reputation. The package is a \$3500 or so option, but provides the confident feel of an M3 in the a bread and butter (ish!!!) machine. The iC's and Ci's get the option for 2005. It should be standard or at least part of the Sport package. It has to be possible to replicate most of the feel with special order or aftermarket parts, but switching steering ratios is not a back yard mod. A real disappointment was the continued unavailability of the 3.0 liter motor in the Touring 3ers.

The general manager quoted a dealer's hosting fee of about \$3500 for the event. On top of that the dealership makes a cash donation, contributes staff members and a big chunk of showroom space for at least the day, supports the speakers and awards, lays on refreshments, and would

have to provide shelter if the weather went sour. They also must transport the cars to their next destination (the Patroon Chapter of BMWCCA gallantly rises to that occasion – they also donated a check for \$500 to the Foundation). This is a Major Good Deed for the participating dealers – probably something only larger players can absorb. We're lucky to have such hospitable neighbors in Latham.

(*Editorial note.* "Patroon" and "poltroon" are spelled similarly, but using the latter term inappropriately in the Hudson Valley could get you tarred and feathered.)



About the Editor

I contracted the car bug in high school. To a war-weary Western Europe, Americans were eager to try anything on wheels. We were swimming in a sea of extraordinarily varied and ridiculously low-priced vehicles. As youngsters we made regular circuits of the Manhattan salons of Max Hoffman, Inskip, Chinetti, and others, with stops at Gordons for necessities like *Autocar*, *Motor*, *Auto Motor und Sport*, and *Quattroruote*. My high school cars were an Austin A-40 Devon, and A-40 Sport, an English Ford Zephyr, '47 Chev coupe, and a '53 Dodge V-8 (4-speed SMG!!!) convertible. Imports were fun, easy to work on, and dates thought they were cute. But the reality was that they were also grossly unreliable, rust-prone, and parts-finding nightmares, with expensive and generally atrocious dealer service.

Rommel was right. Impecunious American boys are fast learners. This was an opportunity. It probably also kept me out of the slammer. Wonderful cars could be had for a song after the owners, dealers or local mechanics had bugged them up. I drove most of grad school in a Healey 100M for which I overpaid \$400-. That was followed by a mint Alfa Giulia Spider that needed just a valve spring, and then a Giulia Spider Veloce, and Sprint GTV, another Giulia Spider, a 1750 Spider, a couple of Sciroccos, a Corrado, and a red hot Miata. And that excludes a succession of family cars, shared projects, and cars worked on, pitted for, or pit marshaled. I'm still at it, today even though perched on the threshold of Middle Age. For the last several years I've enjoyed BMW 3ers. I currently have an E46 328Ci named *Chloe* and an E36 328iC named *Daphne*.

To me cars are raw material rather than finished products. You start to notice that some cars have elegant solutions but iffy execution. Others offset archaic designs with compensating complexity, superior components or build quality. You look for what is already good and whether you can rework the rest. You assume that advertising is like the children of Lake Woebegone, the least endowed of whom is "above average, I'll try to apply the same sort of balance to what appears in *Bimmer Quips and Tips*.

What's in a name?

Let's start a "thread". Everyone doubtless knows the origins of **the acronym "BMW"** as the *Bayerische Motor Werke* or Bavarian Motor Company, a producer of aircraft engines. Over the years, however, BMW has also served as the acronym for a series of less than worshipful references to the marque. In the 1970's BMWs were widely *termed Baader -Meinhof-Wagen* because of their successful use as getaway cars by the Baader -Meinhof robbery gang. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, when BMW greatly expanded 3er production and brought out the first E36 cars, there were catastrophic engineering and quality problems. In German the letter "W" is pronounced the same as the word "*Weh*" (which means "pain"). This led to all sorts of disrespectful plays on "BMW", all ending with *Weh*. Today's ominous usage, which I have encountered in much of Europe, is *Bangle Muß Weg*. That translates to "Bangle's got to Go". The reference is self-explanatory. Can any readers share other BMW acronyms?

BMW on the Web

Most car companies would be delighted to have the number of web sites commenting on them that BMW enjoys. I'll be passing along the URLs for the better sites. Please send me your favorites and comments.

Please visit and bookmark our **Green Mountain Chapter web site** at www.vtbmwcca.org. The web site is the handiwork of our webmaster Aran Walker. It will include chapter and BMWCCA news, information on upcoming meetings and events, and anything else we think will be of interest to BMW enthusiasts. It will also house the archives -with color images -of *Bimmer Quips and Tips*.

For **other club sites**, BMWCCA has its own web site at www.bmwcca.org. Our neighbors in the New Hampshire Chapter hang out at www.wmc.bmwcca.org and the New Yorkers are at www.nyc.bmwcca.org. Most US chapters, other national clubs, related foundations, special interest groups for everything from M1 buffs to model collectors are represented on the web. The sites range from rudimentary to extremely detailed and professional. You can access web sites either via BMWCCA or through a search on services such as Google or Yahoo.

Corporate BMW sites exist for virtually every developed country. You can access them most easily using the hyperlinks at the BMW AG and BMW Group sites. A Google.de search will connect you up. The investor information BMW AG posts on the web is very interesting. Otherwise, don't expect much beyond catalogs and dealer listings. You may be shocked at all the nice models, packages, and options not available here.

Future model spy info is always a fun surfing activity. [Www.autospies.com](http://www.autospies.com) and www.bmw2002.co.uk/news.htm are probably the best English-language sites, combining rumor mill items, spy photos, and advance copies of BMW documents. I sometimes find more timely and detailed information on the web sites of German magazines such as *Auto Bild*, *Auto Zeitung*, and *Auto Motor und Sport*. A command of German helps but navigation is really easy. French and Italian mag's (my favorite is *Quattroruote*) also revel in putting model secrets on-line.

For entertainment value it is also worthwhile to look at commentaries on **corporate developments**. I regularly read www.autoextremist.com, put out in Motown by Peter Delorenzo. They are currently running absolutely scathing critiques of BMW's model policy, interior and exterior aesthetics, excessive technologic complexity, and isolation of drivers from the driving experience. Their bottom line could be summarized as "cruising for a bruising".

Going **parts shopping**? Aside from the more than 300 aftermarket suppliers present on the Web, you might check out what is available on eBay <www.ebay.com>. Once you learn to ignore the many knockoff parts offered, you can often find genuine bargains. We adopted Daphne, our 328iC, via eBay, and we also picked up some of her transplanted M3 organs there. Don't forget that many other countries also have their own versions of eBay. I have had excellent luck finding wood trim on www.ebay.de. Germany is BMW's second largest market. Just keep in mind that burlled walnut is *Wurzelholz*.

There are a couple of excellent **general Bimmer web sites** that purport to organize and hyperlink everything worthwhile about BMWs. Both mainly cover English language, American sites but that's where much of the action is. TUV requirements limit what German and European enthusiasts can do. Check out BMW World www.bmwworld.com and Ben Liaw's Big BMW Links www.bmwlinks.com. It is best to surf these sites when you have lots of spare time. Each links well over a thousand sites.

Sell and Swipe Classified

Parts for Sale

1996-99 For E36 convertible (should also fit 328Si and M3 2DR's) cat-back exhaust. Excellent condition – all paint still intact when removed from *Daphne* and replaced with Borla. Asking \$100.00. Ron Crawford 802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net.

1996-99 E36 Business stereo and speakers. Working well. Replaced *Daphne's* with Alpine. Asking \$60.00. Ron Crawford 802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net.

1995-2001 M3 front antisway bar with links and bushings. An easy and modest upgrade for other E36 cars. \$25.00. Ron Crawford 802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net

Other items for sale

1989-1998 Mazda Miata parts. All like new. Removed to install speed parts and roll bar. Entire intake and exhaust except cat, factory tonneau cover, cover for convertible top, windshield washer fluid bottle (larger size interferes with stress bars) and other bits. Will take \$100 for everything. Ron Crawford 802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net.

Wanted to buy

BMW E30 325iX White or silver preferred but will consider all. Brian (802) 524-4411 (802) 524-3972 bcdoboudreau@globalnetisp.net (VT)

1996-2001 E36 328iC or E36 M3 BMW (convertible) molded wood trim strips from side wall panels of rear seat area. Ron Crawford 802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net

1965-66 Alfa Romeo Giulia Gran Sport Quattroruote (4R) Zagato (6C1750 replicar) in any condition. Will grovel, scrape, beg piteously, swap progeny, etc. . Will also consider a

salvageable Giulietta 1300 Zagato or LHD 52-54 Sunbeam Alpine a la S Moss.. Ron Crawford
802.877.3542 or ron.crawford@adelphia.net

Personals

Newly singled youthful female BMW driver seeks lively, affluent older gent who shares interests in fine machinery, the good life, and extreme sports like Iron Man. Longevity is not an issue Contact lizborden@vtbmwcca.org.

Tech tidbits

(Please send in any tips, questions, how-to writeups, cool part or accessory discoveries, screwups experienced or avoided, and sources of technical information.)

Endpiece

Bimmer Quips and Tips is published bimonthly by the Green Mountain Chapter of BMWCCA. Please send letters articles, pictures, and so on to the editor. Digital texts and images are vastly easier so please use email if possible. We reserve the right to select and edit items that are submitted. Communications may be sent either to PO Box 9309, So. Burlington, VT 05407-9309 or to newsletter@vtbmwcca.org.