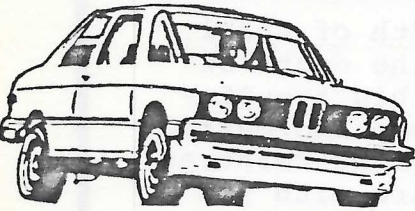




Das Kummert

MAY 1980



AT THE APEX

CHARLES DICKENS

Things seem to be moving along well as far as the Blue Ridge Rendezvous is concerned. I would like to take this opportunity to urge each of you to give this weekend of fun and fellowship a place in your budgets and hearts. By the time you read this, the deadline for signing up for the trip will have passed, but if you decide you can make it, call me and I'll do my best to get you a reservation.

A few words to the traveling team accompanying the rendezvous...Not to cause a panic, but do carry some warm clothes on the trip. We're going to the mountains, and it's cold up there when it's warm down here. Another little item which will come in handy in more ways than one is a small-to-medium ice box with drinkables and sandwich makings or whatever you like to snack on. It will save you time, trouble and money. On the other hand, do not load your car down so badly that it will cause loss of performance and handling capability. Take a page from Wiley Jim Craig's book: He gets his car into as near perfect shape as possible (for him that's mighty near) and then travels very light, leaving the worrywarts like me to carry toolboxes and other heavy things we probably won't need anyway.

On other fronts, I am in the midst of negotiations with the major tire chains in this area for special discounts for members of Bey Em Vey. I have not been able to corner them all yet, so I guess the only fair thing to

(continued on next page)

Der Tafel: ACTIVITIES COLUMN

SATURDAY MAY 17

TECH SESSION at the home of Brian Missig. Brian lives at 1805 Saranac Ct., Va. Beach. Brian's phone number is 468-6249 and only he can tell you how to get there. As usual, we'll have cold drinks and discussion on the state of our beloved Bimmers -- all for only \$2.

SUNDAY MAY 18

BOARD MEETING at the home of El Presidente Charles Dickens, 608 Apache Rd., Portsmouth. As usual, non-board members are cordially invited to come and share their ideas with us. (We really won't bite!)

MAY 24, 25, 26 - MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

BLUE RIDGE RENDEZVOUS. At 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 24, we'll meet at the water tower at Tower Mall in Portsmouth. If by chance you're going to miss this event this year, I really feel sorry for you. We plan on a great time with our president and the visiting chapters.

SUNDAY JUNE 15

BOARD MEETING at the home of Clyde Hill, 1344 Armistead Bridge Rd. in Norfolk. Call me if you need directions. (It's not hard to find.)

SUNDAY JUNE 22

TECH SESSION at the home of Amar Dwarkanath, 500 Scarborough Dr. in Chesapeake. In case you're wondering, take I-64 to the South Battlefield Blvd. exit (otherwise known as S-168). Go

(continued on next page)

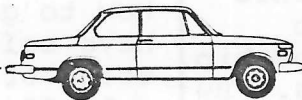
AT THE APEX (continued from page 1)

do is not get specific until I can cover them all.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the shop at Atlanta BMW a new technician, John Lane. I've heard good things about John and am looking forward to getting to know him and his work. Welcome aboard, John!

This seems a fine time to plug club T-shirt sales. We still have a good supply of small, medium and large club T-shirts at \$5 each. I'd like to see a lot of these on the Rendezvous and, for that matter, at all of our activities. Come and get them at any club function. It's finally T-shirt weather!

In closing: When I received my Roundel on the 17th of April, I was greatly saddened to learn, thus belatedly, of the death of Ray Korman's son. I had not myself the privilege of his acquaintance, but have often seen his car in his father's shop and marked well the light of fatherly pride in Ray's eye whenever he referred to his son. The thoughts and prayers of Bey Em Vey are with you and your family, Ray, in this sad time.



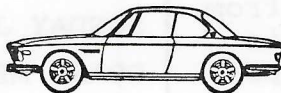
ACTIVITIES COLUMN (continued from page 1)

five miles on S. Battlefield. (You'll pass the canal and the Great Bridge Shopping Center.) Turn left at the fourth light, which will be Mt. Pleasant Rd. (You'll know because there will be a Safeway to the right.) Go approximately 3/4 mile to the third street and take a right. The street sign says Carawan Lane, but in actuality it is Scarborough Dr. (Ain't that tricky?!) Amar's house is on the right, just before the intersection of Arch Dr. If you get lost, call Amar at 482-4220.

IN JULY...

Look for a Specialty Tech with NTW and an Annual Meeting with food, films, facts and, of course, a little fiction...(right, Charles?!)

Your Activities Chairman,
Clyde Hill



TLC FOR SLUSHBOXES

There was a time when a BMW with an automatic transmission was as rare as that proverbial snowball in August, and with good reason. Those early automatics were concessions to the occasional oddball in what was otherwise a firmly stickshift-oriented crowd of Bimmer fanatics. As such, they were not exactly designed for Bimmers, and when it came to service, they were definitely Cinderellas. In recent years, however, changing market consider-

ations plus improvements in transmission design have pushed up the proportion of two-pedal Bimmers, especially among six-cylinder models whose greater engine torque tends to minimize the loss of performance associated with any automatic transmission. Even the club, that bastion of confirmed heel-and-toes, has not been immune to this trend.

Unfortunately, this is one instance where there ain't safety in numbers. Despite their greater prevalence on the road, Bimmer automatics are still Cinderellas. All too often, they are overlooked in the normal scheme of service and maintenance, even by those BMW owners who otherwise lavish the best of care on their cars. It may be simply the nature of the beast -- the fact that automatics remain a total mystery to most drivers, BMW drivers included -- or because people are often afraid to "mess" with what they know to be delicate machinery.

Anyway, whatever the reasons, one hears too many stories of automatic transmission failures that have turned otherwise perfectly good Bimmers into costly white elephants -- often in a relatively short time. Yet, in many if not most cases, these failures could have been avoided, or at least postponed far into the future, if the transmissions had been treated with the Tender Loving Care that any BMW component deserves. There are maintenance and service dos and don'ts that for the most part are no more complicated or difficult to remember than, say, regular oil changes. But they can save the owner of an automatic Bimmer a lot of expense and grief. So, if you drive a two-pedal Bavarian Marvel, read on.

First, a couple of disclaimers. This is not a primer on automatic transmissions. In principle, Bimmer automatics are pretty much the same as any Detroit slush box, so you ought to have a basic idea about how they work. Nor is this article intended to provide a laundry list of details about your particular transmission. To cover completely the range of transmission designs that have graced BMW drive trains over the past ten years would take more space than we can afford here. Instead, this article provides several basic rules of thumb that you should follow if you want to keep your auto-shifter from crapping out prematurely.

TIP #1: KNOW THY TRANSMISSION. Find out exactly what make and model your Bimmer's tranny is. (You'll probably find that it's one of several designs by ZF; or a BMW adaptation of a Borg-Warner box.) This has an important bearing on what specific preventative maintenance procedures, service intervals, type of AT fluid, etc. apply to your car's transmission. Careful reading of shop manuals and your owner's manual (if one came with the car) can help. Better yet, try to catch a glimpse of the ID plate on the transmission casing next time your Bimmer is on a lift. Running changes in components in mid-production may not be reflected in the literature you have available. Once you have this info, you'll have an easier time looking up the specs on maintenance and such.

TIP #2: PREVENT OVERHEATING. Excessive heat is probably an automatic transmission's worst enemy. It can cook the fluid and gum up the works somethin' awful. And it's sneaky; the effects of overheating may be very gradual -- until it's too late! Since the transmission probably incorporates a fluid cooler that is integrated into the radiator, your cooling system has to do double duty. That makes it doubly important to keep the cooling system in tiptop shape. So do whatever you have read about cooling system maintenance -- only do it more often, more regularly and more religiously. Maintain proper coolant level and consistency. Keep an eye on coolant leaks. Go to a thicker radiator core if possible. Watch that fanbelt and water pump. In sixes, keep an eye on the fan clutch -- lock it up if it fails and you don't want to invest in a new one. The small loss in top end power is worth saving yourself the much bigger problem of a cooked transmission.

TIP #3: REGULAR TRANSFUSIONS. Change the transmission fluid in the pan regularly -- say, at 12,000 to 14,000 mile intervals -- and clean the filter screen. Even though some transmissions supposedly don't need it, it's only cheap insurance. If you do a lot of hot weather driving, or stop-and-go driving, or tow a trailer, or simply drive in a "spirited" manner, your transmission fluid will age more rapidly. This will show up as resin deposits, which can gum up delicate parts in the valve body, clog fluid passages, and generally reduce lubricating action. Actually, only the two to four pints of ATF in the pan get changed; the rest (in the converter, etc.) is not affected, although over time, a series of fluid changes will renew most of the ATF. Fluid changes also remove any minute particles of debris floating in the works. Along with the fluid change, plan on replacing the pan gasket -- and the filter screen if that's required. Those items are rarely in stock at your friendly dealership, so plan ahead and pre-order them.

TIP #4: KEEP AN EYE ON PERFORMANCE. Get regular transmission check-ups or tune-ups, depending on what the literature you've read says. Some of that you can do yourself, like checking the ATF level. Doing that as often as you check your oil ain't too often, but the procedure is a little more complicated. The dipstick is located toward the rear of the engine compartment. It's fitted into a pipe that leads down to the transmission fluid pan (and acts as a filler tube for topping off the fluid). The dipstick is marked with two fluid level ranges (MIN and MAX), one for when the transmission is cold (German: kalt) and the other for when it's warm (or at normal operating temperature). "Cold" means right after starting the car in the morning; "hot" means after driving 10 to 15 miles. If there's any doubt about the temperature, use the "hot" marks. To check the ATF level, you keep the engine running. Find a level spot, step on the brake and move the gear selector through all positions, from P down to 1 and back to P, then check the level. For wiping the dipstick use only an absolutely lint-free rag (since even lint could cause trouble if it gets into the fluid). If the fluid level is anywhere near the MIN mark, top it off with a careful and steady hand, a little at a time. Low fluid will cause loss of lubrication and cooling for many delicate moving parts, but overfilling can be just as dangerous; it will cause the fluid to foam, resulting in the same problem as low fluid level. That's why you must do your checking with the car as level as possible; the pan is quite shallow, and even a slight slope can give you incorrect readings. One more point: Be sure to use the right kind of ATF. The ZF automatics generally use GM or Dexron-type ATF, while the Borg-Warners in some cases are designed for Ford or Type F fluid. Because of some key differences in the slip characteristics of these two types of fluid, it is NOT RECOMMENDED to use one instead of the other. So read those specs and keep only the right kind of ATF in your trunk.

Other checks can be carried out while driving. For example, slippage can be detected by comparing engine rpm with the speedometer readings when you're driving in third (or "high") gear. With the Borg-Warner boxes used in the 1972 and 1973 Bavarias, the engine rpm as it appears on the tach (i.e. "20" or "30", NOT "2000") corresponds to exactly twice that number on the speedo. In other words, if your transmission is OK, you'll see "30" on the tach at 60 mph in top gear. If there is slippage, your speed will be lower than the rpm number indicates. This is especially noticeable driving up a hill; you'll see your speed fall off while rpm stays up.

Shift points and quality of shifts may be another area you'll want to keep your eye (and ear) on. Any marked change from what you're used to could be a sign that service (or at least a professional check-up) is needed. But don't compare shift quality with that of U.S. transmissions. Until very recently BMW automatics were quite "crisp and positive" in shifting --

meaning their shifts could snap your neck. Only the latest ZF boxes come close to duplicating the character of, say, a GM Turbo Hydramatic in this respect. (Another step closer to the Ultimate Luxo-Mobile?)

Yet other maintenance and service procedures are best performed at a BMW dealership or, possibly, at a transmission shop that happens to have developed expertise with BMW automatics. (It has been reported that certain AAMCO shops have done creditable work with Borg-Warners, because of their familiar design.) Service at a dealership may include a band adjustment (if specs indicate this is needed to eliminate slippage), a pressure and/or stall test (to determine torque converter functioning), a check of the selector switch, and the fluid/screen change noted above. If shift quality is not up to par, the linkage between the throttle and transmission may require adjustment.

So there you are. Keeping an eye on your auto-shifter isn't that big a deal. Particularly not if you consider the alternatives. Just keep in mind that Bimmer automatics, while basically adequate-to-good in design, are not made to last forever. Sure, they can break down in ways no other component can (such as when coolant gets into the fluid because of a corroded ATF cooler in the radiator -- a condition that can be dealt with only if detected early, through frequent fluid checks). But most of the time, they suffer from nothing more than lack of attention. So if you give your transmission the same TLC that you show the rest of the car, then at least the normal wear and tear can be kept down to reasonable levels. And that can spell the difference between 100,000 miles and a sudden demise at 28,000. Then, by the time you get to that magic 100,000, you may like your car so much that you'll spring for another transmission.

Paul Hoecke
Warheel Chapter



CENTER CAPS FOR BORRANI WHEELS

For those of you suffering from "Borrani's Nuda," there may be fast relief in sight. Ever since joining the club (for the third time), I've heard people lamenting the lack of suitable centers. It wasn't til I picked up a secondhand set of 5½-inchers that the problem became real. After looking at many different items, I decided to call H&H Specialties in Massachusetts about the problem, as they have been an outlet for Borrani's for years. The man on the phone stated that you can't get just the centers, but said to go get a set for an Omni or Horizon. Had we talked longer, he might have come up with more suggestions, but I was calling long distance in prime time.

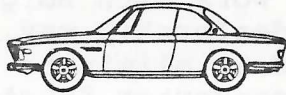
After pouncing on the first Horizon I saw and checking out the caps, I decided they were acceptable. They are black plastic with a minimum of embellishment (no insignias) and fit without removing the lug nuts. A slight amount of squeezing is involved, but they don't come off at high speed (55 mph!)

The part number for the Plymouth Horizon is 520-4001 and they cost \$2 apiece. I got mine from Riddle Chrysler-Honda on Airline Blvd. in Portsmouth, and the parts man, Don Malizia, gave me a 10% discount when I mentioned the BMW club.

The only drawback is if you are using the black plastic lug nut caps.

The rim of the center keeps the lug caps from seating completely. This was overcome by placing a drop of glue on the nuts before the caps were pressed on. No problems in 500 miles of driving. The center caps can also be spray painted any color if need be.

Paul Honea



TINY TECH TIPS FROM CHARLES DICKENS

If you are having plug problems in your 320i (or even if you are not, but want to try a different spark plug), the factory is recommending Bosch W125T30 plugs for all 2-liter 320i's. This plug is a little hotter-range plug and seems to work well and hold up better than other Bosch plugs I have tried.

FRED SAYS:

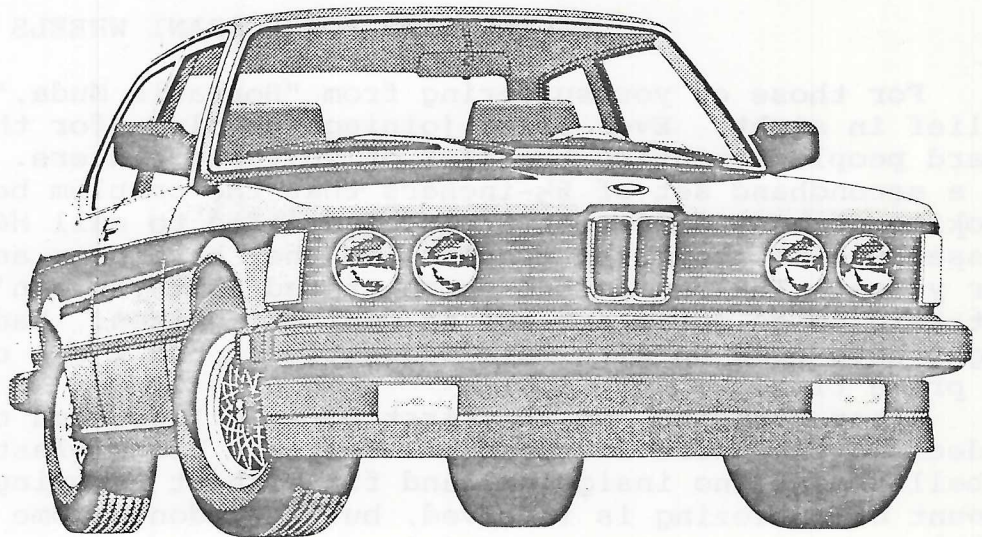
My favorite person in the Atlantic BMW shop says that squealing rear brakes can be fixed in many cases by simply removing the brake drum and dumping out the dust accumulated there. Don't breathe any of this vile stuff though -- it's loaded with asbestos.

ATLANTIC BMW corp.

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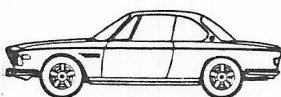
1839 LASKIN RD. AT HILLTOP IN VA. BEACH
Phone 422-3201

FOR SALE: 1 Stylex-Huntmaster reclining seat, tan with dark brown nylon center portions. Finished only five places behind Recaro in the Car & Driver seat test. Cost over \$200 new. Needs minor joint rewelded. Sacrifice for \$75. Call 488-7372 after 6 p.m. Paul Honea.

FOR SALE: For 2002s, tii's, 1600s:

- * 5 Boranni 6-inch-wide steel wheels. \$125 for all 5. Less than one month old. Perfect condition.
- * Bilstein rear shocks - sport settings. Very hard to come by now. \$50 for pair. Used but not abused. Excellent condition.
- * 1 set Miller/Norburn touring springs. Will lower suspension slightly. Slightly over one year old. \$35 for set.

Call 467-1603. Bruce Orman.



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PRESIDENT
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PARTS MANAGER
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TIPS REPRESENTATIVE
William Machrone----201-322-8654

EDITORS
Robert & Joyce
Tumbelston-----625-1236

Rusty + Janis Barton
2 Farington Circle
Chesapeake, VA 23320

VA. BEACH, VA. 23462

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