

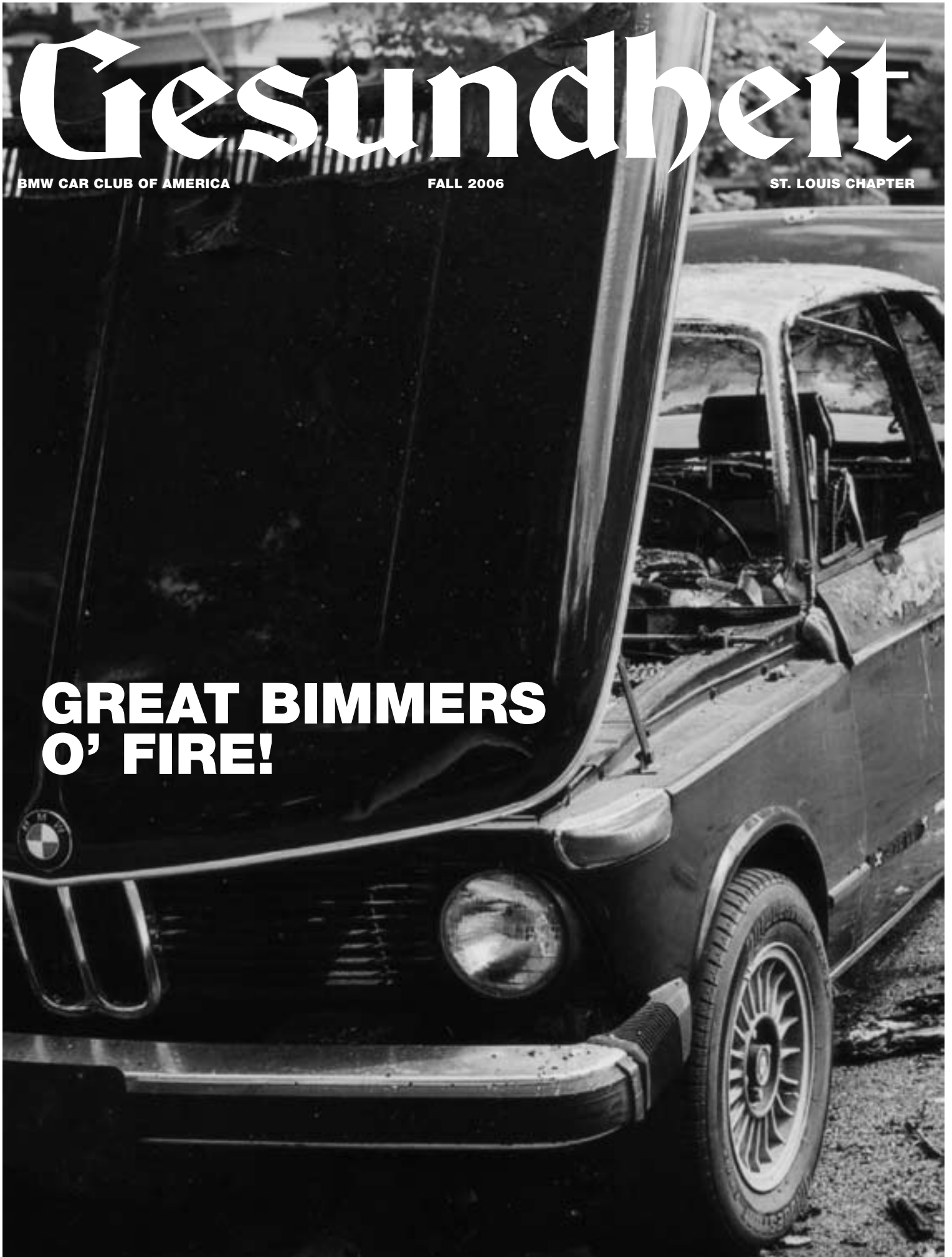
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FALL 2006

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER

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Cover: Former 1974 BMW 2002



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Vice President	Peter Rossato 636-536-3778	vp@stlbmwcca.org
Secretary	Joyce Hoffman 636-464-8464	secretary@stlbmwcca.org
Treasurer	John Hoffner 636-397-5111	treasurer@stlbmwcca.org

BOARD MEMBERS

John Cox
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Driving Events	Garrett Koch	drive@stlbmwcca.org
Driver's School Chief Instructors	Ron Flier, John Barhydt	chief_instructor@stlbmwcca.org
Social Events	Alex April	social@stlbmwcca.org
Membership	Peter Rossato	member@stlbmwcca.org
Advertising	Steve Smart	advertising@stlbmwcca.org

ADVISORS

Detailing	Brad Bloomquist	detailing@stlbmwcca.org
Legal	Burt Garland	legal@stlbmwcca.org
E-Communications	Peter Rossato	ecomm@stlbmwcca.org
Technical	Vince Ko	tech@stlbmwcca.org

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Editor/Art Director	Ryan Weis	gesundheit@stlbmwcca.org
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President's Column

TOM ALLEN

2006 INVENTION OF THE YEAR

I invented something and I want to share it with everyone. This is a cool thing. It's a useful thing. Many of you reading this article might drop what you're doing grab your car keys, run to the car and try this out. You too will be amazed at this invention of mine. Some of you already own one.



A handful of people will write to me and thank me for turning them on to this wonderful device. BMW may pay me royalties for this idea. I don't think it warrants a Nobel Prize, but for the handful of people that praise me, some of them will consider nominating me to the Nobel Foundation. We'll see.

I received one of these things when I bought my car four years ago. The salesman was so happy to sell me a brand new car that he ran to the parts department, grabbed one of these and gave it to me. When he handed it to me I said, "Thanks," but I really didn't want it. So I gave it to one of my kids. That was four years ago. Not sure what my kid did with it, he might have pitched it.

At the time I thought it was a stupid gift, didn't want it, and was glad it was gone. But I ended up with another one.

About 6 months ago I helped a good friend find a new job. Brad showed his appreciation by buying me a gift, a BMW-related gift. It was the same thing that the salesman had given me when I bought the car. For the second time in my life I thought, "Yuck, I don't want this thing."

But this time was different. This was given to me by a friend. I had to keep it. I had to use it. I was stuck with this thing.

Let me tell you what this thing is. It's on my keychain. It's a teardrop shaped hunk of leather that has a metal Roundel (the BMW logo) attached to it. It's a stupid thing for a keychain. It's big, it's bulky, it gets hung up on the fabric in my pockets. It has absolutely no purpose. You can't open a beer with it. It doesn't have a flashlight on it. It contains no tools. It takes up room on your key chain. It interferes with the other keys. It's a stupid thing to have on a key chain. Its only purpose is to hold a nice looking Roundel.

I didn't invent this thing but I invented a use for it. For lack of a better name, let's call it a leather keychain tongue... it's sort of shaped like a tongue, isn't it? Someone told me it's called a key fob but to me a key fob is electronic with a battery and buttons, so I ignored him.

The leather keychain tongue is distributed by BMW. They probably sell thousands of them every year. They're probably given to people all over the world as gifts. And most of these people throw them away because they're stupid.

Until now... (keep reading, this is such a great idea)....



For three and a half years there was something that bugged me about driving my BMW. I tried to fix it but always failed.

When I drive, I adjust my seat so I'm sitting in a hole. I put the front of the seat as high as it will go and I put the back of the seat as low as it will go. This "sitting-in-a-hole" does a good job of hanging on to me during fast stops. I never have to worry about sliding forward in the seat. My body fits great into the hole.


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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

But when I adjust the seat like this, my knees pop up a little higher. My keys dangle from the ignition switch and rub on my right knee. Drives me crazy!! It's the most comfortable position for me to drive but the keys on my knee bugs me.

Whether I'm wearing shorts, long pants or jeans I can feel the keys swinging on my right knee. I've tried to put the unused keys into the key ring so they don't hang down so low. They eventually fall out and dangle again. I've tried stacking them on top of the key in the ignition but hit a good bump and they're back on my knee.

The leather keychain tongue saved the day.

If you take this leather tongue and wedge it between the bottom of the instrument panel and the top of key in the ignition switch, Shazam, no more keys hitting you in the knee. One of the greatest inventions of all time. It comes in third behind electricity and sliced bread.

You can hit bumps, go off-roading, drive as aggressively as you like. Those keys are stuck thanks to the leather tongue. Your knee will remain untouched.

Many people will not appreciate this invention, many people don't have enough keys to dangle on their knee. But there are some, you know who you are, your keys hit your knees and it drives you crazy, too.

I don't think BMW intended for their leather key chain tongue to be used as a wedge to keep your keys out of the way. It was designed as a piece of jewelry for your key chain. A useless, stupid piece of jewelry (sorry, I can't let it go). Maybe I didn't invent it, but at least I found a practical use for it.



Check your keychain and if you have a leather tongue on it, go out to your car and try it It works. (Works on E46 and E36 models. Adjust the steering wheel tilt to fine-tune your wedge.)

Thanks again to Brad, he gave me something to write about.

And, "Hey, BMW... just send the royalty checks to President at the St. Louis BMW Club."

**Tom
Master Inventor**

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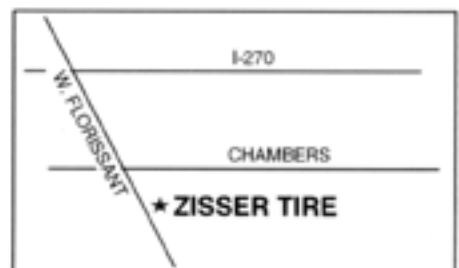
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THE HOT SEAT



Great Bimmers O' Fire!

A Well-done 02 Makes Yours More Rare

RYAN WEIS

I recently started a new job (and a new career) with Hunter Engineering. Hopefully that is still true by the time you're reading this. Over the last year I have met with many people, gone through numerous interviews, and the process at Hunter was actually quite quick and painless. Anything is better than the inconsiderate silence that usually follows any sort of application or interview.

I was cheered of course to go in for my first interview with the head of the vehicle database department. A good solid step toward job security and peace of mind. It's not always easy to "read" someone I'm interviewing with, so while I was optimistic, I wasn't entirely sure how the interview went.

I had planned to call my wife, Emily, when I got home to talk about how it

went, but plans changed. Not entirely. I mean, I did call Emily but rather than talk about the interview, I had only one question. "Do you know where the fire extinguisher is?"

Emily has a particular worry about fire as it relates to the house, in the same way I get a bit panicked by insects with more than six legs. The more legs the worse. Millipedes nearly stop my heart. Disgusting creatures. Anyway, I had to quickly reassure Emily that it had nothing to do with the house and it was in fact my car that may or may not be in the process of going up in flames.

Arriving home from my interview, I pulled off Grand Ave onto my block. I started to hear some clicking coming from the area near the shifter and looked down to see sparks arcing from

a self-tapping bolt coming through the transmission tunnel (don't ask). Bellerive has a slim grass parkway down the middle of the boulevard with a convenient cut through in the middle to get from the north to the south side of the street, so I cut the engine and coasted into this relatively safe area to see where that smoke was coming from.

Lifting the hood I could see smoke rising up the fire wall originating near the pedal box, and a little more smoke at the front of the engine. Figuring the best thing to do was stop the smoke and cut any power to the car, I ran inside for tools and the aforementioned fire extinguisher.

I squirted the various areas that seemed to be the source, coating bits of the engine bay in lovely powder.

The metal bits did alright, but the same can't be said of all the plastic and rubber.

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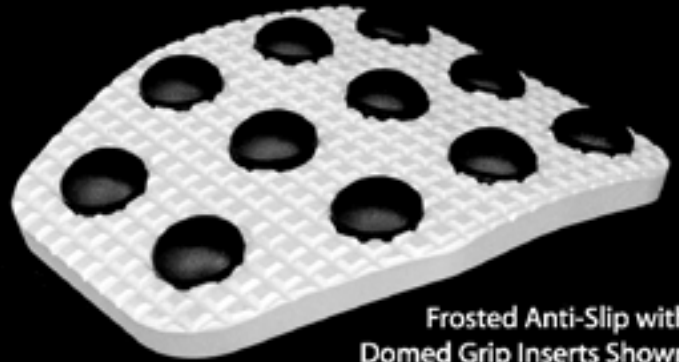
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THE HOT SEAT

I spared a few moments to try to track the actual source of the smoke—a few moments I should have spent on disconnecting the battery. I think now that had I stopped the current causing the arcs that things might have gone differently at this point.

Under the car, I saw flames dripping from some of the cables or hoses near the pedal box. The extinguisher lasted all of about 5 seconds before going dead. Clearly not meant for anything larger than dousing a skillet of bacon. Now it was time to seek professional help.

I called to one of the neighbors who had emerged to watch the conflagration and said, “My car’s on fire. Call 9-1-1.”

He said, “What?” so I had to repeat what should have been obvious. “You should call 9-1-1,” he suggested.

Now perhaps he was stating the obvious.

As the flames were coming along nicely and starting to enter the driver’s footwell under the dash, I reached through the passenger door to get my cell phone and neck tie. Well, it’s a nice tie!

I called the fire department and sat back to watch the inevitable. The interior really took off. The roof buckled from the heat and the windows popped adding shiny sprinkles to the soot and other debris collecting around the car.

It took the firemen less than a minute to douse the car with enough water to quench the flames, and they stood back to look for any sparks trying to make a comeback. Speaking with the fire Captain and the Emergency Medical Technicians, we clarified that I was the owner and no one was in the car. That might seem obvious, but you can imagine how it can be difficult to discern what’s what among the molten remains of a car interior.

One EMT offered sympathy, “That looks like it was a beautiful old car. What year was it?”

A little small talk and a few more condolences and they left to pursue more important matters. Hell, I felt bad for taking up their time, but I don’t suppose there really was any one else to call.

So, now what to do with a burnt out hulk sitting in the middle of my street? Call club members. I called Rick Ramsey at Suntrup and the folks at Bimmers R Us to see if anyone wanted what’s left. I tried to call John Hoffner, knowing he had a square tail light 02 he was working on, but the only thing that may have been of value were the square tail lights. Rick suggested I flip through the phone book and find a wrecker to haul it off.

I didn’t spend much time weighing the pros or cons of one wrecker over another and settled on the first one

Below:
Fortunately, most everything behind the c-pillar was spared, the rest will buff out.

Next page: The engine bay did not take much of the heat, as evidenced by the intact hoses.

My aunt is able to spot quality. Looking at what’s left of the Recaro seats she said, “Those were nice seats!” But, that horsehair in the back made great kindling.



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1998	323is	Auto.	2 door	black w/ black leatherette	1984	72k	WBABF832XWEH60175	\$ 12,900
1998	328i	Auto.	4 door	black w/ black leather	1989	132k	WBACD4325WAV61350	\$ 9,900
1999	323ic	5 speed	2 door	black w/ tan leather	1933	94k	WBABJ7332XEA18517	\$ 13,900
1999	323ic	Auto.	2 door	steel blue w/ gray leather	1914	102k	WBABJ8339XEM23535	\$ 12,900
1999	328i	Auto.	4 door	green w/ tan leather	1991	126k	WBAAM5330XFR07511	\$ 13,900
1999	328ic	Auto.	2 door	blue w/ tan leather interior (Hardtop)	1988	65k	WBABK8330XEY92025	\$ 16,900
2000	323ci	5 speed	2 door	gray w/ black leatherette	1992	58k	WBABM3344XJN63654	\$ 15,900
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2001	325i	Auto.	4 door	black w/ tan leather	1977	78k	WBAAV33461FV77131	\$ 16,900
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2004	330ci	Auto.	2 door	black w/ black leather sport package	1948	48k	WBABD53424PL10136	\$ 27,900
2004	330xi	Auto.	4 door	silver w/gray leather	1998	29k	WBAEW53494PN36438	\$ 29,900
2005	330i	Auto.	4 door	orient blue w/ tan leather	1978	10k	WBAEV53465KM41000	\$ 32,900
2007	335ci	6 speed	2 door	black w/black leather	2001	100	WBABN73527P021113	\$ 45,720
1997	Z3 1.9	Auto.	2 door	green w/ tan leather	1943	91k	4USCH7325VLB82034	\$ 14,500
1999	Z3 Coupe	Auto.	3 door	red w/ black leather	1952	62k	4USCHK5333XLG12032	\$ 15,900
2003	Z4 2.5i	5 speed	2 door	silver w/ black leather	1803	50k	4USBT33453LR61299	\$ 22,900
2006	Z4 M Coupe	6 speed	2 door	interlagos blue w/ black leather	1919	100	5UMDU93466LL93210	\$ 59,999
5 SERIES								
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1994	525i	Auto.	4 door	black w/ tan leatherette	1963	124k	WBAHD632XRK42819	\$ 6,900
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1997	528i	Auto.	4 door	silver w' gray leather	1962	135k	WBADD6326VBW08040	\$ 9,900
1998	528i	Auto.	4 door	aspen silver w/aubergine leather	1843	79k	WBADD6324WBW31611	\$ 15,900
1999	528i	Auto.	4 door	burgundy w/tan leather	1961	80k	WBADM6332XBY31493	\$ 11,900
2002	540i	6 speed	4 door	sterling gray w/ black leather	1982	29k	WBADN53402GF70637	\$ 30,900
2003	530i	Auto.	4 door	silver w/black leather	1885	62k	WBADT63433CK35826	\$ 24,900
2002	X5 3.0i	5 speed	4 door	silver w/ black leather	1969	64k	5UXFA53512LH79763	\$ 22,900
2002	X5 4.4i	Auto.	4 door	silver w/gray leather	1999	56k	5UXFB33502LH31530	\$ 26,900
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2003	Mini Cooper S	6 speed	2 door	dark silver w/black leatherette (Navigation)	1899	33k	WMWRE33403TD68545	\$ 21,900
2000	M Roadster	5 speed	2 door	silver w/black leather (Hardtop)	1690	54k	WBSCK9347YLC92147	\$ 24,000
2003	M3	SMG	2 door	imola red w/black leather	1827	52k	WBSBK93493JR20283	\$ 34,900
2002	M5	6 speed	4 door	silver w/ black/gray leather	1956	36k	WBSDE93492CF90251	\$ 39,900
2002	M5	6 speed	4 door	le mans blue w/caramel leather (Dinan)	1473	33k	WBSDE934XXCF90498	\$ 79,999
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THE HOT SEAT

that stated: junk cars towed for free. As I now had a junk car and despaired at the notion that to add insult to injury I would have to PAY to have it taken away, I gave them a call.

“Do you haul junk cars for free?”

“We sure do.”

“Well, I got one.”

I was told to dig out the car’s title and I waited for the tow truck. Since I had a few minutes, I did what any editor of the Club newsletter would do: I got pictures for the article I knew I was going to write.

Of course this would be the day my wife took the digital camera to work, so I got out the SLR. The batteries were dead on the Nikon, so I rummaged for some replacements and popped in a roll of film.

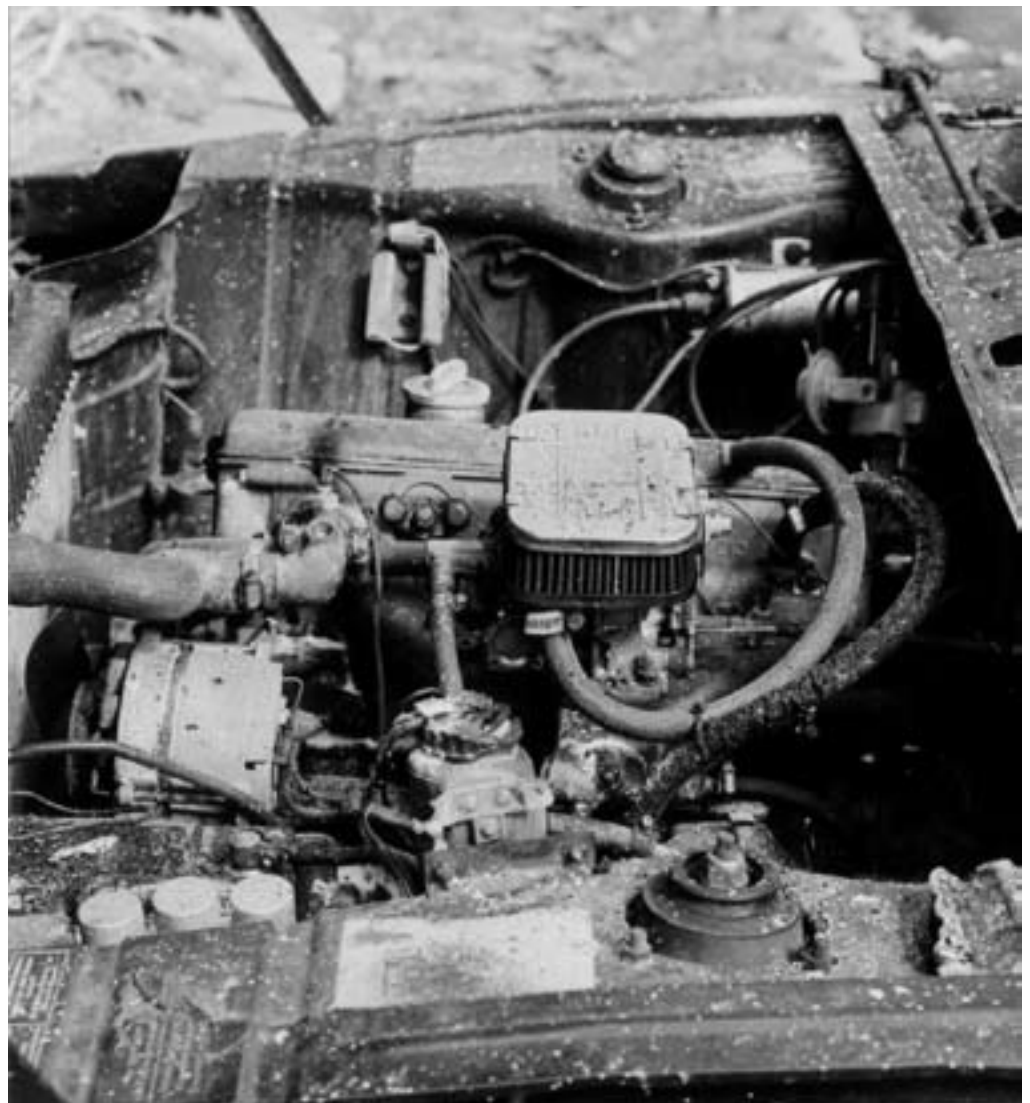
After taking a few shots for posterity, I went back inside to call my insurance agent.

“Say, I’ve got a car insured through you, and I’m pretty sure I only have liability coverage, but would you mind *checking* my policy to see if, maybe, there is some clause in there relating to, erm, fire? Nope? Okay.”

When the tow truck driver arrived, he looked at the black soup that had been washed out the doors the moment the firemen started pumping in water by the gallon. “I didn’t realize this just happened!”

I helped him push the car away from the curb to give his truck the proper angle for hooking up. The car naturally wanted to roll back toward the curb and we both looked around for a second to find something to chock the tires (all still intact). At this point just about anything would do so he picked up some indistinguishable piece of the car and jammed it under the tire. Could have been a side mirror, or a piece of the door panel. Hard to say.

After the two of them rolled away together, it was left for me to sweep



up some of the mess I had left in the street. I filled half a five gallon bucket with glass and bits of whatnot. With the broom over my shoulder and

bucket in hand, I shuffled off to the alley and poured into the dumpster all that remained of my five year affair with my first BMW.

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The Sportsman's Car



Editor's Note

Editor's Note

RYAN WEIS

The horsepower wars.

The vintage ad on the previous page says it all: a fast car is alright, but isn't a faster car inherently better? That 02 was putting out horsepower in the 90s, but that is not going to cut it anymore. There is a never ending quest from car manufacturers and owners to get more power. Higher horsepower and lower 0-60 times have been pushing today's heavier cars ever faster but haven't help fuel economy much. There's no replacement for displacement.

While reading Farnsworth's column in the October 2006 *Roundel*, he poses the question, "How much is too much?" Before getting to the end of the column I already had a number in my head for what would make an ideal horsepower range: 250. And sure enough, when I get to his seventh paragraph, there's the same number: 250. And he makes the point that in modern high power applications, the cars are filled with all sorts of electronic gizmos to keep that power on the road and out of the ditches.

There's no evidence that drivers have become any more adept at handling their cars. What with automatic transmissions, anti-lock brakes, cruise/distance control, navigation systems and active steering, the trend seems to be moving toward eliminating the driver from the equation all together.

Audi nearly said as much when they made quattro standard on all their cars. It's there to keep the extra power under control. But what happened? Few people would argue that the Porsche 356 is not a great sports car, but it only made 130hp at the most. Notable cars that have been in the mid-200hp range include the M1, Ferrari 308 and twin-turbo RX-7. Cars most enthusiasts would not kick out of bed.

A colleague of mine has a new Pontiac GTO with the 6.0 liter engine. He asked if I was thinking of buying one, but I explained I prefer to measure my engines in cubic centimeters. My Miata's high-revving 1600cc making 120hp is just fine, thank you.

When tech Talk asked readers to suggest what the 1 series coupe (2 series?) should be when it makes its way to these shores, I wrote to suggest a nice 2.0 engine making in the 150 to 175hp range, but most letters and opinions that I see demand the sub-3 coupe come slathered in M power over 300hp. What gives? The e30 M3 made 195hp and it still garners some of the highest praise for any BMW ever made.

I don't need excessive horsepower to commute to work or cruise for ladies at the malt shop. I want to be able to merge in traffic, power through low speed corners and have that nice kick in the pants when I get the clutch and gas timed just right. Sounds like I'm looking for a diesel, doesn't it? I'm certainly not looking for a 500hp Shelby Mustang.

My 02 was fast. Fast enough. I even drag raced my brother in his V6 Sonoma, and was doing alright off the line until my carburetor linkage popped off and I rolled to a stop at the curb.

Hopefully I'll be looking for my next BMW in the future. I'd like to think BMW will offer a car in this country that's not over powered or over engineered. Mercedes offered a hatchback for a while, the 230 coupe. Volvo and Audi are going down market with the C30 and A2 respectively. If BMW could take time off from reaching for the tri-stars and remember the *Freude am Fahren* there might be another BMW waiting for me out there.

VOTE

St. Louis BMW Club Election Ballot For Calendar Year 2007

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(select 5)

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Monthly Membership Meeting

The combined business and social meeting is held the first Tuesday of each month at Growler's Pub in Sunset Hills, beginning at 6:30pm. We have a private room reserved at the left end of the pub. Socializing follows the business meeting (usually 7:30 or 8pm).

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Directions to Chapter Meetings—Growler's Pub

From Hwy 270 Exit 44 East/Watson Rd. and continue East to Lindbergh Blvd. South on Lindbergh Blvd to 3811 S. Lindbergh Blvd (on the right).

From Hwy 44 Exit Lindbergh Blvd and go South to 3811 S. Lindbergh Blvd (on the right).

Get more online by going to the St. Louis Chapter website at www.stlBMWCCA.org

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