

BIRMINGHAM



The Oil Spot

The Oil Spot is the monthly Newsletter of the Birmingham Motoring Club

August—2015

Vice President's Message—Randy and Lee Darden

Regular Club Meeting Tonight

Logan's Road House Hwy 280
Dinner at 6, Meeting at 7



Sports Cars at the Summit October 10, 2015

The date is set and the plan is being formulated. We need your help on several committees (groups) that will execute certain task the day of the car show. They include set up, registration, awards, door prizes, hospitality etc. We will have sign up at the monthly meeting Tuesday. Flyers will go out on September's meeting.

If you cannot come to the meeting and want to participate/help please contact

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David Boger

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Jack Weiss

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August Tech Session

Aug. 15th—Chelsea Garage

This tech day is going to include some planning for the Car show. We encourage everyone to come. You can just drink beer and watch the car being worked on and talk. And the weather is going to be somewhat pleasant!



BMC Board Meeting Schedule

President David Boger has set a proposed meeting schedule for the 2015 BMC Board Meetings. All club members are invited and welcome to attend any and all board meetings. The location is mostly at O'Henry's Coffee Shop at Brookwood Mall at 8:30 AM, but is subject to change if there are coinciding events that may necessitate a change in venue. These changes will be announced ahead of the change. Proposed schedule is:

August 29
September 26
October 31
November 28

And as always, regular monthly meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday evening of the month. Currently we are meeting at Logan's on 20, dinner at 6:00, meeting at 7:00 PM. Hope to see you at the next meeting!!!

Editors note: this is from a blog by one of our members John Graham. This blog will be reprinted and there will be a link on our Facebook page every time he publishes. Check it out!

Wednesday, July 1, 2015

The Thing About _____ Cars...

Years ago the new cars were revealed with much fanfare in September and October. Nowadays, not so much. I remember back in 2009 when Chevrolet introduced its newly updated Malibu they had a



set of very funny ads of people walking past tan Malibu's and never noticing them. Some cars people would run into because they were so invisible. One ad, about bank robbers hopping into a tan Malibu and the police running by them was done so well it has become internet folklore as being true. (<http://preview.tinyurl.com/nkdravu>) I have to say I was proud of GM for the willingness to make fun of their own car (I bet they are wishing they could make recalls invisible but that is for a different day).



My recent rental was one of those invisible cars, to protect its identity I won't tell you it was a Nissan Versa. One of those kinds of cars that you just don't notice on the road, in the neighborhood, maybe in your own garage. It was one of those cars that your neighbor brings home and a month later you say to your neighbor:

"Hey, I thought your car was silver, This one is gold?"

It was one of those cars that you pick up at the dealership with little to no excitement and don't bother showing it or telling anyone that you just bought a new car. It is not a bad car, but unfortunately, it is just transportation.

My question, or maybe just musing this month, revolves around the question 'Is there a place for the 'invisible' car?' My premise is no.



I own a Fiat 500 Pop. Bought it used with 14,000 miles, remainder of the factory warranty and for an unbelievable price. Even new the Fiat is a wonderful car and for an out the door price in low \$16,000 dollar range is a lot of value. It is one of the few new cars out there that make me smile when I drive it. I have another car - a 2011 Ford Fiesta - again, bought it used, like the Fiat, new with a realistic sticker price of mid-\$16,000 is a great car. Both cars come with all the 'standard' features we come to expect - power windows, power locks, A/C, AM/FM-CD stereo, fancy trip computer, 6 way adjustable seats, bluetooth connection, iPod connection, aluminum wheels - well, you get the point. These cars drive nice. Super fast, no. Sporty, I will say yes. Peppy for around town driving, most definitely. Comfortable - my first outing in the Fiesta was 8+ hours. Nary an ache to be found.



What else separates these cars or cars produced by Kia, Hyundai, and Mazda that sets them apart from other makes and models? They are not invisible. Kia and Hyundai make some of the best looking cars out there built with quality, in the USA by the way, with a phenomenal and unbeatable warranty. Mazda really does put the 'Zoom-Zoom' into cars and are always a joy to drive.

So why do car manufacturers continue to churn out cookie cutter boxes that are boring, uncomfortable and joyless to drive. Cars like the Yaris, really, can they make it much more boring, inside and out? I would easily run into one because they are so bland. The Taurus, Camry, Impala - compare what they look like and drive like compared to the Sonata, Optima, Mazda6 - not even on the same continent. Be careful with the first three listed, you may nap while driving.

In my world there is no reason for one a boring car In someone's world I guess there is. The one who



thinks of cars only as transportation, as an evil necessity, as an appliance. The ones buying the appliances - do they really not care about a nice looking car? Do they dislike driving so much they it just makes no difference how the car handles? If you offered them two cars, same price, same features, same quality and one was nice looking, would they still rather get the non-descript vehicle? I say no, I think it is more about education on car purchasing than just not caring about what you drive. People think that an inexpensive car has to be boring. In the words of the recently passed John Pinnette, 'Nay, nay'.

Let me share my insights into buying a car::

Few cars are, if any, not built with high quality these days - so get out of your Toyota, Nissan, Honda rut and look at other brands. Kia/Hyundai - beautiful cars with the best warranty out there. FIAT - yes, FIAT, makes some great cars and again, great warranty. MINI - I always thought they were overpriced - I now own a Countryman because I decided to look more closely. It was as affordable as any small SUV and a whole lot more fun to own and drive.

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Buy used - don't be afraid. Remember the cars mentioned above? Most of the used cars you will buy today will have the remainder of the warranty - so little to no risk. Many cars are leased and nothing wrong with them - I just turned in a 2 year old Ford Escape Limited - window sticker of \$32K in 2012. 20,000 miles and it will probably sell for \$18K with 2 years of warranty left. That's the price of an optioned Yaris.



The internet is your friend. Shop high and low, near and far, big and small and...well you get the idea. Maybe that car you love is 400 miles away, so what? Have a fun weekend trip and with the money you save make it a weekend and enjoy yourself.



We have CarFax, dealer reviews, E-Bay guarantees and a host of other protections. So you can almost buy a car sight unseen. I don't recommend it, but you almost could do that.



Of the millions of invisible cars sold, I would have to say only 10 or 15% of the people purchasing them truly say 'I really couldn't care less about what I drive' or even 'I like this car'. The other 85 to 90% just don't realize that a nice looking, fun to drive, high quality vehicle is available in their price range. So take some time, do some shopping and don't settle for the car that you will trip over in your own driveway because you can't see it. Take some time and buy the car you really want.

That's the thing about invisible cars, why own one when a fun one is out there?

Posted by [John Graham](#) at 8:46 AM



Turkey Creek Nature Preserve / 6th Annual Float Your Boat Fund Raiser

July 18th, a small but enthusiastic group of BMC members traveled to Pinson to the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve to display our combustion engine powered British, German and Japanese conveyances. Weather was HOT but the creek was cool as we refreshed ourselves by dipping our toes.



Making the group were David and Tracy Boger, Scott Anderson, Walt Anderson, Steve Horn, Bruce Bizzoco, Lee and Randy Darden. We met Gene and Traci Clennon with their new good looking, red MGB; 1968 we think (bad memory!)



Some of us got wetter than others as we waited.

The fundraiser for the nature preserve was a rubber duck race down the rapids. You could purchase ducks to race for you. There were heats of 100 ducks each. The top ducks went on to the final heat. Lee's duck won 3rd prize with a metal and gift basket of goodies. Told you to enter!



But mostly, a good time was had by all!

From the Pit—Johnathon Nowak

As summer draws to a close, the projects that once were fresh on our minds have become beasts of burden and may have slipped from the top of our 'to-do' list for various reasons. Why, when we have such a love affair with our automobiles, do we treat them so? What causes such an exciting endeavor to become a loathsome ordeal that one just can't be bothered with?

As an auto tech at Empire Autohaus, I see this happen all the time. Even my own project cars have shuddered to a halt, much to my dismay. Let's look at some of the causes of project hiatus and what we as a club can do to overcome these issues.

My current projects are a 1994 Mercedes E320 estate (badly in need of a head gasket) and a 1954 Porsche 356 pre-A "restoration". Those who have been to the Darden Car Haven may have seen the old 356 hiding it's sad, lonely self in the corner.

The first and most obvious cause for project stoppage is cash flow. How many times have you looked at your ride and said "Yep, it'll only cost (insert wishful thinking price) to fix that bit that needs fixing," After the process starts, you see a hose that's leaking a bit, a loose wire dangling heinously near a moving component, or an oil leak. But you weren't surprised by the last one. You knew about it, but hey, let's fix it too. Of course, after the repairs, you head out on a test drive and something else breaks. Hopefully you're uphill and can roll it back to the house. Time to reassess and get back to work. We all want our rides as perfect as we can get, but does that line up with what we've budgeted? How can we better control ourselves and our wallets?

The second most common cause for a lackadaisical attitude is attributed to part availability. Not all of our cars are in popular crowds and supplied by gobs of aftermarket suppliers. That hose you need to finish and drive your car? Oh, it's in north England. On the back shelf of the old factory. And they can't be bothered to ship it on anything faster than a row boat across the Pond. Recently we have been rebuilding a 1959 MGA Twin-Cam at Empire. The cam bearings on the ends of both cams are out of spec. Brother Boger called a twin-cam expert about ordering new bearings. Luckily they aren't produced any more. My own 356 project has been waiting new pistons and cylinders thanks to a cracked/broken cylinder. Not

an easy part(s) to obtain. Finally received a new (custom) set a few weeks ago. What do you do if you need a part that's out of production? Just wait? eBay?

The final cause that hinders any repair is quite dreaded. The inevitable snap, pop, or bang of a component on your beloved breaking. The black flag on my E estate is a broken chain guide retainer pin. Mercedes brilliantly made the upper pin that holds the chain guide up threaded internally so you can easily pull it from the head with a special tool. Sadly, the pin was seized in the head and the threads were messed up. The pin broke off flush to the guide and I stopped working on it. That was many moons ago. The frustration is sometimes unbearable. Couple the added necessity of work to be done with the encroaching summer weather and my wagon is still immobile. How can we handle these sort of situations without losing our cool and breaking more things or putting the job off entirely?

Luckily, to answer each of the questions above, we have each other as a club of automotive enthusiasts. When it comes to taking on a job you may have not attempted before, instead of leaping feet first ask your fellow club members for guidance, expected costs and what issues to look for. There is a plethora of information from all the guys here. We all love to talk about our own cars anyway, why not take advantage of it? Anyone who has been to Randy's place or Empire knows that used parts are fairly abundant amongst members. Missing a part to finish that project? Ask the club. If someone doesn't have it I guarantee there's a known source for you. You never know when that part loitering in the back of your shed will come in handy for someone's else.

Lastly, the greatest thing we can provide each other is support. Discouraged about that broken exhaust stud? Call your mates in the club, grab some drinks and put your heads together to make it right. No need to suffer alone. We've all been there. The best thing is to press on and get over that hump. You'll be better for it in the end.

I hope my first article for the Oil Spot was relevant in some way to everyone. Driving old cars is fun. Working on and maintaining them should be equally as fun.

Johnathon

Restoration Tool Definitions

HAMMER:

Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate expensive car parts not far from the object we are trying to hit.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE:

Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on boxes containing convertible tops or toneau covers.

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL:

Normally used for spinning steel Pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age, but it also works great for drilling rollbar mounting holes in the floor of a sports car just above the brake line that goes to the rear axle.

HACKSAW:

One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

WISE-GRIPS:

Used to round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH:

Used almost entirely for lighting those stale garage cigarettes you keep hidden in the back of the Whitworth socket drawer (What wife would think to look in there?) because you can never remember to buy lighter fluid for the Zippo lighter you got from the glove box/parcel tray of your project.

ZIPPO LIGHTER:

See oxyacetylene torch.

WHITWORTH SOCKETS:

Once used for working on older British cars, they are now used mainly for hiding six-month old Sailems from the sort of person who would throw them away for no good reason.

DRILL PRESS:

A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of

your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, splattering it against the Rolling Stones poster over the bench grinder.

WIRE WHEEL:

Cleans rust off old bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and hard-earned guitar callouses in about the time it takes you to say, "Django Reinhardt".

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:

Used for lowering the Interceptor to the ground after you have changed the spark plugs and trapping the jack handle firmly under the exhaust system and cracking the exhaust manifold.

EIGHT-FOOT LONG DOUGLAS FIR 2X4:

Used for levering a car upward off a hydraulic jack.

TWEEZERS:

A tool for removing wood splinters.

PHONE:

Tool for calling your neighbor Chris to see if he has another hydraulic floor jack.

SNAP-ON GASKET SCRAPER:

Theoretically useful as a sandwich tool for spreading mayonnaise; used mainly for getting dog-doo off your boot.

E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR:

A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is ten times harder than any known drill bit.

TIMING LIGHT:

A stroboscopic instrument for illuminating grease buildup on crankshaft pulleys.

TWO-TON HYDRAULIC ENGINE HOIST:

A handy tool for testing the tensile strength of ground straps and hydraulic clutch lines you may have forgotten to disconnect.

CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 16-INCH SCREWDRIVER:

A large motor mount prying tool that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end without the handle.

BATTERY ELECTROLYTE TESTER:

A handy tool for transferring sulfuric acid from car battery to the inside of your

toolbox after determining that your battery is dead as a doornail, just as you thought.

AVIATION METAL SNIPS:

See hacksaw.

TROUBLE LIGHT:

The mechanic's own tanning booth. Sometimes called a drop light, it is a good source of vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin", which is not otherwise found under cars at night. Health benefits aside, its main purpose is to consume 40-watt light bulbs at about the same rate that 105-mm howitzer shells might be used during, say, the first few hours of the Battle of the Bulge. More often dark than light, its name is somewhat misleading.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER:

Normally used to stab the lids of old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splash oil on your shirt; can also be used, as the name implies, to round off Phillips screw heads.

AIR COMPRESSOR:

A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty suspension bolts last tightened 40 years ago by someone in West Bromwich, and rounds them off.

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Classifieds



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