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of America  
River City Bimmers



# Der Fahrersitz

The Newsletter for the River City Bimmers

Spring/Summer2015



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**On the Cover** - One of Jane Absalom's Great Track Photos

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# President's Message

Juan Larin

Hi all!

It's Juan again.....yes, you guys gave me the opportunity to serve as the Chapter's President for one more year! And I wanted to thank everyone for the trust deposited in me last year and continued support for 2015!

This year started full throttle with a nice attendance to the annual winter party and election night! We have a board full of energetic folks and I'm pretty sure you have seen the results of this.

We've had two successful Autocrosses already in March and April, and as most of you know, we are racing at MIR. If our budget permits, we are going to schedule at least one more in the fall. A driving tour to Rusty's Movie and Car Museum in Jackson, TN is scheduled for May, and probably a cookout in a secret location later this summer...☺

Talking about budget....during the annual BMW CCA Conference in Dallas, we got the green light to set the default delivery method of the Newsletter to digital (you will get more information about this in a separate note, and don't worry, you can still receive paper if you wish), so we are VERY excited because this will save a considerable amount of money that can be used to organize more driving events.

Sorry we are a little late with this issue, we wanted to make sure of a few details on the switch over before sending it to the printers! Please don't hesitate to contact me directly or any member of the board if you have any questions, suggestion, etc.

See you around, don't be shy!

Juan.

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# Editor's Note

Tom Coughlin

I had a great time talking to Jane Absalom, and Tom and Tal Penfound over a couple of beers a few weeks ago. As many of you already know, they are not only interesting but entertaining as they tell their stories of cars, cameras and motorsports. You will find our article on the family on page 7. I hope you enjoy it and, when you can, will buy them a beer and ask for more information, like what's a Prancing Moose?

Several of our members have already been to the Autobahn Indoor Racing facility. Rachel Jackson sat down with the Assistant GM, Johnny Foley and her interview is on page 10. He discusses the 2 leagues currently competing but leaves the door open to additional leagues...perhaps a River City Bimmers' league who might challenge a Porsche PCA league to a season ending championship.

## Going Fully Digital

The big news is that the newsletter is going digital in a big way. Starting with the next issue, everyone will receive the digital version of the newsletter. To continue to receive the print version, just go to the national website and change your preference to print.

As Juan points out in his column, this will let us spend our money on driving events instead of printing more newsletters.

Watch your inbox for the full story!

### Remember to keep in touch with us at:

Website: [www.rcbimmers.org](http://www.rcbimmers.org)

Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rivercitybimmers/>

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# Calendar of Events

May 16 - Jackson TN Driving Tour

May 21 - Dinner Meeting, The Flying Saucer, Cordova

June 18 - Dinner Meeting, Boscus Squared, Memphis

July 16 - Dinner Meeting, Ty's Smokehouse, Bartlett, <http://www.tyssmokehouse.com/>

August 20 - Dinner Meeting, Kooky Canuck, Cordova, <http://www.kookycanuck.net/>

September 17 - Dinner Meeting, My Favorite Place, Cordova, <http://myfavoriteplacemexicanfood.com/>

October 15 - Dinner Meeting, The Flying Saucer, Cordova

November 19 - Dinner Meeting, Patrick's East Memphis, Memphis, <http://www.patricksmemphis.com/>

## Welcome New Members...

David Rhea	Memphis TN	Brian Arthur Roberts	Bartlett TN
Ron McDonald	Southaven MS	Eric Ireland	Arlington TN
Vance Michael Henderson	Olive Branch MS	Rachel Jackson	Arlington TN
Brian Warren Fowler	Jackson TN	Sara Beth Shaffer	Germantown TN
Nhan Huu Nguyen	Cordova TN	Kerry Lisa Guest	Memphis TN
Michael Cope	Collierville TN	Leo Paul Hill	Germantown TN
Elijah Franklin McCord	Jackson TN	Gwyen Elizabeth Sutphin	Starkville MS
Jordan McClain	Millington TN	Jonathan Russom	Memphis TN
Charlie Jenkins	Memphis TN	Stephannie Rial	Memphis TN

# The Family Album

Photos By Jane Absalom



# A Family Affair



If you've been to even one autocross in the Memphis area in the last 10 years, you've seen them. Father, mother, and son all working and playing together not only at BMW club events, but also at those put on by the Porsche club, SCCA, and NASA.

Tom Penfound, the father, had his interest in racing piqued when working in a family garage in North Carolina while he attended Warren Wilson College. The garage owner's son, nicknamed Thumper for his heavy foot, was an SCCA racer driving formula Fords. (For those either under 40 or without children, Thumper was a rabbit with an oversized foot in the Disney cartoon Bambi.)

Tom continued to build his skills by working on cars including his first car, a 1970 Austin America. The 1970 was the first of three Austin Americas which met tragic ends. Each of those tragedies was an opportunity for Tom to enhance his automotive knowledge and repair abilities, but it wasn't until years later that Tom took his turn on the track.



It was at Warren Wilson College that Tom met Jane Absalom who was using her associate degree in photography to work on the campus newspaper. Jane's interest in photography began early in life when her mother gave her a Girl Scout Brownie camera. Jane was only five years old and her mother had expected Jane to bring home photographs of herself and her friends. Jane, however, found it much more fun to take pictures of the interesting things around her than to capture the selfies of the day.

Fast forward several years and we find Tom and Jane living in Tennessee with Tom trying to get 16 year old Tal, the son, interested in cars. Tal was fascinated by cars but only the virtual kind. He preferred to spend his time on simulated race tracks on his computer rather than in the engine bays of real cars.



It wasn't until Tal received his grandparents' 1974 Volvo 140 station wagon that Tal started thinking about real cars more than virtual. (It bears noting that Tal's full name is Taliessin, the name of a character in a Welsh myth. The name translates to "Radiant Brow" though Tom and Jane seem to agree the more appropriate translation is "Smartass.")



In August of 2009, all of these experiences came together when Tal drove his first autocross at the Millington jet port. At his second event, Tal was joined by Tom and the family affair with motorsports had started. Jane began documenting her boys' on-track exploits using a small handheld video camera. By the fourth autocross she was taking the kind of still pictures she always preferred but now the pictures were of cars, not plants or animals.

Tom and Tal's involvement continued to grow and they can now be seen setting up, driving and tearing down most autocross tracks in the Memphis area. Tal takes part in about 30 driving events per year with Tom doing about half as many. Most of those are autocrosses but you also find them doing the longer road course events.



Jane is at all the events capturing great images of Tom and Tal and all the drivers on the course. If you like a photo Jane has taken of you and your car, she makes them available asking only for donations to offset her costs. You have seen some of Jane's work in previous issues of the River City Bimmers newsletter and on this issues cover.

This is a very brief telling of Tom, Jane and Tal's family history with cars. There isn't room here for the full story of the family's 7 Chevy Vegas, multiple Volkos and Miatas or how the prancing moose became affiliated with the BMW Car Club when they don't own a single BMW. Ask them for the full story sometime and be ready for some great tales!



# Pflege fur Bimmer by John Scheidhauer

## Replacement for Displacement

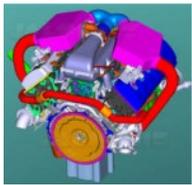
When I was growing up there was a saying by old hot rodders and racers that “there ain’t no replacement for displacement!”, meaning that if you wanted more power from an engine the best way was to increase the displacement by increasing the bore or stroke of the piston.



Engine designers and modern car manufacturers have proven this saying to be untrue. A modern turbocharged 4 cylinder engine can fairly easily make more power than an older V8 engine with two or three times the displacement.

How is this possible? Not an easy question to answer but here are a few reasons:

- Modern computer designed engines have improved drastically in volumetric efficiency allowing designers to get more from less.



Using CAD programs designers can try hundreds or thousands of combinations of

piston diameter and stroke combinations, camshaft designs, intake and exhaust port shapes, diameters, and lengths without having to touch any raw steel or aluminum.

- Materials nowadays are superior as are metal treatments such as hardening, plating, or non-metallic coating or fusing. This allows

designers to use these materials to increase engine efficiency without decreasing reliability. Engine management such as direct injection where fuel and air are injected directly into the combustion chambers or individual ignition coils for each engine cylinder give the modern designer a huge leg up on tuners of the old days.

- Forced induction where air under pressure is literally forced into the engine intake such as turbocharging or supercharging make things really exciting.



Pat Williams told me once of a simple formula that I really like. Atmospheric pressure is around 14 psi (pounds per square inch) so your engine is operating with that natural intake pressure. If we increase that pressure by forcing say an additional 7 psi in theory and all other things being equal we should increase the engine output by 50%. Or if we increase that pressure by another 14 psi we should double the engine output. Pretty cool huh?! Then on top of that we can precool the intake air with an intercooler (air or water cooled “radiator” that removes temperature from the intake air before it enters the engine) which will increase engine efficiency by creating a denser and more oxygen rich air which improves combustion by allowing more fuel to be burned. It just keeps getting better and better doesn’t it?!

All the above mentioned mechanical components would be nothing without proper management.

Designers can tweak the fuel and air mixture at every point throughout the



engine’s rpm range. Aftermarket tuners have become quite adept at squeaking out more power from modern engines through manipulation of injection and ignition maps inside the engine control module. There is an industry of businesses that do only electronic tuning or sell “custom tunes” which can be purchased and downloaded into the factory engine control module to increase engine horsepower and or torque.

To answer my own question: Yes there are replacements for displacement. Some are quick and easy, some are fundamental , others are expensive beyond reasonable cost effectiveness.



Where are we headed next? I didn’t even touch on variable camshaft timing or valvetronics so who knows?!!!!





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# Interview with Autobahn's Johnny Foley

By Rachel Jackson



Autobahn Indoor Speedway, an indoor kart facility opened early March to much anticipation in the car enthusiast community. Since the doors have been opened they have been packed and plenty of our club members have visited and can vouch it's a fun experience and definitely worth the visit.

I interviewed Assistant General Manager Johnny Foley who relocated to Memphis from Jacksonville, FL for Autobahn. Johnny is not only a big kart fan but has a spec Miata that he has raced with SCCA!

**Rachel:** What made you get interested in this business?

**Johnny:** The owners decided to go with indoor karts because they enjoy it and put a lot of love into the company.



**Rachel:** Would you say this fosters more interest from younger generations in the car culture?

**Johnny:** I think having kids around any sort of racing is going to get them more interested. Throw in something like Autobahn and you get a fever and interest in it.

**Rachel:** Do a lot of people come here who have performance cars or are car enthusiasts?

**Johnny:** We have a lot of the dirt track guys who come as well as motocross guys. We have our League guys that come very often too. A lot of car clubs meet here. We set up the parking lot so the clubs can all park together then race together.

**Rachel:** What's a common misconception about this business that people may have?

**Johnny:** A lot of people think the karts won't do 50 miles an hour. They will actually do 65-70 mph, but if you try that on our track, you'd be in the walls. You can hit 50 on our track, but our fastest guys will only get up to 25-30 mph. It's not necessarily about being the fastest; it's about being the smoothest.

**Rachel:** What is the league and how does someone sign up?

**Johnny:** We have two leagues: Competition and Average Joes. Average Joes is competitive, just a little slower so people aren't getting lapped. Competitive runs 10 weeks; Average Joe's 8 weeks. You get three races a night – qualifying, heat, and feature. It's position racing, not for times. Anyone can sign up for Average Joes, you don't have to qualify. The Competition league is for our best drivers and it keeps the competition hot. We're also willing to start other leagues if groups are interested.

**Rachel:** Are there any driving clinics to help customers improve their skills?

**Johnny:** We are going to start doing clinics, usually on weekday nights and you'll get about an hour of racing. The clinic will be \$50 and you'll get 4 or 5 races. If you have any questions about the track, we're here all the time and can answer any questions.

**Rachel:** What techniques can be learned on this track that can be applied to other racing?

**Johnny:** Any kind of racing where you can get a true driver's mind set up will help. If you can adapt to any situation or any vehicle, it gives you experience. You have to learn your braking line, racing line, and it makes you analyze everything.



**Rachel:** Do you ever change the way the track is set up?

**Johnny:** This is a brand new system to the US. We're only the second company to use it and it is fixed. It's posted in the ground. The springs are there and the walls won't move. We plan on about a two year stint with the track then we will think about changing it. There are a lot of options we can do.

Having personally been to Autobahn and raced around the track before deciding to write a piece on it, I was thrilled with the experience. Not only is it exhilarating to go around the track at the speed the karts go, but there's plenty to do while you wait for your races, whether it be watching other racers, playing video games, or getting a bite to eat from the food truck vendors. Give it a try and see if you can get in the top ten!

# Board of Directors

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tc4bmwcca@att.net

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Rachel Jackson

Tom Coughlin

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[How to Contact the BMWCCA](#)

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[How to Contact the River City Bimmers](#)

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