

many sensors have you experienced or heard of failing? How many dipsticks?

Yeah, exactly. And a hand-crank versus a starter motor—definite performance advantage to the starter motor.

Randy Jones
Bloomington, IL

FROM GLOBAL WARMING TO TOPICS THAT MATTER

First, I'd like to make a motion that global warming will be not solved in the letters section of our beloved *Roundel*, and henceforth we will move on to other important stuff, like dipsticks. Several fellow members seem to equate a desire for dipsticks with a pathological need for antiquity; these are probably the same folk who think SMG and Step-tronic are the future.

I believe they confuse the most basic of arguments: needs versus wants.

I want a dipstick. I understand that technology no longer makes it necessary. I want a clutch pedal. I understand that a computer can do it faster and better.

I don't need a lot of things; my list of wants, however, is fairly long. Many manufacturers make good vehicles that would satisfy my needs. I look to BMW to satisfy my wants.

Peter A. Gray
Newtonville, NY

Amen.—SC

NO TIRES AND NO BRAKES: LET'S GO

In 1996, I went to my third BMW CCA driving school. After a few laps I found that my brakes were spongy and my tires were gone. I pulled into pit row and Monty Sidhu came up and confirmed my findings. I was disappointed that my weekend was over.

Monty then said, "Now it's time for you to really learn how to drive!" We hopped back in and went out on course. He was right; we had a blast all weekend driving with no brakes and no tires. I did my fastest laps that day.

A couple of years later when we restarted the autocross program in Los Angeles, Monty always volunteered to instruct unless he was racing that weekend. Students loved him and his enthusiasm. I always heard excited students tell me how he also changed their lives.

Thank you, Monty. You will be missed.

David Alsbery
Santa Monica, CA

THE CAR GETS OLD AND THE PARTS GET EXPENSIVE

Oh, my poor old 524td has been having some problems these past two months. For starters, I am going on my second fuel pump in the tank (\$600 each) in a four-month span. I never had that issue before; maybe it's a quality-control issue with BMW parts.

I also just had my injector pump replaced (\$2,000) back in November, and now the car is at a BMW dealership in Newport Beach;

the injector pump is bad again. Thank goodness I got it at a BMW shop; warranties are good for this part!

I guess they do not make the parts like they used to—or maybe my td is too old now? I have not been able to enjoy driving it lately. I'm waiting for the injector pump to arrive from Germany.

Vince Zamora
Los Angeles, CA

HOW TO ESCAPE A SINKING BMW

In 2006 I accidentally drove my 540i into a river on the eastern shore of Maryland. I was taking a "spirited" drive down Bogles Wharf road in the Eastern Neck Wildlife Reserve, and in the dark I didn't realize that it dead-ended into the Chester River.

I landed about thirty feet out. I remember my landing being much like coming down a log flume at an amusement park; the water cushioned the blow. I did have my seat belt on, but the air bags did not activate. Instinctively, I opened the window, unbuckled my seat belt, and kicked off my shoes. Then I climbed through the window to swim to safety.

When I got to shore, I realized that I was in my bare feet, seven miles from the nearest town. My car had sunk to the bottom in a little less than four feet of water. The lights were still on (under water) and the top of the car was exposed.

Then I made a huge mistake: I decided to wade back to the car to get my shoes, wallet, and briefcase. While I was sitting in the passenger seat chest-deep in water putting my shoes on, the window that I had climbed through automatically closed, trapping me in the car! I remember hearing the locks click shut. Obviously the electrical system was shorting out.

I tried to open the windows and doors, but they wouldn't budge. Then I climbed into the back seat and began kicking the rear driver's-side window. I kicked as hard as I could, but the window wouldn't break.

Totally exhausted, I gave up, assuming it was my time to go. I said a short prayer. A few seconds later the rear window that I had been kicking automatically went down about eight inches. I was able to squeeze my head and chest through the opening. Then, when my knee hit the top of the window, it shattered; apparently once the window is down even a little, you can break it. When it's completely closed, the frame supports it and makes the tempered glass almost impossible to break.

Since my accident I have done exhaustive research on water immersion, entrapment, and escape. I've interviewed many "experts" and combined their knowledge with my own to try to educate the public on how to escape a sinking car. Every year over 10,000 people in the U.S. are involved in water-immersion accidents. Thousands more become trapped in dry-land accidents when their doors, windows, and seat belts are jammed. Most people don't

know that a car window is almost impossible to break without a tool specifically designed to do the job. The key to surviving a water immersion accident is to *exit the car through the window as quickly as possible*.

Tragically, many people make the deadly mistake of keeping the window up, hoping that the car will float until the rescue squad arrives. A typical car will only float for about two to ten minutes, and it takes at least twenty minutes (usually more) for a rescue squad to arrive.

Here are the five steps to surviving a water-immersion accident:

1. Try to stay calm
2. Open the window
3. Unfasten your seat belt
4. Climb through the window
5. Swim to safety

If the window will not open and you have a tool that will shatter the window, now is the time to use it. The two best personal auto-escape tools I have found are the original LifeHammer and the keychain auto escape tool, ResQMe. Either of these will shatter a car side or rear window and cut through a jammed seat belt. You can order them online at www.saveyourlife.us.

If you don't have an auto-escape tool, you can try to break the window by slamming the point of a screwdriver or the tip of a tire iron against the corner of a side window. But be aware that it is difficult to break a car window even hitting it with a traditional claw hammer.

If this fails, your last option is to wait until the car is almost completely full of water, which equalizes the pressure inside and out. Then push the door open. You should be sure the door locks are disengaged (pull the door handle at least two times) before the car is filled with water.

Of course, my 540i was totaled. So I went out and bought a 330i Sport (my seventh BMW). I don't think it will float any better than my 540i, but at least now I'm equipped with a LifeHammer and ResQMe.

Archie Allan

EZCARLIFT IS JUST AS DESCRIBED

I wanted to follow up on Anthony Masciopinto's letter that appeared in the November issue, talking about the EZcarlift. After reading about it I went to their website (www.ezcarlift.com) and looked it over, then called Boytcho Manev with additional questions I had about the lift design and its options to fit other vehicles other than my 1983 E28 528e. I had a very detailed discussion with Boytcho and ordered the product.

The EZcarlift arrived early December and I've been using it since, placed in my small garage (typically called a one-and-a-half-car garage), where it is currently supporting my BMW while I work getting it ready for the 2008 BMWCCA NCC Concours event in Virginia. The quality of this lift is excellent, and the more I work with it, the more I am

impressed with its design, strength, and flexibility. I've fabricated some lift blocks specifically for the E28 lift points and have shared that simple design with Boytcho, who may make something like these available to other BMW owners who purchase the EZcarlift.

I maintain a website documenting the maintenance and modifications to my E28 and have included additional info about the EZcarlift and my use of it at mysite.verizon.net/vze7aq8e/continued/id25.html for anyone interested in its use with an older E28.

I've had many question about the lift, and a few visitors who were impressed with the design of the EZcarlift. It's a great product and an ideal solution for someone such as me, with a very small garage, but several different vehicles that I maintain and modify. And when the weather warms up, it will be going to friends' garages to assist them, too.

My thanks to Anthony Masciopinto for sharing info about the EZcarlift and to *Roundel* for publishing it, as I probably would have never heard about it. My thanks, also, to Boytcho Manev at EZcarlift, for designing, building, and supporting a great product. I consider it money well spent.

Rod Paine

WEIGHT DOES NOT EQUAL VELOCITY

I enjoyed Mike Miller's article on the trip to Dinan and the transformation of his 325Ci. Combining the "road trip" angle with a detailed description of the work done on the car made an interesting story. However, I do question his comments near the end of the article when he theorizes that reducing weight might yield a higher top speed.

My understanding is that top speed is achieved when maximum horsepower reaches equilibrium with aerodynamic drag (assuming a level road). Reducing weight will enable you to accelerate to top speed more quickly, but only reducing aerodynamic drag or increasing power will increase top speed.

If I'm incorrect about this, I'd appreciate a clarification.

Brian Lay
Northampton, MA

Dang! Another member who studied physics!—SC

ON MINI AND MAXIMUM EGOS

Regarding Marc Biunno's column: Marc, I read with interest your column and I have some observations. Before that, though, you should know I am coming from a different context. First, I'm 63 this year, so I grew up with low-powered British sports cars and watched them race at Road America in Wisconsin.

I have never been a horsepower junkie. I bought an MCS—that's Mini Cooper S to you non-Mini members—in 2002 and did my first autocross that summer, then three track days, and I have done 50 more events since then. I modified my Mini a little at a

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