



# NINES

THE SAAB CLUB NEWSLETTER

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November  
1991  
no. 208



On the grid at the St. Paul Winter Carnival Cup Ice Race - February 1977. See page 16. Photo by Kate Westberg.

**Replacing V4 valve seals, the easy way** page 13

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**The Alcan 5000 Rally**

page 9

# Regional Club News

## Calendar of Events

### 1992 National SAAB Owners Convention

August 7-9, Columbus Ohio  
Dan Orzano, 614/231-3892

### Minnesota SAAB Club

Nov. 16 - Karta Turina Rally, Hastings, MN  
Dec. 12 - Gen't meeting. Costs of car insurance and how to get fair price after an accident.  
Dean Nelson, 612/636-3771.

### Milwaukee SAAB Club

Nov 17 - Lakeshore Road Rally, Racine, WI  
Rick Lemerond, 414/634-5735  
Jeff Ninnemann, 414/634-4049.  
Nov 23 - Tech Clinic: Motor Car Body & Paint, Bradley Rd.  
Karl Buschhaus, 608/575-8091.

### New Jersey SAAB Club

Dec 10 - Meeting at Bennigan's, Saddle Brook, NJ. Dave Starbuck, 908/647-7549  
Scott Behrle, 201/797-5391.

### Saab Owners of Canada

Nov 20 - Visit to GM Saab/Saturn/Isuzu headquarters

## New Clubs

### Central States SAAB Club (Illinois, Indiana)

Contact: Jason Henske  
Rt. 3, Box 80-4  
Litchfield, IL 62056  
217/324-4426

### Utah SAAB Owners Club

Contact: Chris Cox  
P.O. Box 526105  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84152-6105

## SAAB Fest '91: Preview of '92

Over 80 SAAB enthusiasts from the Central Ohio area, and as far away as Tennessee, gathered on a hot, sunny day in Columbus for the first "SAAB Fest".

A family picnic setting at Camp Mary Orton provided a beautiful backdrop to display the nearly 50 SAABs ranging from a beautiful 1960 GT-750 to a 1991 Turbo Convertible. Fantastic 1968 and '69 Sonetts were also there, as well as several 96s, a few 99s and many 900s, plus a 9000 or two.

Organized mainly by Capital Star Service with the help of a few other local SAAB enthusiasts, the event raised \$850 for the Columbus Children's Hospital.

SAAB Fest '91 was also an organizing meeting to form a local SAAB Club in the Central Ohio area. Dan Orzano, who has been a national club member since 1985, has offered to chair the 1992 National Convention in Columbus for 1992.

Planning for the '92 event has been going on for over a year now. Columbus has been designated a national and international exposition city to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Hotel space has been limited due to large numbers of tourists planning to see all the activities being planned in Columbus for that year.

Orzano has tentatively reserved space at a hotel that can accommodate the anticipated crowd for August 7, 8 and 9. Early plans call for a format similar to other SAAB conventions, but with a few special touches such as spouse tours of local attractions, kids activities and a possible autocross event for daring drivers.

More information on the '92 Convention will be available over the next few months.

### SAAB Club of North America

2416 London Road, Unit 900  
Duluth, MN 55812-2221

218/ 724-1336, 9am - 6pm Mon - Sat  
Fax number: 218/ 728-6307

### NINES Editor & Publisher:

Tim Winker

### Editorial Ass't / Membership

Joan Oswald

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Editorial contributions are welcome. All material submitted is assumed to be for publication unless clearly labeled otherwise. Double-spaced typewritten articles are preferred, but most anything is acceptable. We cannot answer every inquiry and reserve the right to edit materials submitted.

Those wishing to submit articles or letters on 5 1/4" IBM-formatted disks, please convert to ASCII text files (<filename>.TXT). Please include a printed hard copy, and a SASE if you want the disk returned.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Eight weeks notice is required for change of address. Please send new address and old address, including zip codes, to the SAAB Club at the address above.

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## Letters to NINES

As you are probably aware by now I have resigned my position as President of Saab Cars USA, Inc. effective September 30, 1991.

For personal reasons I decided not to relocate with the company to Atlanta. I have thoroughly enjoyed my almost twelve years with great Saab people and exciting Saab automobiles.

I am enclosing a check and subscription form for my home address.

I admire your involvement, interest, and efforts in behalf of the Saab Club and I wish you and all the members all the best. There are some exciting new Saab cars coming down the line in a couple of years. I am certain your membership will increase dramatically.

Best Wishes,  
Sten O. Helling

### Steer by wire

How can I get Active Steering on my '87 Saab 9000T? Ever since I flew a side stick control airplane I have felt that stick control was the only way to go and have looked for ways to accomplish it.

If Saab is looking for people to evaluate such a system - say to look at the difference between force control and motion control - I would like to volunteer.

Hopefully the conservative group that says "everyone knows how to turn a steering wheel" will not win out. Saab is just the company to come out with this new approach. To me it's a sure winner.

Let me know if there is any way that I can get involved in this exciting project.

William T. Cleminshaw  
Irvine CA

### What, me worry?

I've got a confession to make - I'm worried. I own a 1984 900S with 140,000 miles on it and, except for some minor electrical glitches and despite being rear-ended by idiot driver (twice), nothing has gone wrong with this car! What am I doing wrong? Cars aren't supposed to be this reliable and I expect a complete breakdown any minute!!

I've changed the brakes three times, the clutch once, I change the oil every 3-4000 miles, have done routine maintenance like plugs/cap/rotor/timing/Ox sensor/trans oil/filters/wheel alignment, but that's about it. I've never adjusted the valves, never serviced the fuel injection, haven't blown a water pump or a timing belt yet. At the last count I'm getting 30 mpg (mostly highway) and I don't spend my weekends stroking and adjusting every widget on the car. Hell, I haven't even waxed it for three years.

What disasters should I expect and what should I do to avoid them? Any advice on high mileage maintenance and things that definitely should be checked/serviced/changed? Your advice (other than "Quick, buy a new 9000CD") will be appreciated.

William A. Cole  
Margaretville NY

P.S. If the engine falls out before the next issue, I'll call you.

### Good Saabs, Bad Saabs

Wanted to write to comment on the four 9000T five-doors that I have purchased. The 1986 model was a terrible car and needed constant service. The poor feel and quality of the 5-speed made it the last Saab 5-speed I was to buy. The 1987 9000T was an automatic and was a bit better than the 1986. The 1988 had many mechanical and fit and finish problems.

My 1991 is a much improved car and after 25,000 miles is still tight and runs well. I really enjoy driving the 9000s except for a few points.

The first is the controls for the AC and ventilating system. The OFF button that Saab placed on the panel is redundant. What about a system that remains in the same mode the next time you start the car as when you last shut the ignition off? It is a constant hassle to press three buttons (now the rear door panel vents also start up) every time you start the ignition. If you shut the car off and the panel is on ECON, low fan and vent, it should remain at that setting when the car is turned on. Like Burger King says, "Have it Your Way".

My second point would be to offer a high quality cloth seat in the 9000T and CD

models. As good as leather is, it is still cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

My last complaint is the hard shifting of the automatic transmission. The shift between second and third gear is especially noticeable and many of my passengers think I have transmission problems. The Saab dealers say the 9000 has a rough shifting transmission.

Thanks for your magazine. My local dealership, Wigglesworth Saab in West Chicago, suggested it to me. All the people at Wigglesworth do a great job, from Rick, Chuck and Scott in Sales, to Larry in Parts (best inventory in the area), Mike in Service and Mike the service tech.

Tom Nawara  
Riverside IL

My 1989 900 is my third Saab, and I love it. It handles and rides well, has most of the features I want in a car, and it is comfortable and safe. It even looks good.

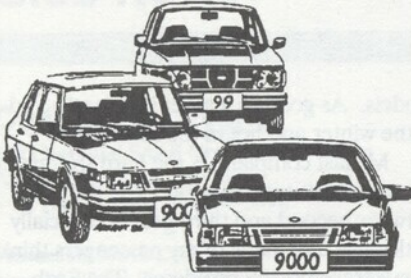
It is better than my '83 900 and my '78 model 99. In fact, from that old 99 on, I though I was spoiled by Saab for life. But I was wrong.

My 1989 900 is my third Saab, and I hate it. I hate it because such a good car shouldn't have so many annoying problems. I should not have had to make so many trips to the dealer to have the same things repaired. And it could be nice if a bit more care was exercised at the dealership.

The car was delivered with grease all over the dash and door panels, permanently wrinkled driver's seat upholstery, missing clips for one of the speaker grilles, and a misaligned driver's door. The exhaust system rattled against the rear suspension. The misaligned hatch squeaked annoyingly until the third attempt at repair. A non-functioning UPSHIFT indicator had to be repaired twice. And worst of all, a horrendous surge problem caused the engine to hunt over an 800 RPM range at idle.

During the 34,000 miles I drove it in two years, the windshield had to be replaced because of a stress crack, the brakes were repaired five (yes, 5) times for vibration from out-of-true rotors, and the front grille fell off on the Massachusetts Turnpike. A wheel cover fell off after the car was

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serviced by the dealer. Another wheel cover was missing two of the rubber clip inserts and also was about to fall off.

After many trips to the dealer, little has been done about the surge problem, and a letter to Mr. Sinclair (well before he retired) resulted in a response from a Saab customer service employee (to whom I had already spoken to no avail), claiming that the problem had been resolved and offering no help whatsoever.

Love-hate relationships can't last forever, and my affair with Saab is about over. I'll probably keep my two remaining Saabs, but I doubt if I will buy another one. At least that's what I said on the J. D. Power survey I just completed. The funny thing is that it seems I have had less trouble overall with my '83 after 134,000 miles of service than I have had with my '89. Thank goodness for the 36,000 mile warranty, but it's about to run out and elope with my good will.

Jeff Baker  
 Fairport NY

*I'm going to go out on a limb with an unscientific observation. It seems that there have been more complaints about 1989 Saabs than other years. If you'll recall, 1989 was when there were lots of rumors about whether Saab was for sale, that absenteeism and turnover were high at the Saab factory, and morale wasn't particularly good what with people concerned for their jobs. My guess is that quality control slipped during that period.*

*Reports on 1990 and 1991 Saab indicate that build quality is much better. New management and better job security seem to have made a significant difference in the product delivered to the dealerships.*

*From the tone of Jeff's letter, it seems that the bulk of the problems are not with the car itself, but with a dealership that is unwilling to seek customer satisfaction. While the car should not have had faults when it left the factory, the dealer's service department should have been able to correct most of the above mentioned faults the first time. - TW*

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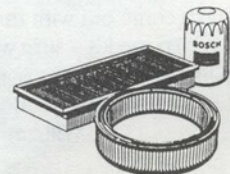
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RADIATORS

## Doktor Nio's SAAB Klinik

Submit your questions with as complete information on the problem as possible, also giving the year and model of SAAB. Problems of general interest will be answered here. No requests for personal replies please. Questions which would require modification of, or would defeat Federally required emissions systems will not be answered. For a proper diagnosis, it is recommended that you contact an authorized SAAB dealer or repair shop.

Send your questions to: SAAB KLINIK, 2416 London Road, Unit 900, Duluth, MN 55812-2221

I recently purchased a **1991 900T SE Convertible**. The factory Accessories/Options book lists an engine tuning kit which is supposed to increase engine output from 160 hp to 185 hp. Exactly what is entailed with the tuning kit including installation difficulty?

What possible negative side effects could happen to the engine after installation of the kit?

How necessary is the sport exhaust system in addition to the engine tuning kit?

Is there an aftermarket kit which performs a similar function and, of course, meets all Federal emissions standards?

Phil Leibowitz  
Baltimore MD

*The 0245001 APC control unit mounts on the left inner fender and it's a matter of unbolting and unplugging the black one and reversing the procedure for the red one. SAAB does specify the highest octane fuel you have available. The factory box may be a bit conservative to preclude any "negative side effects".*

*The factory sport exhaust, or any of the free-flow systems available will enhance torque and maximum power.*

*There are other control boxes available through one or more of the SAAB parts and accessory sources in this publication.*

I own a **1989 9000S 5-door** bought new in Germany. I have had a nagging problem with the AC system losing freon. Every two months it completely loses its charge and the AC will not function. Just prior to expiration of the 12-month warranty, I told the dealer I was tired of this routine and to fix it once and for all. He claims to have done so, only time will tell.

I have also experienced some wear on the driver's seatback leather. The dealer says it is FWT and to be expected because the leather is dyed. Any ideas?

Mark A. Scheidler  
APO NY

*Your shop should be capable of using modern "sniffing" devices to locate the leak of freon. A dye that is picked up by ultra-violet light can be introduced into the system and the leak located in this manner.*

*Some leather colors were more prone to cracking and deteriorating more quickly than others. Other than keeping a conditioner on the leather, I have no remedies.*

I have a **1986 900S** with 100,000 miles on it. There is a loud clunk in the front suspension at low speed with the wheels turned sharply. It is especially noticeable while backing up.

The local dealer says it is wheel bearings, independent shops have claimed bad front shocks (replaced with no help) and bad bushings (at torsion bars?).

John Endsley  
Knoxville TN

*The noise you describe is a shifting either of the wheel bearing in the hub or the stub axle spline fit into the drive flange. An inspection of the splines is the easiest first step in tracing the noise. Remove the large center axle nut and look very closely at the splines for wear on the tips. If you remove the wheel, caliper and brake rotor, feel how tightly the drive flange is pressed on the stub axle. Inspect the top edges of the splines for signs of flat spots indicating shifting. If there is evidence of wear on the splines, you may get by with replacing only the drive flange itself.*

*Check for axial play that could be due to a loose wheel bearing fit into the spindle. In either case, replacement of the bearing, hub or drive flange is necessary to eliminate the cracking sound.*

The left rear tire of my **1977 99** rubs against the upper shock mount. This occurs both with 185/65 tires and 165-15's. The metal of the shock-mount area is polished indicating at least occasional contact. No such contact on the right side. I am reluctant to go to a frame shop for general bending as the whole unit body is somewhat brittle from rust. Both trailing arms have rusted and been replaced, shocks are good.

Martin Berger  
Youngstown OH

*It appears the panhard rod is at fault. The brackets that it attaches to or the bushings themselves are broken or badly worn. The panhard rod locates the axle transversely and the mounts could be rusted*

*and bent out of position. The rod mounts on the body at the left side and on the axle at the right side.*

I installed an oil temperature gauge in my **'85 900SPG**. The sending unit is an oil drain plug replacement. When the outside air temperature is 70°F or less, the oil temp won't even come off the 120F peg of the gauge. When the outside air temp is over 70°F, the needle will move up a little, but I've never seen it over 180°F, even when idling in 90°+ heat.. I've checked the sender gauge combination using hot water and it is accurate. Is the oil cooler doing too good of a job? I've read that optimum oil temp is between 180°-210°F. This oil temp seems awfully cool for going through a turbo bearing.

Dan Roehre  
Madison WI

*This kind of temperature reading is quit common during normal driving conditions. The oil is cooler in the sump than anywhere else in the engine. The highest reading we have seen in a sump mounted sender was slightly over 300 degrees. This was after sustained high boost, high speed driving and the temperature climbed to this point only after slowing down and idling. The turbo temperature was very high but air flow over the oil cooler ceased, thus the high oil temperature. I think your readings are normal and safe.*

I tried to install a Solex 32TDID carb and matching manifold on my **1970 96-V4** in place of the original FoMoCo carb. When I drove the car after the work was finished the engine got very hot, almost into the red zone. All hoses, radiator, etc., checked out. I re-installed the FoMoCo carb and manifold and the temperature read normal again. Any ideas?

Oded Mandelblatt  
Israel

*My only guess is the coolant passages in the replacement manifold you used did not line up with the cylinder head water ports. I'm not real familiar with any differences between the manifolds you mention. Can anyone out there offer a clue?*

# SERVICE SUBJECTS



## FROM SAAB

### Changes in Alarm Operation

Application: 900 Convertible, 1992  
PSI 09/91-0134, Sec. 3/Pg. 12

A number of significant changes have been made to the operation of the alarm system in 1992 900 convertible models including the addition of a start inhibitor feature and integration with the central locking. Also, the complete alarm system will be factory installed and will not require any dealer installation. Outlined below are the components that have changed and a description of any new operational function.

- **Remote Disarm Transmitters:** Two transmitters are now included with

every car. Previously, the car was equipped with one transmitter and one frequency-matched ROM chip that could be installed if the customer wanted two transmitters.

- **Alarm Electronic Control Unit (ECU) Relocation:** The alarm ECU is located under the rear seat beam directly behind the drivers seat. A new bracket secures the ECU and houses the starter inhibit relay and flasher relay and is easily accessed on the front side of the seat beam. To gain access, lift the rear seat bottom and fold down the carpet. A T-30 torx screw secures the bracket to the front side of the seat beam and a locating tab on the back of the bracket fits into a slot under the seat beam.

The central lock ECU is also attached to the bottom of this bracket.

A 5 amp blade type fuse for the alarm system is located in-line in the alarm wiring harness beneath the alarm ECU bracket.

- **Starter Inhibitor Function:** A starter inhibitor relay is integrated into the system from the factory. Should the

alarm be triggered (set off), the starter inhibitor will prevent the car from being started until it has been disarmed. The relay is located on the alarm ECU bracket for easy access.

- **Keyless Entry with Arming/Disarming Function:** The central locking system is now integrated and controlled by the alarm system remote transmitters. To arm the alarm system and lock the doors and trunk lid, remove the ignition key, exit the car and close the doors. When the transmitter button is depressed, the central locking system will actuate both door locks and trunk lock and the alarm system will verify that it is armed by a short chirp of the siren.

To disarm the system and unlock the doors, press the transmit button. The central locking system will unlock and the siren will chirp twice indicating that the alarm is now disarmed.

#### NOTE

The central locking system does not actuate from the driver's door lock (key or lock knob). From the interior of the car, the central lock can be actuated by a new rocker switch located on the center console.

- **Rear Seat-Bottom Wired for Tampering:** The rear seat cushion is now wired into the alarm system by forming a ground through the hold down springs to provide anti-tampering protection. Should the rear seat cushion be pulled up, it will activate the alarm if the alarm is armed.

A one-pole connector in the wire can be easily detached to allow the seat bottom to be removed.

Be sure the connector is reattached after any work requiring rear seat removal is completed.

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### Correction to 1992 900 Owner's Manual

Application: 1992 900 Naturally Aspirated  
Models B212 Engine

The spark plug specification listed in the 1992 900 Owner's Manual (page 105) for naturally aspirated models is incorrect. The correct spark plug spec is NGK BCP5EV. When ordering, use part number 91 36 276 for a four pack of these plugs.

The electrode gap remains the same at 0.024"-0.028" (0.6-0.7mm).

## Summary of Most Recent Recall Campaigns

Saab Ref. Nos.	Date Recall Began	Models and VIN's (Total No. Recalled)	Defect Description	Recall Bulletin No. & Action Prescribed
NHTSA 87V-013 Saab 269	04/02/87	1986 900S, 900 Turbo G2025755- G3019628- G7029285- 1987 900S, 900 Turbo H2000001-H2012867 H3000001-H3010345 H7000001-H7018747	The fuel hose between the pressure regulator and injector rail may rupture due to stress resulting in a fuel leak, and possibly, a fire.	03/87-944 900 fuel pressure regulator hose.
EPA-Related Saab 270	06/06/88	1988 9000 Turbos J1012100-J1019006 J2006250-J2010641	The front exhaust pipe may have a welding flaw resulting in an air leak and increased emissions.	05/88-1052 Replace front exhaust pipe.
NHTSA 88V-057 Saab 271	05/31/88	1988 9000 Turbos, 1988 9000 S Turbo J1007322-J1030196 J2003314-J2017955	Ball chain for the cruise control may get caught on the vacuum regulator on the throttle pedal.	05/88-1059 Install ball chain covers on regulator and throttle pedal arm.
NHTSA 88V-149 Saab 272	09/15/88	1988 900, 900S and 900 Turbo J3027796-J3035000 J7038630-J7041552 J7042873-J7045000 J7041982	Certain suspension bolts could fail resulting in loss of directional control.	10/88-1080 Replace front suspension bolts.
NHTSA 88V-173 Saab 273	01/30/89	1987 900 Models, all 1988 900 Models, all	Wire chafing behind the dashboard may lead to an interior fire.	02/89-1111 Apply wire protection at critical points.
NHTSA 88V-185 Saab 274	11/30/88	1989 900 Models K7003601-K7005530 1989 9000 Models K1003410-K1006162 K2001588-K2002754	Fuel filter may leak.	12/88-1094 Replace fuel filter
NHTSA 89V-104 Saab 276	05/31/88 07/24/89	1989 900 Models K3000001-K3011755 K7000001-K7014459	Heater fan wiring may cause overheating of the heater fan resistor.	07/89-1161 Modify the wiring at the microswitch on the air distribution selector.
NHTSA 89V-191 Saab 277	03/05/90	All 1988 9000 models with Automatic Trans. Certain 1989 9000 models w/ Auto. Trans. K10000001-K1022647 K20000001-K2013289 (14,000)	The clips securing the automatic transmission throttle (kick-down) cable may work loose, possibly allowing the cable to come into contact with a brake line below the ABS hydraulic unit.	02/90-1220 Inspect throttle cable and brake lines and install a bracket to secure the cable in place.
NHTSA 90V-001 Saab 278	03/05/90	All 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 9000 models with Automatic Trans. Certain 1990 9000 models with Automatic Trans. L1000001-L1011813 L2000001-L2008735 (24,000)	The possibility that the combination neutral safety/back-up light switch may overheat from current flow through the back-up lamp circuit when the ignition is switched on and the automatic transmission selector lever is in the Reverse (R) position for long periods of time. If overheating of the switch assembly does occur, smoke or, possibly, fire could develop in the center console area.	03/90-1226 Modify back-up light wiring circuit to reduce the maximum electrical current flow through the neutral safety/back-up light switch, and replace.
NHTSA 91V-002 Saab 280	01/25/91	Certain 1991 9000 models with Automatic Transmission. M1004573-M1007401 M2003031-M2004955	There is a possibility that, during vehicle assembly, the ball of the automatic transmission gear selector arm may not have been properly fixed to the socket on the end of the gear selector cable. If the gear selector arm should become separated from the gear selector cable at this ball socket joint, the gear position could not be selected or determined by using the gear selector lever inside the passenger compartment. This, in turn, could lead to the possibility of starting the car in a gear other than Park or Neutral.	01/91-0082 Check selector cable attachment at the gearbox selector arm to ensure excess grease has not prevented a good connection.

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## SAAB NEWS

### Saab sales up for first nine months of '91

Saab is the only significant European marque to show an increase in sales for the first nine months of 1991. Between January 1 and September 30, 1991, a total of 20,644 new Saabs were registered, compared to 20,532 Saabs registered during the same period last year, an increase of 0.26 percent. Sales of new Saabs during September were up 59 percent over 1990 figures, from 1,390 last September to 2,217 this year.

The only other European auto manufacturer to show an increase in the same period was Alfa Romeo, whose sales increased to 2,900, due primarily to the introduction of the 164 model. All others were down for the period, with BMW off only 17 percent, while Jaguar and Porsche sales are off 50 percent so far in 1991.

Saab has offered several incentive plans to improve sales this year, primarily involving special financing programs instead of rebates. The most recent incentive, called the Flexible Finance Program, covers all 1992 Saab 900 and 9000 models.

Under Flexible Financing, customers can tailor their own interest rates from 0 to 10 percent based on the amount of down payment and length of term. For example, a 1992 900 with a suggested retail price of \$19,835 (including destination charge) may be purchased with 0 percent interest and monthly payments of \$219 for 48 months with a 40 percent down payment, while the monthly payments on a 1992 Saab 9000 with its suggested retail price of \$25,285 (including destination charge) and the same terms would be only \$288. Terms are also available for 24 and 36 month periods, and down payment requirements range from 20 to 40 percent.

Saab's Flexible Financing Program is effective through November 30, 1991 and is subject to model availability. Further details are available directly from any Saab dealer.

### '92 Saab 9000 most fuel efficient "Large Car"

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the 1992 Saab 9000 is the most fuel efficient auto in the agency's "Large Car" size class.

The EPA recently released its mileage ratings of 1992 models, and the 9000 is rated at an economical 26 m.p.g. on the Highway test cycle, and 20 m.p.g. on the City cycle.

With 120.4 cubic feet of interior volume--including luggage compartment--the 9000 is the only import to be rated as a "Large Car" by the EPA. The "Large Car" class is EPA's biggest interior category for sedans.

### Some rare Saab accessories available

Several questions raised at the roundtable discussion during this year's Saab Owner's National Convention were about the availability of certain accessories. Steven Rossi of Saab Cars USA now responds to those questions:

As mentioned during the roundtable discussion during the Convention at Crystal Mountain, there were a few questions in the Accessory area which required further discussion back in Orange to get the most accurate information. Here are the latest details on two of the points raised.

Like the bridge spoiler presently available on the Saab 9000 CD and CD Turbo, a similar spoiler will soon be available for Saab 9000 hatchback models. The relocation of the high-mounted brakelight--which is blocked by the spoiler on 5-door models--required additional development time.

As far as the 5-bolt "Minilite" style wheels for the 95/96/97, it appears these may still be ordered from Sweden, though I haven't any firm details.

The 900 Convertible tonneau cover question is still under investigation.

Club members interested in Saab Accessories should visit their local Saab dealer and pick up a free copy of our Options brochure for all the latest details on the goodies that are available.

Steven Rossi  
Director, Public Relations  
Saab Cars USA, Inc.  
Orange CT



## Pop, pop! Fizz, fizz!

Let's start with the important stuff. Our bar bill at the Chateau Jasper following the 1991 Alcan 5000 Rally was over \$400! Four bottles of Moët & Chandon champagne was a considerable part of that, but still...

It wouldn't have been so bad if Satch had been able to purchase the case(s) of Moët from his pal the distributor in Anchorage. But his pal the distributor was out of town, and no one else knew of the arrangement.

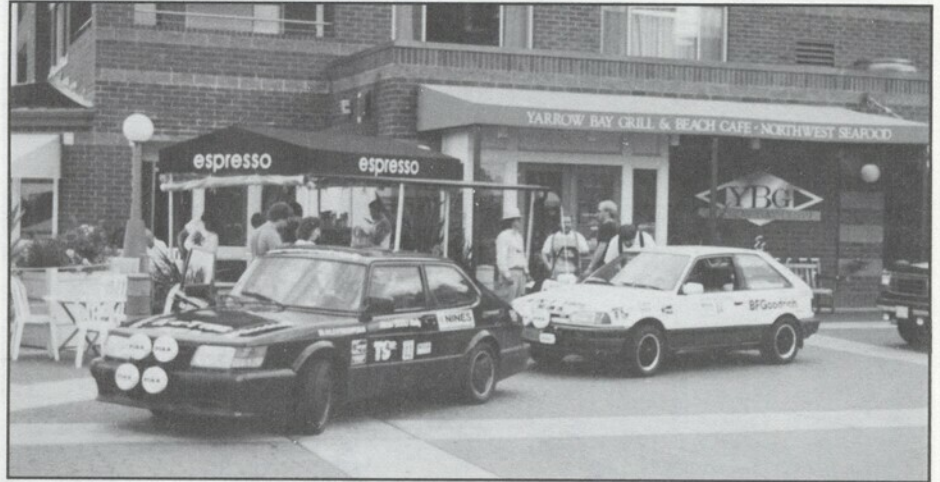
We did carry several cases of that same champagne on the first leg of the trip (Seattle to Anchorage), and Satch warned us that the team would be limited to three bottles per overnight stop. No problem!

Lest you think the Alcan 5000 Rally is nothing but One Big Traveling Party, well, it was other things, too.

Our team "owner and spiritual leader" (in charge of spirits?) was none other than G. C. "Satch" Carlson, former *AutoWeek* columnist. Satch (nobody dares call him "Gordon" anymore) has been a competitor on the Alcan since it was revived as an "endurance tour" in 1984. With two cars that have been prepared to endure the rigors of the Alcan, Satch decided to enter both under the Alaska Rally Team banner and give other ne'er-do-wells a chance to compete. That's how I came to be invited.

Those who have read Satch's adventures in the pages of *AutoWeek* know that he is a fancier of Saab automobiles, having owned several 96s including the Hawg of Steel rally car, and its successor, a Sonett dubbed the Piggue of Plastique. My ride for the Alcan was to be a black 1985 900 Turbo SPG, known as the "Blackbird", in a fashion after the famed SR-71 reconnaissance plane. Satch and Russ Huntoon were my co-drivers. They had been high school pals in Reno some thirty years past. Huntoon still resides in Reno.

The team's other car was a Mazda 323 GTX, that little 4-cylinder, 16-valve, turbocharged, all-wheel-drive hot rod that has been so popular on the Pro rally circuit the past several years, known by the CB handle "White Trash". The crew consisted of Alcan veteran and long-time Alaska Rally Team member John Fouse, with Alcan rookies Mike Richardson and Paul Duchene. The latter pair are from Portland. Mike's claim to fame is that he wears surgical gloves while working on his Lotus. Paul is an expatriate Brit and auto writer for



*Blackbird and White Trash just prior to the start at the Woodmark Hotel.*

the Portland Oregonian.

B.F. Goodrich had signed on as sponsor for the Alaska Rally Team. Consequently they furnished the cars with tires and team members with black leather-like bomber-style jackets. Unfortunately, a mix-up in communications resulted in the Blackbird getting 205/50 tires instead of the 205/60s that had been requested. Remember this, it will be important later.

The Alcan is basically a touring rally using passage controls, meaning that there are no traps to make the teams early or late at checkpoints, and that it was not necessary to stop at checkpoints. Each leg consisted of two to five checkpoints, and there were over a dozen legs. In all, there were over 30 scored checkpoints, each with the potential to add up to 300 points (one point per second, maximum of five minutes) to each competitor's score.

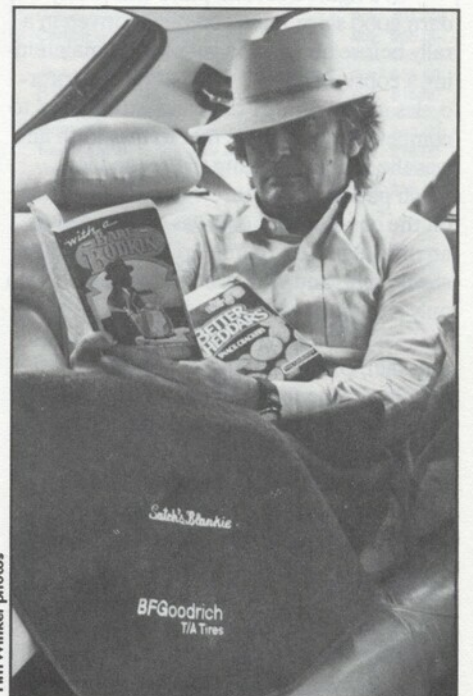
Both Alaska Rally Team cars, and those of several competitors, were equipped with the latest hot-spit rally computers from Timewise. The navigator, either myself or

*Right: Satch spent most of the trip napping or reading in the back seat. Below: The Signpost Forest. at Watson Lake, Yukon Territory.*

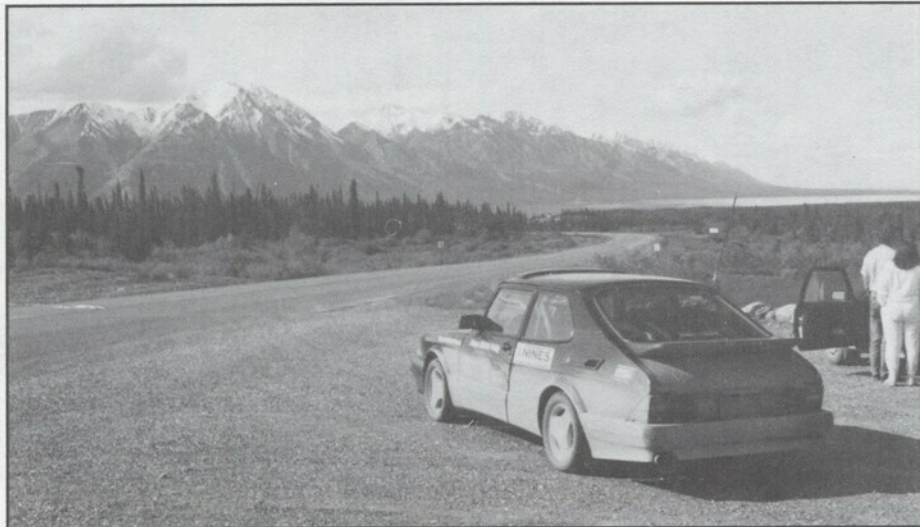


Satch on a given leg, was required to throw a switch for speed changes to keep our arrival times even with those calculated by the rallymaster, Jerry Hines. A small display in front of the driver, Russ, indicated time early or late, and speed to 1/10th m.p.h. With this computer, a rally team should be able to get a string of zero, or perfect, scores.

We departed from the Woodmark Hotel in Kirkland, Washington on the morning of Friday, August 30. There were two rally legs that day, and teams immediately showed their abilities and about where they would finish. The factory-provided Subaru



Tim Winker photos



SVX (a.k.a. "Sushi Sled") of Bob Dart and Ken Knight took an early lead with our Alaska Rally Team SPG a few points behind. The White Trash held third, with the Ford Explorer of Paul and Wendy Hadley sitting in fourth. Former Alcan winner Tim Paterson and his wife Penny made a one minute error in their start time on one leg and picked up about 60 points at each of the five checkpoints, so their Porsche Carrera-4 was only in fifth place after the first day's run. Tim didn't believe they could move up significantly over the remaining 4,000 miles, and they headed back to Seattle.

We figured second place was pretty darn good since Russ had never driven in a rally before and had to get used to maintaining a constant speed. He had raced motorcycles in his younger days and wasn't used to competition where the first to the finish line was the winner. During the second leg, Satch panicked and threw the wrong switch on the computer. Luck was on our side as an official mileage came up before the next checkpoint, and we were able to correct with only a point or two of penalty.

Day One ended at the Valhalla in Quesnel, British Columbia, with the opening of the first of several bottles of champagne. After dinner at the hotel's restaurant, Satch and Mike unpacked the pump-action water guns, put nylons (or panty hose) over their heads and everyone was treated to a dousing. The Valhalla staff even got into the action. A waitress borrowed one of the water cannons to attack the cooks, and was herself sprayed upon her return to the dining room. Fortunately there weren't other patrons as

the place soon degenerated into a very damp free-for-all.

The next portion of the rally was one of those grueling two-day non-stop sections. About midday we converged on Dawson Creek, BC, at Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway. A couple more competitive legs did not change the standings.

In the darkness of overnight, rallyists were treated to one of the most fantastic displays of Aurora Borealis that this Northern boy has ever seen. Wildlife was also active that night, with several rabbits giving up their lives so that owls and other predators could dine. During daylight hours the next day, the team of Paul Shaver and Sarah Morris spied a bear in the bushes alongside the road and paused to videotape the event. The grizzly obliged by not only crossing the road in front of them, but rearing up in a warning not to come closer.

The Shaver/Morris team bears mentioning. Seems Paul called Sarah and asked if she might want to go to Alaska with him. Rumor had it he didn't mention they'd be driving his Nissan 300ZX from North Carolina to the start in Seattle and then on a 5000 mile rally.

Socializing began almost immediately upon arrival at the Taylor Arms on Destruction Bay along Kluane Lake. Since Anchorage was only a day away, the last of the on-board champagne was consumed.

Day Four (Labor Day) began in the wee hours. While getting settled into the drive just minutes out of the hotel, Russ commented that he wished he had removed the driving light covers. Moments later the Saab hit a crater in the road which bent the right front rim and flattened the tire.

Would 60-series tires have given the extra sidewall to absorb the impact? Possibly not, as the SVX developed a sidewall aneurysm after falling into the same hole. They made it all the way to Alaska before discovering the bubble.

The impact also caused a shock absorber bushing to disintegrate. The Saab bottomed regularly on the frost-heaved road surface, creating a steady shower of sparks not unlike a Formula 1 car. The sparks were created when the heads of the bolts holding the skid plate in place struck the pavement. By the time we reached Anchorage, the bolt heads had been ground away!

Not far from Tok Junction, where the road choice takes you to Anchorage or to Fairbanks, there is a WWII airbase called Tanacross whose concrete runways are now used by SCCA for races. Several members of the Alaska Sports Car Club stuck around after the weekend's racing to assist with a Reliability Run, an exhibition event for this year's Alcan Rally, not to be scored.

The road from there to Anchorage was dubbed by one team as "the jigsaw puzzle scene of the week". The trees were reaching the height of the annual autumnal alteration and the yellows were so bright as to be nearly blinding.

It was on this same section that Alcan competitors became heroes. A youngster riding a bicycle along the shoulder took a tumble and broke his arm. The Mazda Navaho team of Rally Magazine Editor Kerry Voll, photographer Cat McKeen, and Kevin Clemens, P.R. guy for Michelin, happened by moments later. They had requested to be the last rally vehicle on the road as Kerry and Cat had EMT training, just in case an earlier rally car ran into difficulty. The message was relayed by radio to contact the State Patrol, and by the time the ambulance and trooper arrived, the situation was well in hand.

Anchorage was the halfway point and



the rally could have ended there as positions didn't change significantly over the last half. The Sushi SVX was in the lead with 9 points, followed by the Blackbird with 29, and the Mazda GTX at 56. Out of the running for top three were the Hadley's Explorer at 443 in fourth, and the Rally Magazine Mazda Navaho at 874 in fifth.

Tuesday was a day off, and several teams sought mechanical assistance. Satch and Russ took the Blackbird for replacement of the lost shock bushing, at least one new wheel and a set of 60-series BFGs. I went in search of a laundromat.

Alcan Rally participants were invited to a musical poke at Alaska at Mr. Whitekey's Fly-By-Niteclub, where the chef's specialty was Spam. Onstage entertainment consisted of a musical revue featuring such memorable songs as "Wish I had a Duct Tape Suit" and "Spawn Till You Die".

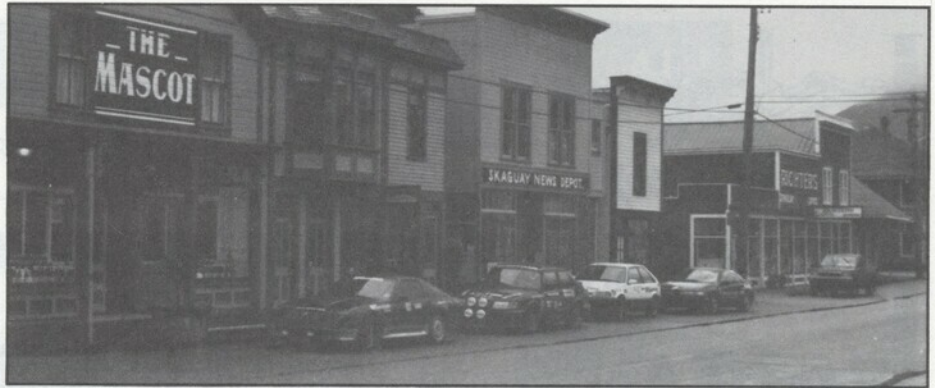
Wednesday found us on the road again, this time to Dawson City, Yukon, via the Top-Of-The-World Highway. Unpaved and very winding from Tok Junction to Dawson, Russ declared, "This is the road I came to Alaska to drive!" The Blackbird took the point and soon the other cars were out of radio range. On one stretch of smooth, unpaved Canadian road, Russ showed three digits on the computer's digital speedometer. We arrived *real* early at Dawson City.

Out of Dawson, the White Trash was running just ahead of us on the road. They rounded a bend and warned on the CB radio, "Moose Alert!" Moments later we met the behemoth. We could see daylight between the roof of the Mazda and the belly of the moose. Bullwinkle was apparently surprised at our intrusion as well, as he made a deposit on the Mazda's driving lights before dashing off into the woods.

The next day's run took us to Skagway, Alaska, gateway to the Klondike Gold Rush, on the coast of the Pacific. Satch has a fascination with Soapy Smith, the legendary outlaw king of Skagway, and proceeded to swap Soapy stories with a bar patron. Turned out our new buddy played Soapy in the local historical theater production.

The Golden North was our home in Skagway, an old hotel restored to its Gold Rush glory. That meant canopy beds and clawfoot bathtubs, but no showers.

The next to the last rally section started in Skagway on Friday morning. We were still only about 20 seconds behind the Subaru SVX, which meant one bad checkpoint on their part and a clean run on



ours could move us into first place. Bob and Ken were a bit nervous about the point spread as they, unlike the other teams, had factory backing and it was a matter of first place or losing. We, on the other hand, were content to be in second place with over a minute lead on the White Trash in third place. But a win in the Blackbird would be even better.

As we climbed the twisting road out of Skagway, we had to contend with tour busses, motor homes and laden semis in the fog. Though we lost some time getting around the slower vehicles, we were able to make it up before we encountered a checkpoint. We picked up seven more seconds of penalty over four checkpoints, but the Sushi Boys only picked up one.

The final rally section was late that day on the Cassiar Highway, where we collected only one more point, while the Subaru picked up two. Final scores: Sushi Sled, 15; Blackbird, 36; White Trash, 115. The Team Hadley Explorer ended up with 506 points for fourth place, while the Rally Magazine Navaho had a total of 1227 for fifth.

From there it was a long, overnight drive to Jasper, Alberta, where the official mileage reached 4,742. We checked in at the Chateau Jasper early in the afternoon, then tried to stay awake for the evening award ceremony. Though the eyes managed to stay open, it is uncertain whether the powers of logic and reason continued into the late evening hours.

The journey was not quite over, as the Portland contingent had to be at work on Monday. After another 600 miles and a full day's drive, yours truly was dropped off in Seattle to begin the final leg of my journey, the trip home.

Over 5000 miles in less than nine days of driving. Not as intense as the 8000 miles covered during the 1990 One Lap of America. Considerably more fun, actually, with the overnight stops which allow

competitors to socialize and compare scores and stories over dinner and drinks.

The Alcan traditionally has run one year in Summer, the next in Winter, so the 1992 Alcan Rally is scheduled for late February. 1992 is also the 50th anniversary for the Alaska Highway, which was built to help supply western Canada and the U.S. with defense material early during World War II. With the added hazards of cold and snow, the challenge to rallyists is even greater, and the tales tend to be better.

I've already started making plans.

*Tim Winker*

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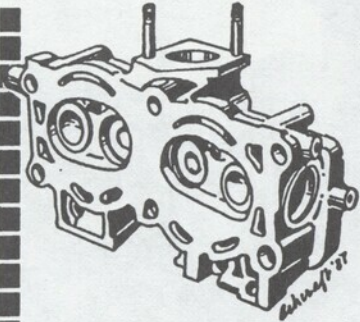
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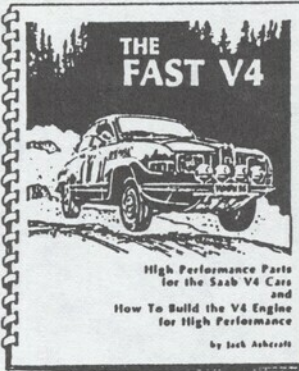


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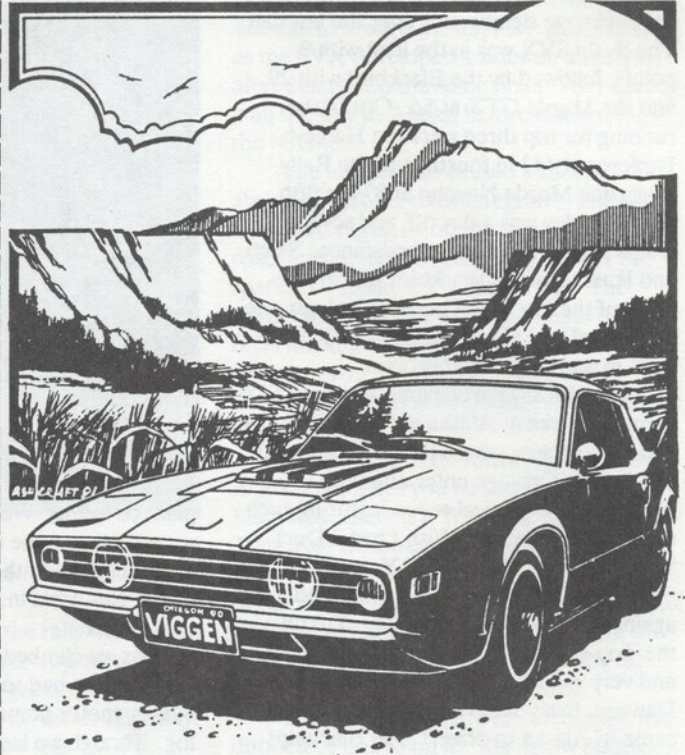
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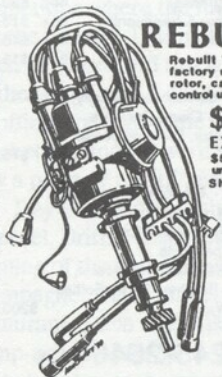
by Jack Ashcraft

A number of callers recently asked my advice on whether or not to keep their old V4 Saab. One had a bad engine, one a blown trans, another a good bit of floor rust. Should they spend money on an old car or buy a new one? The prospect of a big car payment for 5 or even 6 years didn't seem to trouble them, amazingly enough! But the idea of spending money on an old Saab was causing them some anguish.

Truth of the matter is that you can keep ANY car on the road as long as you WANT to, barring a severe crash or really severe rust. WANTING to is the key here. YES! you will put some money into the old Saab. But isn't that the case with the payment on a new car? What is the problem here? Lack of parts? Not really, especially if you plan ahead a little and carry a survival kit of spare parts when you go out of town with the Saab. ALL cars need repair, even that new one, so if you keep that in mind and put some parts on the shelf for futures, that worry can largely be taken care of.

We are talking more of how we feel about the Saab than the parts or the expense, in many cases. We often overlook the strengths of a V4 Saab when we get the smell of a new car. We overlook the fact that there is not an infinite supply of these cars left in the world, that an old 95/96/97 Saab is still an excellent car to drive once it's aging systems are all set right once again and finally, for the first time ever, the cars can APPRECIATE in value, even as we are driving and enjoying them! GOOD LORD! Driving a car that is appreciating! How terribly un-American!

The callers I talked to ALL began to have second thoughts about getting rid of their V4 Saabs. They got to thinking about how neat a Saab they could have if they spent the amount of a new car payment on theirs. Even HALF the new car payment....hmmmm....They decided their old Saab was a car worth making a home for. That it was a car well worth saving.

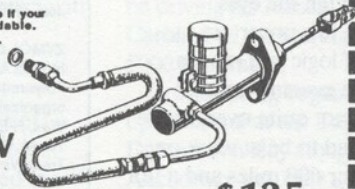


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## NEW V4 CLUTCH MASTER CYLINDER

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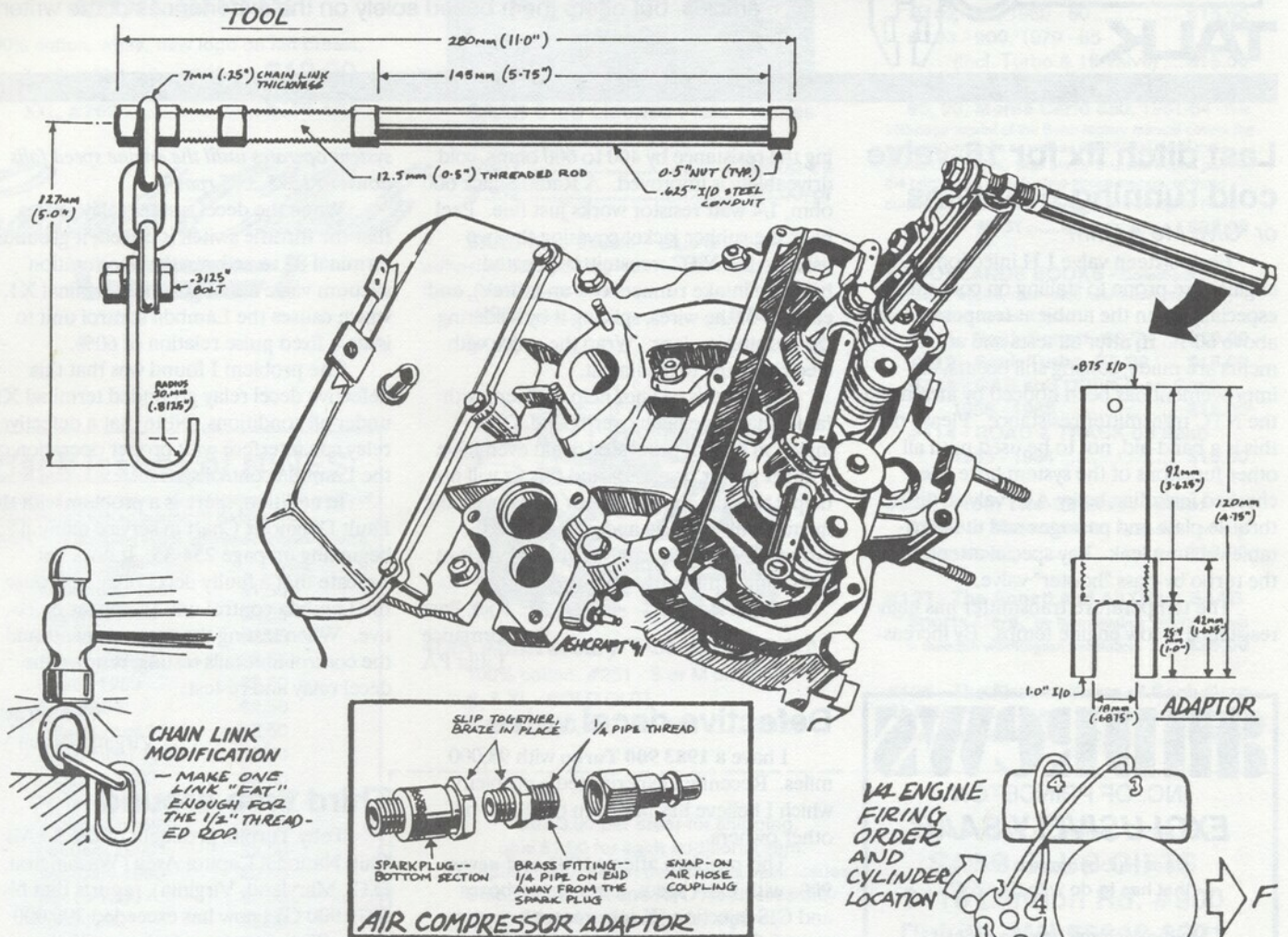
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# CHANGE V4 VALVE SEALS--IN THE CAR!



The V4 engine can benefit from a valve seal change after about 30,000 miles, or even more often on an engine modified for higher performance. The reason is that the old umbrella valve stem seals get brittle, crack, or even break up with age. Exit any sealing for that valve. These seals CAN be changed IN THE CAR, without removing the cylinder heads. Shown are the required tools, and the setup being used to change the valve stem seal on the intake valve for no. 4 cylinder.

The KEY to making this tool setup work is pressurizing the cylinder you are working on with air. Your 1-3 HP roll-around home shop air compressor, if it will produce 90 psi or so, will do the job just fine. You need an adaptor to screw into the spark plug hole (see sketch) and it's easy to make one up.


Each cylinder must be at TopDeadCentre as you pressurize it. Then the valves are both closed and the piston at the top of it's stroke. Put the car in gear so the engine can't turn over (or it WILL, as soon as you apply 90 psi of air pressure!), remove the valve cover, the rocker arm assembly and the push rods. Install the dummy rocker shaft (any old V4 assembly without the rocker arms will do), set the adaptor on top of the valve assembly, hook up the J-hook tool, depress the valve spring, and use a pencil magnet to retrieve the split key keepers. Lift off the retainer and the valve spring. Remove

the old valve stem seal. Clean up the area, install a new umbrella seal, replace the valve spring and retainer, depress the spring again with the tool & adaptor, and install the split keys. Release the depressed valve spring--gently--and go on to the other valve. Check to see that the split keys seat evenly.

Now you can go on to the next cylinder. I suggest you start at cylinder 1 and do the job in firing order (1-3-4-2). Remove the air pressure. If the plugs are out, you should be able to turn the engine over by hand, using the engine fan. Look at your timing marks. They will line up for cylinders 1 & 4, and the pulley mark will be on the bottom, 180° away, for cylinders 2 & 3.

Once all 8 seals are replaced, reassemble the push rods & rocker arms, retorqued (32 Ft/Lb) the rocker stand bolts, readjust the valves (.014" intake, .016" exhaust), reassemble the rest, and you are done!

# TECHNICAL TALK



Technical articles written by subscribers may recommend procedures or parts not approved by Saab-Scania of America, Inc. The SAAB Club and NINES cannot stand behind the correctness of information in these articles, but offers them based solely on the experiences of the writers.

## Last ditch fix for 16-valve cold running problems or "Give Me A Ohm"

Early sixteen valve LH injection engines are prone to stalling on cold start, especially when the ambient temperature is above 60°F. If, after all tests and adjustments are made, stalling still occurs, an improvement has been noticed by increasing the NTC transmitter resistance. Please note this is a band-aid, not to be used until all other functions of the system have been checked including balky AIC valves, dirty throttle plate and passages and the inevitable vacuum leak. Pay special attention to the turbo by-pass "hooter" valve.

The temperature transmitter has high resistance at low engine temps. By increas-

ing the resistance by 400 to 600 ohms, cold driveability is improved. A Radio Shack 600 ohm, 1/4 watt resistor works just fine. Peel back the rubber jacket covering the two wires to the NTC transmitter (located between intake runners two and three), and cut one of the wires, splicing it by soldering the resistor in place. Wrap the splice with electrical tape to insulate it.

Again, this will not help a system with faults that have been overlooked. The injection system processor could even have a burnt power transistor and this fix will not help it. As the oxygen sensor takes over, the mixture will stabilize and no increased emissions should occur once the engine is at operating temperature.

Rick Parr  
Parrformance  
Lititz PA

*system operates until the engine speed falls down to 1375 ± 75 rpm."*

When the decel system relay senses that the throttle switch is closed, it grounds terminal 87 to activate the deceleration vacuum valve and it grounds terminal X1, which causes the Lambda control unit to issue a fixed pulse relation of 60%.

The problem I found was that this defective decel relay grounded terminal X1 under all conditions. Note that a defective relay can interfere with proper operation of the Lambda control system.

In addition, there is a problem with the Fault Diagnosis Chart in service manual 2:4, beginning on page 254-35. It does not indicate that a faulty decel relay can cause the Lambda control unit to appear defective. When testing these components and the control unit fails testing, remove the decel relay and re-test.

Steve Taylor  
Virginia Beach VA

## Defective decel valve

I have a 1983 900 Turbo with 98,000 miles. Recently I experienced a problem which I believe has not been observed by other owners.

This problem affects 1982 and newer 900s with USA specs, manual gearboxes and CIS injection (K-jetronic with oxygen sensor regulation).

The components involved are the Lambda control unit under the rear seat, the deceleration vacuum valve located at the mixture control unit rubber bellows and the deceleration system relay located in the emission relay panel.

According to the factory service manual Section 2:4, page 254-7:

*"The deceleration system relay is activated if the following conditions are obtained:*

- 1) *The thermostitch is closed (coolant temperature over 45°C/113°F)*
- 2) *The time relay is not activated (relay switch in rest position).*
- 3) *Engine speed exceeds 1575 ± 175 rpm.*

*From the moment the throttle switch closes (accelerator released) the fuel shutoff deceleration system will be in operation. The*

## Third time around

Toby Turpin, president of the SAAB Club National Capitol Area (Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia), reports that his 1979 900 GLi now has exceeded 300,000 miles. The very clean Alabaster Yellow hatchback is regularly seen at the National Saab Owners Conventions.

According to Ed Tonat in the SCNCA's *Smoke Signals*: "That car is probably one of the most non-standard 900 GLi's on earth. It's been suggested that for Toby, Saab ought to supply a car in kit form so he can pick and choose the parts he wants, and allow him to add other parts and components he prefers."

Sounds like someone should write an article about Toby's Saab. How about other high mileage Saabs?

Million-mile cars have been used in Mercedes and Volvo ads, and there is a million-mile Datsun pickup somewhere in the central U.S. Any Saabs that have reached that plateau?

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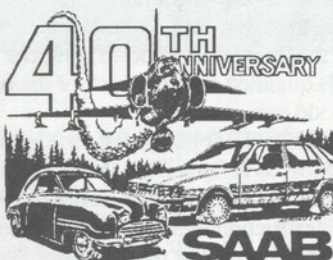
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## Sighted SAAB, Sought Same

We all have significant cars in our lives. Last year I wrote about my first car, a 1960 93F, which I purchased on my eighteenth birthday, much to my parents' dismay (NINES, Nov. 1990). But there was another 93F in my life, an ice racer.

In 1977, I procured parts and turned an occasional wrench for the Old Volks Home in St. Paul. (It was there I decided that I didn't want to make a living as a mechanic, especially a Beetle mechanic.) OVH owner John Sanford wanted to participate in the St. Paul Winter Carnival ice race that year, and bought a race prepared black 93F with the engine in several cartons. Since I had once owned a stroker SAAB and rebuilt its engine, the task of getting this little black popper running fell to me.

The car had been built by a couple of guys who had spent time working on some very professional race cars, Pat Whelan and Jeff Lange, consequently this SAAB had been given similar treatment. The interior had been gutted, the car had been wired strictly for racing, and an alternator replaced the OE generator/water pump so a small electric pump was used to circulate coolant.

Dan Jones had assisted with my first SAAB, so I called on him (conned is probably a better description) to help with the engine rebuild.

Rather than build a racing engine of questionable reliability, we decided to stick with a stock powerplant.

Then there was the driver's seat, made of molded fiberglass. Both Jeff and Pat were skinny guys. Though I was



many pounds lighter than I am today, my tush wouldn't fit the confines of the molded seat and we had to track down a stock seat.

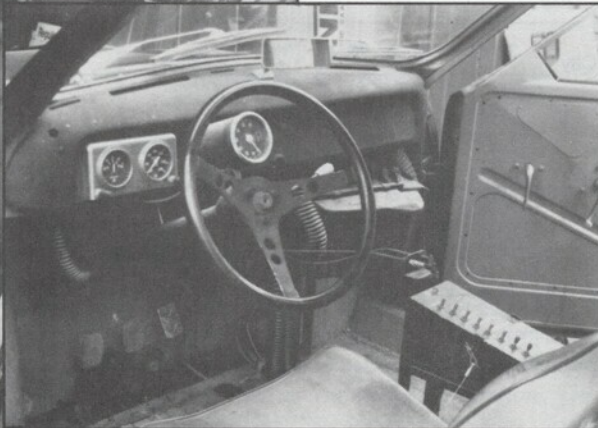
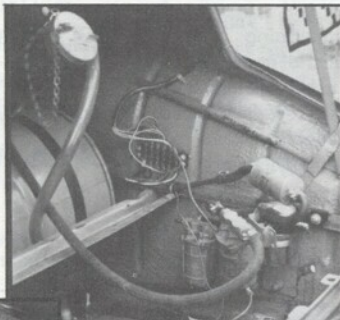
Jerry Rinehart and I were to be the drivers of the SAAB. Jerry had raced a G-production Triumph Spitfire for several seasons. I had never raced before, though I had scrubbed tires in autocross competition.

The SAAB finally ran the Saturday of race weekend. We got the car to the track in time for just a few laps of practice. With Jerry making the shakedown runs, the SAAB qualified near the back of the pack of sixty-odd cars.

I still had not had much time in the seat of the car, so Jerry started the race. His racing experience probably saved the SAAB from destruction as a Corvette on the fifth row got sideways just past the Start line and generated a multi-car pileup that eventually eliminated 28 competitors from the restart. Though many cars were completely destroyed, roll bars and cages kept injuries to a few bruises.

Very few cars made it past unscathed, our SAAB was one of them. Jerry squeezed the 93 past a couple of spinning cars, off the plowed track and around the wreckage.

There had been seven starters in our class (front-wheel-drive, under 850cc), but only a couple made it



to the restart. Our race was not without problems as the intake manifold tried to vibrate off (no Loctite on the bolts), and the gearbox locked itself in 2nd (no one had bothered to check the fluid level). The SAAB was the last car to take the checkered flag, 13th overall, but it was the only car left running in our class and we were awarded the class trophy!

Business at the OVH began to suffer the winter doldrums so Sanford cancelled further racing plans for that season. He put the 93 into storage with an idea of racing it again someday. A few years later he sold it to Dick Schneider of Midwest Vee who also had ideas of putting the 93 back on the ice.

Over the years whenever I ran into the SAAB's current owner, I would inquire as to the possibility of purchase, but was always met with "plans to do something with it someday."

Recently the story changed. Dick decided he wanted the garage space for his growing collection of older American iron and the SAAB was expendable. We completed the transaction and the 93F moved North to my garage.

Despite fourteen years of storage, the old ice racer is in remarkably good condition. It had been started and driven annually so the engine turned over freely. Once in my garage the fuel system was flushed, new fuel introduced, the battery was charged up, and soon the neighborhood was filled with blue smoke and that famous "rinnng-a-dinnng dinnng d-d-d-dinnng".

I recollect that we ran a stock single throat carb in the '77 ice race, but the engine now sports a two-barrel Solex, apparently the 44P11 from the Stage-II GT-750 kit. It has no choke, consequently starting is a bit of a chore. In one run around the block I had to rev it over 3,000 rpm to motivate the car, but that could have also been a result of sticking brakes.

What am I going to do with this beastie, you may ask? Since many of the OE pieces are long gone, it will remain in its guise as a competition car. It has a racing history, so a Vintage racing association will likely approve it for track use. It will need a new roll cage and fuel cell to bring it up to current racing safety standards, but it should be able to run with the Bugeye Sprites, MGAs and Alfa Guilettas.

I (or at least the car) should be eligible for membership in the Vintage SAAB Racing Group, though I don't know if or when I might be able to join them at a race.

*Tim Winker*



## GT Dreamin'

After Erik Carlsson first won the Monte Carlo Rally in 1962, it was good marketing to name subsequent 96 cars with performance engines "Monte Carlo". At some point, General Motors registered that name for Chevrolet and prevented Saab from using it further. Why a company with the ability to come up with such great product names as "Chevrolet Chevelle Laguna Type S-3" would need such a short name is beyond my imagining. Perhaps now that GM and Saab are on speaking terms, the historic race name can again appear on a Saab.

Ever since Carlsson's Monte Carlo wins, I have dreamed of finding and restoring a 96 racer. Recently a friend who has a narrow gauge railroad in his backyard returned from an estate sale in St. Paul. He called to say that in addition to the railroad memorabilia there were a couple of stroker Saabs and a Sonett III for sale. What he didn't mention was that the basement was filled with a mountain of Saab parts including about a dozen three-cylinder blocks and an attic with a complete and seemingly perfect Monte Carlo interior. The only place I have seen more old Saab stuff is at Stroker Williams shop in Waterloo, Iowa.

What caught my eye was the faded red bull-nose 96 in the back yard. Close inspection of the strangely clouded and crazed side and rear windows revealed plexiglass had been substituted for glass. Racing seatbelts were resting on the front seats. The passenger side of the dash had a Halda Speedpilot, a tachometer and a Stockholm-made stopwatch. Both navigator's and driver's seats had headrests mounted on still nicely upholstered seats. It



was a GT-750!

Best of all was the evidence of racing history - a Tech Inspection sticker still on the dash pad identifying car #72 as a participant in the 1961 Hershey Hill Climb. This was significant as Wendell Francis of the Vintage Saab Racing Group had suggested trying to find a car with racing history to qualify it in vintage racing events.

The engine was free, but stale fuel, lack of battery and an exhaust pipe blocked by mud-dauber wasps left its condition unknown. The license plates suggested the car had not been driven on Minnesota roads since 1980.

I bought the car and extra parts like grilles, a wood and aluminum steering wheel, lots of old Saab two-stroke oil and some literature.

After towing the car home I opened the mud-clogged exhaust, installed a battery

and connected the fuel line to my chain saw's gallon of pre-mix. The engine would not start.

Cleaning fuel pump contacts and distributor points and trying new A-7 spark plugs didn't help until I had partially warmed the engine with repeated use of a torch to dry out wet plugs. When it finally fired and was warmed up, a mystery remained - it would not idle. When Stroker Williams came by to look at the car, he solved the mystery. The largest throat bore he had ever seen on a GT-750 was 28mm. This car has 32mm bores.

Part of my reason for writing about this car is to say that with 30-year patience, a network of observant friends and some luck, even rare cars can be discovered. Most important now is finding the history, racing and otherwise. Here is what I know:

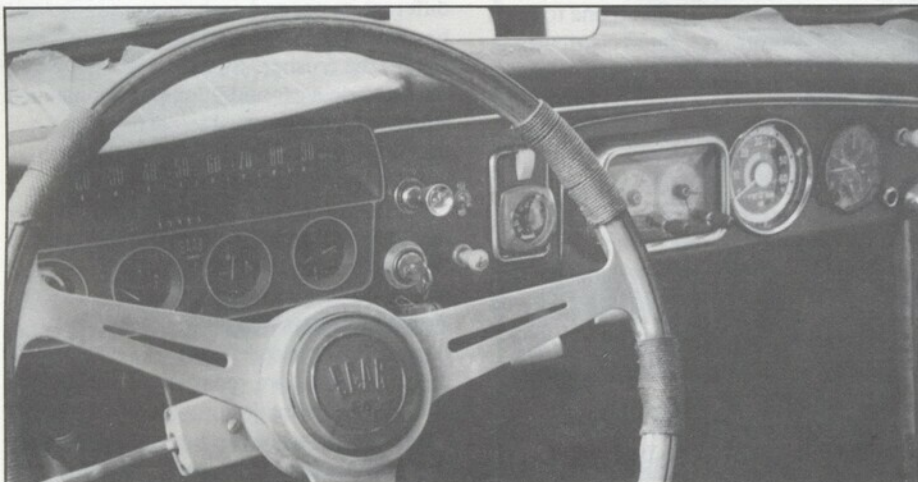
### Saab 96 GT-750

Built in 1960, titled as a 1961 model.  
 I.D. number: 101541  
 Raced Nov. '61, Hershey Hill Climb  
 Last license: Minnesota in 1980  
 Last owner: Ray Marklund  
 Odometer reading: 40,351

Anyone with information on this car, please contact me at the address below.

A final note was my surprise on first sitting down in the car. I found the dash-mounted stopwatch, the clock on the Halda Speedpilot and the instrument cluster clock. All ticked dutifully!

Eric Johnson  
 613 Union St.  
 Northfield MN 55057



## **hakkapaliitta**

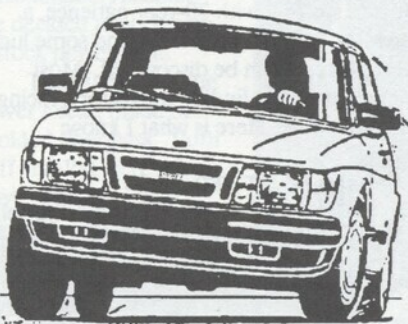
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## **Therapy and Two-stroke Saabs**

The '67 stroker 96 had just taken me over 900 miles in four days. The last day had been 500 miles with a brief time spent admiring Larry Williams recently acquired Saab 92. In the waiting pile of mail at home was my October NINES. There on page 12 was Jack Ashcraft's superb description of two-stroke appreciation. The next day, my November issue of *Automobile* arrived with a second testimonial to old Saab qualities. Robert Cumberland, in the *Cogito Ergo Zoom* section, wrote a column entitled, "Steering: Critical Path Analysis." I recommend the entire piece, but quote the Saab reference:

"The first time I drove a Saab, back in 1959, what impressed me most about the car was not its percolator-sound two-stroke engine (I'd already owned a DKW) but the superbly accurate steering. Somehow, through the development of several series of new models, Saab engineers have maintained that wonderful feel, the accurate tracking and total lack of slop that characterized their first cars."

Although I have enhanced my stroker with disc brakes, 900 seats and seatbelts, Sonett wheels with P8 tires and a sound system, the essential fun of driving this car was built in before it left the factory. Most importantly, that essence remains after 24 years and more than 100,000 miles.

### **Stroker Parts**

My local Champion Auto dealer is patient to a fault in helping me locate new parts that will fit old Saabs. Two recent discoveries may help others.

Preferring to use magnetic suppression plug wires, I dug through the six-cylinder sets in hopes of coming up with one to fit an engine with a centrally located distributor. A MSW 1211, fitting pre-'75 Ford trucks is a reasonable fit, renews wires on two three-cylinder Saabs and has a limited lifetime warranty. I have detected no radio interference, which is quite a contrast with the copper wires that came on the car.

When needing a replacement exhaust manifold to expansion pipe gasket, take the original one to a shop and match it with one for '40s thru '60s Fords.

### **Old Car Values**

Our NINES editor has asked me several times over the past year to put together some information on values of

older Saabs. I didn't respond immediately for several reasons. First, so few cars change hands that averaging of sales, as is done with more recent cars, is not feasible. Second, when cars are in the age range of one to four decades, condition is everything and condition is very difficult to assess by phone or by a short ad in NINES.

Finally, there is the emotional aspect of car buying that makes a particular car worth a lot of money to one person and worthless to another. This last factor is especially important in Saab values where, unlike with old Porsches or Jaguars, the pool of informed and interested buyers is small. The demand just isn't there.

Because the editor has continued to ask for some sort of guidelines on values, I will relate my experiences with the hope readers will appreciate that I intend to tell no one what their car is worth or tell them what price they should pay for their dream vintage vehicle.

My basis for writing is having bought eleven 1959 to 1972 Saabs in the past three years. In addition, I have done follow-up calls on 95 and 96 model cars six months after they were listed in NINES to get selling prices and to find out how many actually sold.

First the bad news. Many cars did not sell. A good running stroker 96 Special was traded along with lots of cash to buy a used van. Actual value was a couple hundred dollars. There was only one call from the NINES ad.

My personal experience with this end of the market has been the gift of a stroker 96, a V4 96 and a V4 95 in the past six months. These cars were not running but one had a perfect interior, one ran with a new distributor drive gear and one had a frozen engine. Each of these cars came from a different owner and each person wanted to be assured the cars/parts would not just be sent to the crusher. Since it takes me two days to strip a car and I don't have unlimited storage, I have resorted to passing these cars on to others wanting to get started in collecting or driving old Saabs.

All collectors of old Saabs someday need to unload their collections. Last year I bought such a collection including two 95s, two 96s, a 93 and lots of parts. Price: \$500. As with free cars that take two days to dismantle, these collections take time and money to transport, repair or part out.

This raises major problems with Saabs. There are so few buyers interested in them that it's necessary to advertise them for sale

in a national listing like NINES or Hemmings Motor News. Then there is the problem of communicating condition and the complication of transportation.

Now for some more positive stories. A fellow in New York had once owned a dark green 96 V4 with the factory tuning kit. When one in pristine condition came up for sale in NINES, he flew to the Midwest, paid with about fifty \$100 bills and drove home in his favorite car.

A Corvette Yellow V4 96 recently changed hands for \$4,000 despite needing brake and minor body work. A bull-nose 96 with an asking price of \$3,500 did not change hands in spite of a \$3,000 offer. A beautifully redone 96 V4 sold for \$3,000. These last two cars were National Convention award winners. A '67 95 stroker was bought for \$1,100 delivered to a neighboring state. After two years, 17,000 miles and some TLC, the car sold at a garage sale for \$1,200. A GT-750 with good interior, racing extras, new Michelins and strong engine, but having no brakes and faded paint, sold for \$450. Going to the oldest cars, there have been three model 92 Saabs that have traded owners the past two years, two needing restoration for \$4,000 and \$1,000, one restored for \$7,500.

What I conclude given these and other examples is the following:

- 1) Values are highly dependent on the buyer having owned or wanted that particular model of car in the past.
- 2) There is currently little evidence of foolish speculation in old Saabs that would drive prices above their functional levels.
- 3) For the person with access to creative engine and body rebuilding there are some excellent values in old Saabs.
- 4) A selling price of \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a sharp looking and mechanically excellent old Saab makes sense when compared to what is available at most used car lots for similar money.
- 5) Old Saabs have become safe, reliable, economical and delightful transportation for their owners.

My best example of this last point is the description in NINES of the resurgence of V4 Saabs in Algoma, Wisconsin and in my own town. Here in Northfield, a town of about 8,000 year-round residents, we have both V4 and two-stroke examples of models 95 and 96 on the road. All are in excellent mechanical condition and have reasonably fresh paint. There is a creative mechanic who works on them and a custom auto restoration shop that does the rest. Com-

bined with the sources in NINES including Jack Ashcraft, Bayside and other Saab dealers and Milwaukee's Vintage Saab Services, it is feasible that even more old Saabs can be returned to service.

I need to add one additional possibility for old Saabs that they may pique someone's interest. Long-nose two-strokes are excellent candidates for repowering with newer engines. I currently have a '67 95 in storage waiting for the next generation of stroker engines that many sources suggest will be available in the next couple of years. *CAR* magazine in England recently reported the '92 Fiat Uno has an optional three-cylinder two-stroke engine. When the first fuel-injected, stratified charge, three-cylinder two-strokes become available in the U.S. and the first one is crashed, I will be in line to buy the drive train for a conversion. At \$325 for an engine from a three-cylinder Geo with 3,200 miles as a gauge, the cost of converting an old stroker to 70 m.p.g. fuel economy should in itself be economical.

Eric Johnson  
Northfield MN



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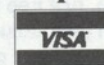
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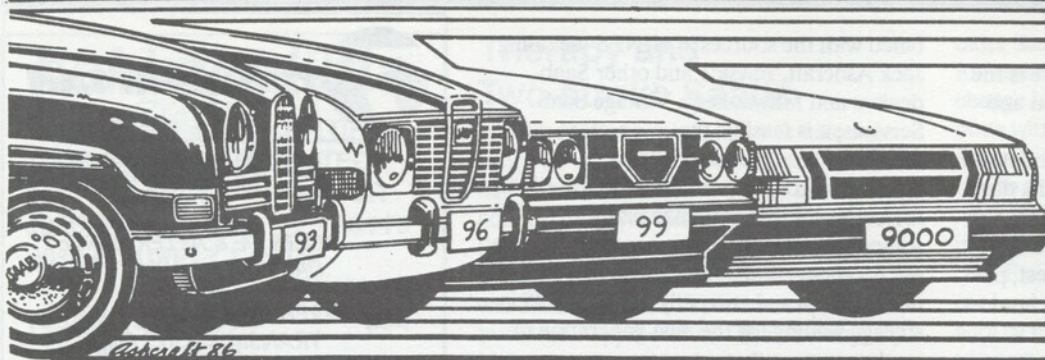
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**3 cyl Monte Carlo engine** compl w/ head, flywheel, oil pump, intake & exh manifolds, etc. Spare oil pump & orig oil tank incl. Greg Wold, 8335 Passfield Turn, Maple Grove MN, 55369. 612/420-4503.\*

**'67 96 V-4 engine & trans.** Running excellent when removed. Incl spare engine. \$450 for all. Most '67 96 parts avail incl manuals. John Healey. 203/230-9032 after 6 pm.

**93-95-96 parts collection** requiring reduction. No list. Send SAE with your needs. Steve Verkouteren, Box 71, Rt 1, Swanton MD 21561, 301/387-6647.

## 99s & 900s For Sale

**'89 900S,** 4 dr, dark grey metallic, gray cloth int, 5 sp, 14K mi. Like new cond, warranty. \$13,000. Rod Beckner, 604 E 1st St, Albany NY. Tele/Fax 503/928-6351.

**'88 900S 5 dr,** very rare. Black w/ tan int. 5 spd, low mi, 16V engine, rear spoiler, new alloy wheels & tires. Has all bronze glass. In mint cond. \$11,500. Ask for Boe at Automotion. 508/667-5373.\*

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**'74 Sonett III** completely rebuilt by J & B Imports, Orange CA. Very good cond. Steve Zimmert, PO Box 5301, Los Alamitos CA 90721. 714/846-6866 eves.

**'71 Sonett III,** Restored. Southern rust free, exc cond. Red pictures available. \$3500 incl air flow & spares. Mike Tucker, 57 Botany Woods, Hartsville SC 29550. 803/383-5443.

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**'72 95,** mint body, exc interior, stored winters. Solid car, good runner. Incl misc extras. \$2500. M. Abel, 1317 N Front, Marquette MI. 906/226-6507.\*

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**'67 96 2-Stroke,** rust free undercarriage, used daily, needs 4th gear adjustment. Spare car, engine, trans, plus many parts/components. \$1700 obo. Wayne Knapp, 74 Warren Rd, Sudbury MA 01776.508/443-2628.

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**'67 96 2-Stroke,** "Collector's Salvation", runs perfectly. Hand rubbed original maroon finish inside and out. Rustfree. Many new parts, eat off engine, completely new ignition system, use only racing oil, lg color returnable pic avail. Serious collectors only. \$3850. Paul Ruch, 13302 Sussex Pl, Santa Ana CA 92705. 714/633-9013.

**'59 93B,** Complete, slight front end damage, many 2-stroke extras, no rust, garaged since '81. \$2500 obo. Willie Boudevin, 5511 Stardust Dr, Huntington Bch CA 92647. 714/897-4042.

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**'68 V-4 engine,** \$150. Rebuilt 4 speed, \$150. GT body, '68, absolutely no rust (garaged for past 5 yrs), \$300. Assorted other parts. David Joyce, Banner Elk NC. 704/963-7155.

**Parting 1 GT 850, 1 MC 850,** early GT beauty rings and other unobtainium objects de Saab. V-4 parts cars also! Mark Chase, Sacramento CA. 916/925-2224.\*

'85 900, Dark blue, MSS header and exh, 2 dr, 5 sp, AC, PS 105K mi. Exc Cond. Never in salt. \$3700 fly & drive. Mike Tucker, 57 Botany Woods, Hartsville SC 29550. 803/383-5443.

'84 900S, 4 dr, 5 sp, sunroof, Red, Excellent Cond. (interior/exterior), 77k mi, never driven in winter. Duaine King, 14300 Minnehaha Pl, Wayzata MN 55391, 612/936-0743 eves.

'82 900 Turbo. Racing blue, CA car. Meticulously maintained by Saab fanatic. Front bumper caught at right angle, unibody bent. Otherwise mint. Whole or parts. \$1500. Joe Cowly, 16 Jonas Blvd, Centereach NY 11720. 516/732-1040.

'79 900 GLI, 120K mi, 20K on rebuilt motor. Rust on fenders, PA inspected. Runs great. \$1500. Randy L. McGrath, 432 Union St, Nazareth PA 18064. 215/759-7762.

'77 99 EMS/Turbo. Trollhattan built pre-production test car #937 factory turbocharged 2 dr coupe. All orig. Ready for restoration. Incl pile fo goodies. \$4000. Rick Comes. 203/265-7000. Lv msg.

**9000s For Sale**

'86 9000 turbo, 5 sp, Edw. Gray Met, 85k highway mi, gray cloth int, super clean, well maintained, Alpine/ADS stereo. \$9200. Doug van Dorsten, 904 Ventura Way, Mill Valley CA 94941. 415/389-8338 lv msg.

**99, 900, and 9000**

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**4 Steel Wheels,** clean, straight, no rust w/ hubcaps and lug nuts. Fit 99/900/9000 thru '87. Six slot style. \$150 + shpg, or will negotiate delivery in the Northwest. Tom Carlson, Sweet Home OR. 503/757-7547.\*

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**5 spd manual trans '86 9000 Turbo-type GMT 5301.** Used w/ 30k mi. Incl Saab Service Manual 4.1. \$975 + shpg COD. David Webster. 615/366-4207. Ask for Johnny.

**SAAB SOUTH:** Rust-free Southern body parts, rebuildable wrecks, mechanical parts 96, 99, 900. 3 Sonett III's. New parts, sales and service. Call or write with your needs. Next day shipping most items. Div. of European Motorcars LTD, 436 Scufflestowne Rd, Simpsonville SC 29681. 803/288-0628.

**170hp red APC box** for '86-'89 9000 Turbo, \$150. Hella Euro hdltts, \$200. Set of factory technical manuals. \$55, stock springs, \$75. Doug van Dortsten, 904 Ventura Way, Mill Valley CA 94941. 415/389-8338, lve msg.

**4 Gislaved snow tires w/ steel wheels,** 185/65 R15 radials. Good cond, \$200. Roof rack w/ lock, \$40. Both for 900 & 99. 201/586-9343.\*

**Wheels (orig alloy) and tires (excellent Michelin MXV),** full set from my stolen '85 900 Turbo. \$700 /set. Original factory manual for same, \$60. Tim Brown, 4 Peter Cooper Rd, New York NY 10010. 212/260-0784.

**Wanted, All Models**

**Ronal or Panasport mini-lite** style spoked alloys for 96, 97 application. Set of 4 w/ lugs. Rick PARRformance, Inc. 717/627-7222.

**Need rear fender side marker lenses** for '71 96. Must not be cracked. Lawrence W. Pratt, RR#1, Box 65, Center Sandwich NH 03227. 603/284-7367 after 6 pm.

**Green front headrest inserts** and mudflaps for '79 900 5 dr. Also seek trailer hitch for '85 900, rear fin spoiler & bra, poster of 900 5 dr (prefer green). All must be in very good condition. Brian Garrett, 2742 Van Buren, Ogden UT 84401. 801/621-4210.

**Primary drive sprockets (31:26),** chains & tensioner from 99T/900T type. G44601 4 sp gearbox or just 26 tooth sprocket. John Blas, 2400 S 2nd Ave, N Riverside IL 60546.

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## HISTORY OF THE THREE CYLINDER TWO STROKE

### The 96 and the Long Nose

Needless to say, the new 96 was an updating of only one end of the car, in this case, the rear. Remember the back half of the 93/B/F was the same as the 92B and its time was at hand. Naturally this was yet another Sason effort and it went well with the front half. The major changes started with the rear side windows which were now larger. At the back, the new wrap around window was more than twice as big as the small rear window of the 93. The trunk was made bigger, its lid was redesigned and it acquired a handle. Incorporating reflectors for the first time, the tail lights were made considerably larger and moved up to make them more visible. The fuel tank grew about 10% in capacity to 40 litres.

Inside there were more changes. The rear seat was widened, allowing optimists to call the car a five seater. Air outlets were added to the 'C' pillars to give 'flow through' ventilation. The dash was updated with safety padding on the top and front edge



and new instruments, a large horizontal speedometer with four round gauges.

Under the hood the news was mixed. The new 96 received the same engine as the 95, the new 850 (841 cc actually) but the continuation of the three speed transmission was a great disappointment to some.

With three new models, the 95 (May '59), the 93F (Sept. '59) and the 96 (Feb. '60) Saab was certainly getting its share of new car publicity. This undoubtedly helped sales results. Soar the sales might then, but the confusion factor soars now when trying to imagine what was going on. (Two main line cars?) Let's step back and sort it out.

As mentioned in an earlier article, the 93F was a stopgap model, simply a 93B with front hinged doors. In '59, it was introduced as a 1960 model and when the 96 came along in early '60, it was called a 1961 model. For most of 1960, they were sold side by side. Saab sold 2000 of the cheaper 93Fs before they were dropped at the year's end. Strangely enough, the 95 didn't get front hinged doors until March 1961. Some sources say it got the 96 dash in 1960. The GT750 moved to the 96 body shell immediately and fortunately got the sporty four speed transmission.

In its home market, Saab had always sold their cars through Philipsons, But on the first of January 1960, Saab took control of the multi-marque distributor, ANA. By the fall, ANA became the exclusive Swedish distributor for Saab cars. Sales rose.

The next two years brought only small changes. The production of 95s was moved to Trollhattan in '61, and in '62 seat belts were fitted to all Swedish market cars. In '63 the front badge moved from the hood to the grill and the four speed was finally made an option (for all but Sweden). In 1964 the company went badge crazy with the 96 carrying a total of eight! The real news was a new dash and the important introduction of diagonal circuit braking. Remember this was 1964!

In August 1964, as a 1965 model, the Long Nose arrived. This was the end of the nine year old 'Italian-inspired' nose of the 93. The new grill and headlight surrounds were stainless steel and the hood design was changed to the 'slide forward, hinge up' pattern similar to that of the 900. To improve the cooling, the rad was moved to behind the grill. Called the Monte Carlo 850 here, in honour of the Monte wins, the Sports model got the famous triple carbs and more power. Even the 95 looked better with the longer, more angular nose!

But there was something sinister afoot. 'Operation Kajsa' was to spell doom for our beloved two strokes.

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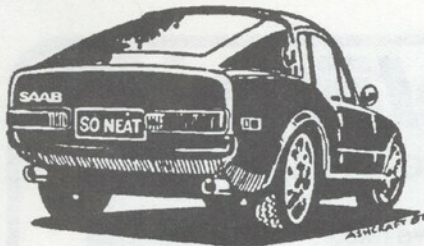
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## Rear View

There have been a several phone calls and letters lately regarding Saab's intention to move their U.S. headquarters to Atlanta. While I have tried to quell some of the speculation with what information I have picked up, I have some concerns as well.

First the good news. The move is expected cut operating expenses by as much as 25 percent, through lower property costs, more favorable tax rates, and a smaller staff. There is no real reason for Saab's offices to be located in Connecticut, other than other European auto companies also have their U.S. headquarters near New York City.

Though only 20 current employees have been offered jobs in the Atlanta office, others are welcome to apply for the positions that need to be filled, and many will be favored to resume their old jobs. Moving, however, will be at their own expense and not paid by Saab. Also, some of those offered the chance to move to Atlanta may prefer to stay in Connecticut. The current staff will be trimmed from about 165 jobs to near 100 positions at the new location.

The move to cut expenses was not unexpected. Several months ago in this column I suggested there would be more shakeups and layoffs at Saab headquarters. An early draft of this month's column predicted the regions were the next target, and now Saab has made an announcement

to that affect. The Northeast and mid-Atlantic regions are being merged on January 1, 1992. Saab is also beefing up the South and West regions to improve sales in those states where Saab sales are weak. More field personnel are being added to assist dealers in the South and West regions.

The number of Saab dealerships has declined by about 15 percent in the past couple of months. (Here in Minnesota the number has dropped from six to three in the past year.) They have mostly been dealerships that depended on another marque for their primary sales, and sold only twenty or thirty new Saabs a year. Several Saab dealers told me earlier this year they had received a letter that, should they decide to retire or sell, their Saab franchise would not be transferable.

Again, this is not necessarily a bad thing. With declining sales, it only makes sense to make each remaining dealership more productive. Dealerships for all marques often have a poor reputation when it comes to service. If they want to remain in the business of selling new cars, all dealerships are going to have to pay more attention to that portion of their business.

I expect the number of U.S. dealerships will level off around 300.

Saab is not the only car company suffering from a drop in sales, many are worse off. Volvo Cars of North America has cut over 100 jobs this year. Isuzu has asked GM to take a larger stake in that company, possibly even majority ownership. Chrysler recently sold its stake in Diamond-Star Motors to its partner in the venture, Mitsubishi. Luxury car companies lay part of the blame on the Federal Luxury Tax.

America's Big 3 announced huge losses for the third quarter of 1991; General Motors lost just over \$1 billion, Ford Motor Co. posted a \$574 million deficit, while Chrysler Corp. felt lucky to limit losses to

\$82 million. Obviously the entire auto industry is suffering.

I haven't any thoughts to offer yet on William Kelly, Saab USA's new president. I haven't had a chance to meet him, but I understand his strengths are in sales and marketing. He isn't a car guy like Bob Sinclair. Guess we'll have to wait and see.

Getting back to dealerships for a moment, when Saab leaves a smaller market (such as Duluth), owners of newer Saabs are left hanging because they now have to take time off to deliver their car for maintenance, or spend extra time tracking down parts. (The round trip to the nearest Saab dealership from Duluth is over five hours.) Saab would be wise to invest in authorized service facilities for these remote locales to keep those owners from defecting to other cars. This is not to say they should select a place at random, but must require a certain investment in training and equipment, and have a service facility that meets minimum requirements commensurate with those of other near-luxury marques.

A few people have expressed a fear that Saab may pull out of the U.S. market, as Sterling and Peugeot recently did. That isn't likely as the U.S. accounts for about a third of Saab's annual car sales. Peugeot does well in other parts of the world, but the U.S. market was only a few thousand units a year; pretty insignificant in the overall totals. Saab would be foolish to leave one of the few markets where its products are selling.

Those of us in the SAAB Club recognize these cars for their soul, but to the corporate mind they are a product. The goal is to keep offering a product that will sell. If they can keep the Saab soul, it will.

A couple of months ago I promised to reveal the ignition key location for the next 900. Where it should be, of course.

*Tim Winker*

# NINES

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