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# Nines




The SAAB Club Magazine

2000



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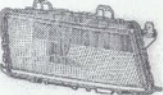
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**Front Cover:** Saab 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Wagon Undergoing a Grueling NINES Road Test by Norma Goldberger.

**Cover Wrap:** From Left: 9000 CD owned by Terri Lane, 900S owned by Diane and Marc Fails, 900SPG owned by John Webber. Photo taken at Tim and Nick Brown's Summer Getaway in Eagle's Mere, PA., by Marc Fails.

## In praise of the Saab 9000

I began to search for a replacement for our 1990 SAAB 9000S last July (1999). The budget was \$30,000 plus PA sales tax. As a number of our friends and relatives are quite tall or bulky, the SAAB 9<sup>3</sup>, because of its small rear seating volume, would not serve. Otherwise, my tests of a pair of 1999 9<sup>3</sup>s, manual and auto transmission, indicated an almost perfectly developed model in its 5th year. Only the ABS was less than ideal, as stepping hard on the pedal gave longer stopping distances, screech and rubber streaks, with the helpful clicks inaudible from higher speeds (60mph).

As covered in these pages before, the 9<sup>5</sup> has the same ABS as the 9<sup>3</sup>, and a number of other differences from the 9000 that made this model undesirable to me. While I normally express contempt for people who buy vehicles for some silly feature, there were several things that were very important to me, such as automatic pre-tensioning (APT) of front seat belts, which doubles their effectiveness, a pollen filter (PF) for my allergies (not to mention road salt and diesel soot), and a real minimum of impediments to driver vision due to my advancing years. The most important and un-quantifiable feature will be understood by sports-car drivers: good chassis feel that tells what all the wheels are doing. This is different from good steering feel.

A rented '99 Pontiac Bonneville was big enough, had better ABS than either of the new SAAB models, good chassis feel, effortless power; but no APT or PF. The driver's seat had collapsed within 27,000 miles and was not comfortable. The instruments were all an eye-tearing red at night, the auto trans indicator was mostly invisible, and body parts were falling off.

A rented '99 Chevrolet Malibu was also big enough, but had such bad ABS as to leave 30-ft rubber streaks on hard stops interspersed with not stopping, A/C not working, woolly steering, no APT or PF.

A rented '99 Oldsmobile Alero had a lot in common with my '75 SAAB 99, such as failure of the front wheels to re-center in tight turns at low speed under modest power. Its ABS, including a wonderfully hard pedal, was very effective, but accompanied by a horrendous screech. The Alero was too small, had vision problems, and no APT or PF, but its 2.4 L 4-cyl was quite fast and gave

26 mpg.

A '99 Toyota Camry 4-cyl was the class act of the rentals with very good seats, very quiet, and with good ABS (alas the brakes themselves were inadequate), and APT, and nothing falling off. Chassis feel was quite lacking along with ground clearance, no PF, or any detectable acceleration at high speeds.

A '00 Nissan Maxima SE was suitably sporty, had APT and good seats and decent chassis feel, but the brake pedal sank to floor, the ABS was second-rate, no PF, there was tail-wag on high-speed lane changing similar to that of the 9-5, and a lumpy ride. It was fast up to 80 mph, but there was not much acceleration in 3rd or 4<sup>th</sup> gears.

A '00 Infiniti I30 did have APT, a small PF, a very sensible type of traction control and even an active head restraint, but shared the problems of the related Maxima. I feel that this \$30,000 model is easily a match for the \$34,000 4-cyl 9<sup>5</sup>. In size the I30 is about as roomy for 5 people as a 9000, and because of the excellent seats, the most comfortable.

Because of a new close dealership I tried a '00 Saturn L2 V6, whose engine is related to that in the 9-5 V6 LPT. The engine and transmission and steering were excellent, but that was it. Terrible tail wag, wretched ride, cramped cabin, poor ABS, and no APT or PF meant that this \$23,000 model was not acceptable.

Two rented '98 Ford Taurus in Florida the year before had driver vision problems, seating, ride, ABS and chassis feel problems, got only 21.5 mpg, and had no APT but did have a PF. The Taurus also had the slowest-shifting auto trans ever.

Volvo 850s and the S70 were considered. These were all too small inside, had too little ground clearance, and very poor chassis feel. Their traction control would kill power to such a degree that acceleration on a poor surface was agonizingly slow. They had, however, excellent power, APT, and excellent ABS.

So a search of some weeks led to a '93 SAAB 9000 CSE from Sports Car Service in Wilmington, DE. If I were to evaluate this a '00 model I would note the absence of side air bags, a lumpy idle, and a bit of chop to the ride (no KONIs yet), but still a better ride than the I30. In general it is very superior to all the other models tested with its excellent ABS, APT, PF and sensible traction control. The auto trans had more drag

on trailing throttle in all gears than any of the models above, a very desirable feature. The sewer rat gray metallic color was altered to light silver on the upper 2/3. Thus we still own 3 SAABs. I consider our two '93 9000 turbo models (a CS and a CSE) superior to any current 2wd models.

The other revelation is that General Motors is quite capable of making the world's best cars for under \$30,000 (except for workmanship), but has not yet succeeded. That goal could be achieved by combining the best qualities of GM cars already on the market into a single model.

*Dr. Joel Kauffman  
Philadelphia, PA*

Dear Stephen,

Really enjoyed your detailed appraisal of the 9<sup>5</sup> wagon. I am not a wagon fan, but it sounds like this car certainly could make me one. I was especially interested in your approach because you made a direct comparison with the 9000, the Saab I drive. My eyes jumped when you mentioned the "rustling sounds from the doors"! So my 1995 9000 CSE is not the only one with this feature. My wife says it's "talking to us". What causes these sounds?

I have driven the 9<sup>5</sup> sedan, and felt it was a much stiffer car than the 9000, with fewer (or no) rattles. I guess the CSE is more susceptible to this since it is a hatchback. It seems to "creak" from the rear when going slowly over irregular ground. And it has added a few more small rattles from various places as time goes on. The ride quality of the 9<sup>5</sup> is also better than the 9000, which is rather hard at times.

But lest you get the idea I am not happy with my 9000, I waited 10 years before I could afford the "car of my dreams" (I wanted a 9000 from the time it was introduced), and generally have been very pleased with my car. In the cosmic scheme of things, to me the 9000 is a milestone car. The style, interior space, features, and performance (simply amazing) have been all I thought I was buying. And the 9000 to me is somehow a more distinctive car than the 9<sup>5</sup>. I didn't say "better", and I feel the 9<sup>5</sup> is technically a superior machine to the 9000, and smoother and perhaps better looking. And one I could see myself owning and enjoying. But after waiting so long, I need to enjoy my 9000 for a while longer.

My 9000 has had its share of troubles. Most major was a problem with the brakes early on, to the extent that I almost ran into a couple of cars ahead of me. Pedal effort had seemed high from the start, but when mentioning this to the dealer, I was told it was the different feel of ABS, which I hadn't had before. This was apparently caused by the master cylinder "bypassing internally", and basically I had about 50% of braking capability. I rarely drive in commuter traffic, and the problem was not really evident until I found myself in that situation (interestingly enough on my way to the first Bay Area Saab Club meeting I attended!). Anyway, Saab obviously covered this under warranty (master cylinder, ABS control - \$3000 in parts alone!), and my dealer had the car for a week, during which time I had a Volvo 850 loaner, a car I had considered before getting the 9000! Nice car, but not in the same class as the 9000, and we had driven Volvos for 30 years before getting the Saab.

Another problem, which oddly enough I discovered while helping in the 1996 Saab Summit owners club convention in California, was that if the hatch was opened the engine would die. John Moss of Saab USA took a look at this at the convention and suspected a ground fault. I brought the car to my dealer a week later, and was told that a local Saab field representative had said they should do nothing about this, that they would never find the cause! I wrote to Saab in Sweden, and next thing I knew my dealer called and asked me to bring the car in. A ground fault was found under the left rear seat, and was repaired. John Moss was right. The field rep was wrong, in more ways than one.

The only other major problem I have had was the radiator having to be replaced at the end of 1998, because the metal to plastic seal was failing. Fortunately under warranty, as I was told this was a \$650 item. There have been a few other small problems from time to time. At delivery the door windows were seen to have waterspitting. My dealer was prepared to replace them (!), but I managed to talk them into having them polished. The left rear door fan didn't work and was replaced. The plastic trim piece at the back of the hatch floor cracked and was replaced. One of the headlight wiper blades had the small pin that holds the tension spring break, and it was replaced under warranty. Now that I'm out of warranty the other

one has bent and won't hold the spring. Why they (Robert Bosch) make that pin so weak is a wonder. Also have noticed recently that the dashboard indicator light for the right side seat heater is erratic, sometimes on, sometimes off.

A few months ago I had a problem with a high speed miss, or "bucking" on hard acceleration, and fortunately I had brought this up with my dealer just before the warranty was up last August. They weren't able to find it (or repeat it) at that time, but it persisted (for me anyway) and when I brought it back a couple of months later, out of warranty, they sent me out with a service technician, and I was able to demonstrate it. He replaced the turbo boost control valve (which he felt was not operating exactly right, and was covered by warranty), but it still bucked. A new set of plugs (gap was too large) finally cured the problem.

Just recently have noted a bit of vibration in the steering wheel at 70+, but the wheels have never been balanced since delivery, and maybe it is time. Will perhaps try to put it off until the 35,000 service, in less than 1000 miles.

Forgot to mention my bit of Saab serendipity. I grew up mainly in Burlingame, on the San Francisco peninsula. Next town south is San Mateo, and then comes Belmont. In 1963 I bought a new Volkswagen beetle at the VW dealer at 825 N. San Mateo Drive in San Mateo, nearby to my folks home in Burlingame. Moved back to my birthplace San Francisco about that time, and lived there 20 years, where I married a Danish girl Elisabeth Clemmensen (she hates when I say that, but she was born in Copenhagen!), and we graduated to Volvos, a new 1966 122 and then a new 1979 244 (we kept the 122 until 1993, and still have the 244). When we moved to Belmont in 1982, the nearest Volvo dealer was at the same address, 825 N. San Mateo Drive, and we took our cars there for service. They then moved up the street to Burlingame, and we continued going there. When they moved, 825 was taken over by the Saab dealer, which strangely enough call themselves Burlingame Saab, even though they are in San Mateo! So you get the idea, yes, I bought my new 1995 Saab 9000 at the same physical building/address where I bought my 1963 VW beetle. That had something to do with my getting a "vanity" California license plate that says "SCARABE" (my 9000 is

Scarabe Green). Scarabs are beetles, you know.

Burlingame Saab, by the way, inherited some service and sales folks I had known at the Volvo dealer, and have been great friends in my new Saab experience.

I went from the 9<sup>s</sup> back into my 9000 experience so far, and want to again thank you for the fantastic job you did comparing these two great cars from Saab. I think Saab needed to do the 9<sup>s</sup>, and I think they did it right. I would like to own one, and I really hope I don't have to wait 10 years! The 9000 was to me the "Holy Grail", and I'm happy I got my wish. A few less problems might have been nicer, but as a friend once pointed out, "maybe they wonder why you didn't buy a Buick!" And another friend said "this is not a Buick", so I guess I have gone into the high tech world with my 9000, and things can happen. Amazing car, somehow more "stately" and, I guess, classic than the 9<sup>s</sup>, but you know, time does go on, and the 9<sup>s</sup> is going beyond those definitions when the 9000 was designed. It is the new Saab.

Robert Bausch  
Belmont, CA

See Dr. Nio's "Saab Klinik" for the solution to many of your 9000 noises. -Ed.

I used to have a '69 96, but chose to keep my husband instead. Now, after 11 years of marriage I've convinced him that he can peacefully coexist with an automobile that's almost as old as we are! I need to find one before he changes his mind. Please send NINES as soon as possible.

Patricia Steed  
Roxbury, CT

That crash you hear is another stereotype biting the dust. Welcome back to the fold, Patricia. -Ed.

I'd have not let (my subscription) lapse but somehow didn't realize it would be an easy online kind of deal. I love NINES. It's the only magazine I receive that I actually read and enjoy.

Mario Murphy  
San Francisco, CA

Mario renewed his subscription on-line through The Saab Network. We thank TSN and Scott Paterson for helping our subscribers, and Mario for his kind words. -Ed.

**Saab's Advertising**

In '97 at the jubilee Joel Manby showed us some of the ads they wanted to run. One of them said: "If SAAB makes the safest cars in Sweden, and Sweden makes the safest cars in the world..." Great! I loved it, but I never saw it in print anywhere. Or the 0-60-0 on the aircraft carrier, everyone loved that ad and it ran for what, 2 weeks? I have long been very dissatisfied with the SAAB ad campaigns- they are dull and lifeless, unremarkable. Not good things for an ad campaign to be. I had visions back in '96 of what SAAB should be doing for ads and at the jubilee we was shown some very nice ads, most of the better of which I never saw after that.

*James Fox  
Lakeville CT.*

One of the primary reasons I bought my Saab, and therefore why I love it so much, is that it's a great combination of several kinds of vehicle. It doesn't excel at any one

area, but does very, very well in many. Performance, comfort, practicality, and safety are all above average, sometimes far above average and right up there with the best.

Unfortunately, I'm not sure that Saab knows what market they are trying to sell to. Few people think like I do, or do loads of research before buying a car, they just buy whatever is perceived as good by their friends or family. Saab needs to really toot their horn about what they do exceptionally well. Safety for one. I was disgusted when, quite some time after I read about the new Saab Active Head Restraint system, I saw a Volvo ad on TV advertising their new exclusive seat design designed to reduce whiplash! Where was the Saab ad which should have run a year before?

How many know that Saab was the first to implement side impact door beams, way back in the '70's? Or know that Saab engineers go out to numerous real life accidents each year in Sweden to investigate the results? While it may be true that Volvo 'owns' the safe car image, much as BMW owns per-

formance, that doesn't stop other car manufacturers from advertising how this or that model scored in the latest crash testing (ie., Toyota Sienna). Why haven't we heard how the 9<sup>s</sup> got top honors in recent testing, and why did we never hear that the 9000 was named safest car in Sweden for six years??!

I'm not saying Saab should necessarily go all out for the safety market. I feel the American public in general has been so inundated with airbags, abs, and awd (at least in SUV form) advertising that they probably feel any vehicle with all these features is inherently safe and you're untouchable while inside it. Personally I'd rather be in my 9000 which has none of these features, than a vast majority of the vehicles made today. Ah well, I'm no marketing expert, I have no recommendation. Saabs may be the most intelligent cars ever built (at least they were in the 80's!), but I don't feel the car buying public in the U.S. as a whole is smart enough or has a long enough attention span to recognize it.

*Aaron Gilbert  
Seattle, WA*

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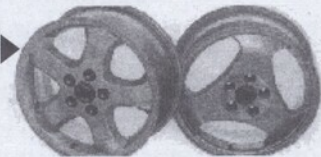
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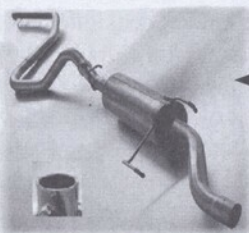


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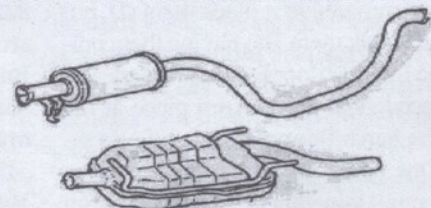
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**What I've Carried in My Saab**

My name is LaDonna Walker and I drive a 1986 900 3 door white Saab. I really enjoy driving my Saab. My husband drives a 1985 900T 16 valve blue Saab and he really enjoys the turbo. We have owned and driven Saabs for nearly 15 years Both of our daughters drive Saabs. One has a 1981 Saab 900S and the other drives a 1986 900 SPG Saab. My husband owns British Motors, Ltd. in Des Moines, Iowa where besides the British cars, he also services and repairs a large number of Saabs.

I am a Meals on Wheels Driver for Generations, Inc. We deliver meals to elderly, handicapped and disabled clients in the Des Moines and surrounding areas. We deliver over 800 meals per day in this area. I am a substitute driver which means I can be sent out on any of the 24 different routes on any given day to deliver anywhere from 25 to 45 meals in the span of about 3 hours. The meals come in three parts, the hot part of the meal is in a container 5" X 7" in size and the cold part is in a styrafoam container about 5" X 7" and the third part is a container of milk. The meals are packed in large containers with 12 hot meals in one container and about the same number of cold meals in an insulated bag. My 3 door Saab works great because I am able to get so

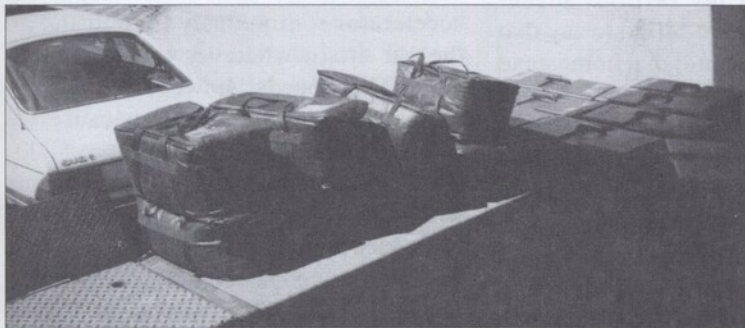


**Meals loaded in the Saab**

many containers in the back of the Saab and also on the back seat. A 3 door Saab is so much better than a lot of the drivers who drive American cars, vans or small pickups. They have very little trunk space. On one particular day I was required to transport 19 containers and the Saab did it with room to spare. I am very proud of my Saab.

Also I found it very interesting that Saab U.S.A. provides six brand new Saabs to NAMP (National Association of Meals Programs) to use for one year. This last year there was one in Chicago, Indianapolis, Denver and three other cities. Our company has applied this year and we are hoping to be the lucky ones to be driving a new Saab next year to deliver meals in Des Moines. Saab is doing their part to help elderly, handicapped and disabled stay in their homes for a longer period of time instead of having to move in to a nursing home or group home setting. Thank you Saab U.S.A.

*LaDonna Walker  
Des Moines, IA*



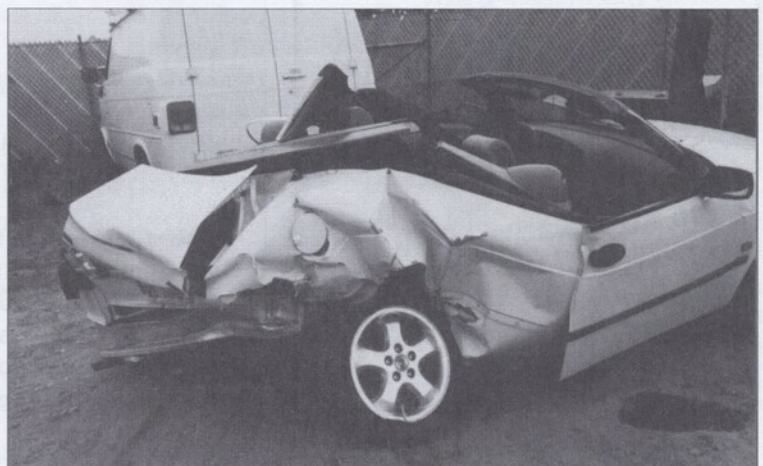
**Meal on Wheels...on the loading dock**

**My Saab Saved Me**

My 96 900 Convertible was squashed recently. It was rear ended at what looks to be a high rate of speed. I was there, but don't remember anything till the hospital. The car absorbed the force of the collision by crumpling up to the back of the drivers seat. My worst

injury is a shiner that will be around for about a month. All told, the Saab became a parts doner, and I didn't, for which I'm thankful.

*Bill Woodruff*



## My Saab Saved Me

One late and rainy evening here in Rochester I was headed south on 590 out of downtown doing about 65. Not a whole lot of folks out on the road as it was 12:45am and raining pretty hard. I had just finished stopping by a friend's weekend get-together and was tooling along enjoying myself at the thought of a completely work-free weekend. There were plenty of chances to sit down over a drink at the party, but I live well south of the city and knew that since sleeping on the couch didn't sound so appealing I would have to make the 20 minute trek home before the night was out, so I abstained. I'm in autopilot mode grinning to the whirr of the turbo as I approach the bend in the road where 590 intersects Monroe Ave. in the leftmost of three lanes and the glare of the headlights from oncoming cars catches my eye off of the puddles in the roadway. I look twice because something doesn't

seem quite right and in enough time for my life to flash before my eyes I'm breaking a haaaard right almost killing the guy behind me. Sure enough, it was a drunk driver in a Jeep Cherokee headed towards me doing 60mph in MY LANE putting approach velocity in the neighborhood of 120 I figured...on a DIVIDED HIGHWAY! In a lesser (or heavier) car I could have rolled or spun with the abruptness that I changed lanes, but the 9000 stuck fast despite the wet and I avoided careening into the side of an Explorer in the rightmost lane. Road handling isn't just for fun sometimes.

*Tom Young  
Rochester, NY*

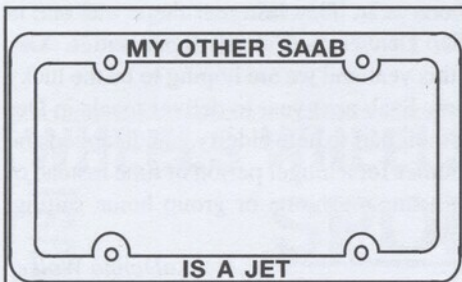
## Wild and Crazy

In the vein of wild and crazy car adventures, one of my favorite adventures started when Dad called to say that he was selling the Indiana homestead and moving to a small cabin in north woods of Minnesota, and anything left in the house 3 weeks hence, including Grandma's furniture, would be given to charity. Needing furniture and recoiling at the potential loss of family heirlooms, my wife and I hastily had a tow hitch welded to the 1985 C900S and rented a 5x8 Uhaul trailer with the high roof (not the aero design) and set out on the 2000 mile drive home. We had rented trailers for each of many moves using our 1974 99LE, but thought that the 900 would be more comfortable for this long trip. With limited vacation time—and no money for lodging anyway—we drove non-stop, eating cheese sandwiches and M&M's from a cooler in the back seat, and swapping off driving every six hours when we refueled. In between pit stops, the passenger would take advantage of the fabulously comfortable seats to catch some sleep before the next turn at the wheel.

The first leg out of San Diego included both mountains and desert and there we encountered our first challenges. Even though the trailer was now empty, the car was not exactly having an easy time pulling it at highway

speeds. With the outside temperature close to 100 degrees, in the desert, the engine was running hot even with the cabin heat on full-hot—which as you can imagine made the car very uncomfortable. At this early point in the trip, we were beginning to regret taking the 900 in favor of the trusty 99 with its already proven towing abilities. Running the A/C was a mixed proposition. On the one hand, the A/C turned the much-needed radiator cooling fans on—which for some reason were not coming on by themselves. On the other hand, the load of the compressor was slowing us down. We figured out that we could disconnect the A/C compressor and use the A/C switch to turn on the radiator fans and that helped limit the overheating and allowed us to use all the engine power for speed. In the spirit of "the long run," we kept the accelerator continuously floored and let the car attain whatever speed it could get. The speeds, however, were not typical of "the long run," because we were power limited in 3rd gear at 5000-6000 rpm. The constant high-rev whine would have put fear in the hearts of some rice-burner owners.

We arrived at Dad's in 36 hours. The car's comfort meant that we arrived in Indiana fully rested and were able to get to work immediately cataloging what we would take and how we would pack it. We used templates to maximize the use of every cubic inch in the trailer, car, and roof racks. The last items fit like a jigsaw puzzle and the car was literally loaded to the hilt and piled high when we set out on the return journey. We had dressers, end tables, two dining tables, a 6x6 foot glass display case made by Dad's dad, eight chairs from Mom's mom, trunks of linens, a sewing machine desk, crystal and china for 12 from both sides of the family, thousands of family pictures from the '50's and onwards, glass slides from the 1890's, WWI and II letters home from the military men of the family, a library's worth of books of my youth, mom's youth, grandma's youth in Germany—we packed it all in, somehow. We wished we had running boards so we



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could lash even more onto the car.

I slid past the first exit ramp due to wet road conditions, but then everything went smoothly until Texas. While crossing the Texas panhandle, we hit a spring snowstorm around midnight. With the roads getting worse, my wife turned the driving back over to me around 3 AM at the next gas stop. I got back on the interstate (which was at that point completely clear) and got the lumbering beast of burden up to its terminal velocity of about 45mph. Soon, I came over a hill and in the faint pre-dawn light, I realized that I was on a vast sheet of black ice. The trailer started to pass me on the left (pulling the rear out with it). I gently got it going back in line, but it overshot and started pulling out the other side. At this point, sensing that the car was not going nose-first anymore, my wife woke up with a start. We both had visions of a major crash with lots of crushed family heirlooms—really the least of our true worries.

Miraculously, we didn't jackknife and I got the car stopped at the right side of the road. I looked forward down the road in the dim light, there were cars off in the ditch along nearly every possible trajectory (including an ambulance!). Every few minutes, another car would come along, and hit the ice and go spinning out. We decided that we had to move, but couldn't until we got the chains on. It was difficult even to walk and I discovered that I could get the massively heavy trailer to slide sideways just by leaning against it! The chains were in the compartment under the trunk, which required a lot of unpacking to get to. My wife became the lookout while I dug the chains out of the trunk and mounted them. When she saw a car coming, we both ran off into the snowy fields as far as we could get as each car fishtailed within feet of the trailer. A 4X4 truck pulling a jeep came along at one point and the two vehicles went off the highway exactly where we were, except on the left side, and went down into the ravine between the highways. With so many close calls, we decided to only put chains on the front

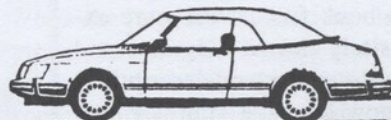
wheels (even though I also really wanted to have chains on the rears while pulling a trailer).

We got out of there without further incident and drove for many, many miles through what soon became deeply rutted ice (which served to keep the trailer securely behind the car). The last excitement was when the Jeep in front of me, who was driving like an idiot, spun out and I had to switch lanes to avoid hitting him. The trailer wanted to stay in the ruts of the original lane, but finally yielded to the pull from the chained front wheels. Due to the heavy load and weather, we spent much of the return trip in 2nd gear running over 6000 rpm. As a result, it took nearly 48 hours to get back to San Diego.

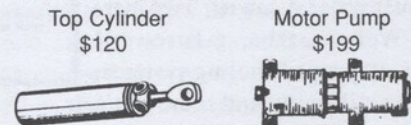
After safely unloading all of our possessions in San Diego, I returned to the shop that had welded on the trailer

hitch. The hitch and bumper were both bending downward and I asked if they could bend the bumper up to where it belonged and reinforce the hitch. The owner scratched his head in puzzlement and asked what I had been doing in the week since he had put the hitch on the car. I nonchalantly said that we had rented a small trailer and moved a few things—that's all. He bent everything back into place and added extra bracing to the trailer hitch. Other than that, the car was unaffected by the abuse we put it through and since that eventful trip, the car has run reliably for an additional 170,000 miles. So, between the '74 99LE and the 900S with the reinforced hitch, we are ready for the next time a similar opportunity presents itself!

David Hattery  
San Diego, CA



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# Ramblings and Demands

by Phil Lacefield Jr.

## Ancient Tomes and Forgotten Knowledge

**Y**eah, okay, we're all just about mental in our devotion to Saabs; we know that. I'll be the first one to step up and scream my love of this particular automobile and all its trappings, and yet I'm still not crazy enough to actually try to run a business based off them. You'd have to be completely off your rocker arm to do that...and yet, a quick perusal of this issue will uncover dozens of loose screws who have done just that, scavenging parts and repair info from the four corners of the globe to help us all preserve the cars we hold so dear.

One such loon is Jack Ashcraft, whose outstanding how-to articles and line drawings have appeared in this and other Saab magazines since quite possibly the beginning of recorded time. Jack has entirely too much free time on his hands, as evidenced by his meticulous upgrade and repair parts listings on his web page (<http://pages.prodigy.net/jackashcraft/>) and by his efforts to spread the collective knowledge of decades of Saab care and feeding on to a younger generation (myself included) desperately in need of it through a series of repair manuals he published himself. Although a bit pricey to some, these books are absolutely invaluable in keeping your beloved V4 on the road, and are packed to the gills with numerous hints, tips, suggestions, threats and outright lies that only a lifetime of service to these balance-shafted little monsters can bring. If you don't already own the complete set, get them now from the webpage, and thank me later. Go, I say. Kill if you must. Here now is a list of the most important ones to own if you care a whit about your trusty steed:

*Maintenance & Overhaul of the Saab V4 Engine* (\$59, 96 pages) According to the foreword, the entire contents of this manual have been culled from the pages

of the now-defunct Saab Journal, cleaned up, corrected and put in a logical order from their original form but otherwise intact. Written with the basic owner/do-it-yourselfer in mind, this book is quite possibly the most important addition to any V4 owner's toolbox since the invention of duct tape. Crawling with photos, charts, diagrams, parts listings and more, this manual will hold your hand through every step of maintenance from adjusting the timing to a complete engine teardown and rebuild from scratch.

*The Total Performance V4* (\$35, 82 pages) So, those 80 horses just aren't enough to get your blood moving in the morning? Jack takes us behind the scenes of his racing days with this book filled with more exquisitely drawn diagrams and easy-to-understand descriptions of how to make your V4 sing like a canary, either at the track or just around town. Two-barrel Weber carbs, g-force oil pans, improved cooling systems, frame stiffening and more – it's in here. From mild to wild: (ever seen a turbo on a V4? Jack has!) you can find all sorts of ways to pump some steroids into your engine and still drive to the store for a gallon of milk on Sunday.

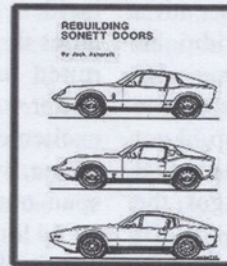
*Saab Electrics For Everyone* (\$45, 70 pages with numerous foldout diagrams) Ever tried to figure out just what the relay over there is good for? Don't know the difference between a bulb and a battery? Or have you simply given up on attempting to read the microscopic wiring diagram in the back of your 96s owners manual? The first part of this book takes in slowly and explains just what your Saabs electrical system is and how it works, then slowly feeds you info one system at a time. Yet again, the clear and oft times funny drawings and illustrations help the novice understand just what all those multicolored wires are all about with little technobabble or high-brow terms. Anyone with the ability to read basic English and hold a wire cutter firmly can use

this manual to completely rewire their Saab in no time. Covering 95s and 96s from 68 on up and all Sonett V4s as well as 99s and early 900s, this book is a must-have for us all.

*Saab Sonett III Tilt Hood Conversion* (\$25, 20 pages) and *Rebuilding Sonett Doors* (\$20, 28 pages) While these last two books are only relevant to Sonett owners, they contain some of the handiest info you'll ever get your greasy mitts on while working on your fiberglass wonder. Ever wonder why the fine folks at Trollhattan didn't continue with the full-tilt hoods of the Sonett II on the IIIs? Jack did too, and decided to figure out a way to make it happen on the later model Sonetts as well. This conversion takes a lot of time and patience, as well as replacing the round bucket lights with small square ones behind the grill (the procedure of which is covered in yet another manual), but it allows the Sonett III owner unprec-

edented access to all areas under the nose without the aid of an assistant and sawhorses every time you want to get in there. Doors are another area that often need special attention, and in this little book are all the hints and tricks you'll ever need to keep your doors slamming and sealing perfectly for years (are you hearing two clicks when shutting the door? If not, you may need adjustment). Whether you feel like taking them down to their core components and restoring them from square one or just redoing the weather stripping, there's a procedure in here for you as well as a listing of parts Jack offers for sale to help make the job easier.

All these titles and more are available on the webpage, or by contacting Jack at (541) 779-0731 for more info. It may seem like quite an investment, but the knowledge you're sharing in has taken a lifetime to acquire, so cough it up now and keep your old warhorse running while you still can.



As she pulled up onto the service pad a gentleman in uniform politely opened her door. "Hello Sarah, welcome to Executive Motor Cars". She couldn't help but smile, as she had never met him before. The greeting was echoed from the service staff that followed. She barely had to describe the problem with her new 1998 Skitzufara 8000, as the staff was already aware of her needs from the phone call she made that very morning. Bill jotted down some notes and assured her of a prompt repair while his assistant, Mary, whisked the car away. Bill was her regular contact and was always so thoughtful. He never made her feel dumb or talked down to.

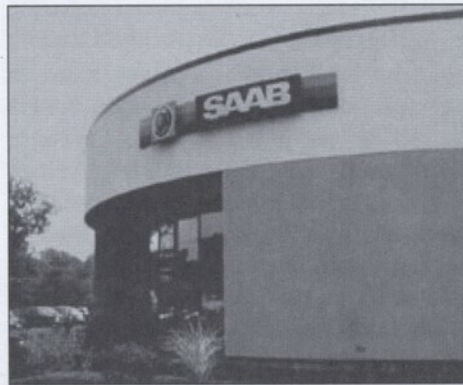


**The Service Bay in a Large, Multiple Brand Dealership.**

The sharply uniformed gentleman led her to a beautifully appointed room where freshly made tea and pastries were waiting. This was Sarah's first service visit to the Dealer in person as the Dealer usually sent out a car for her to use for the day as they picked up hers from her house whenever service was needed. Today was different though as she was on her way to a seminar on investing. She had always wanted to meet these nice people in person.

As she sat down in a plush wingback, Jim, the service manager, came in to chat a bit and see how she was enjoying the car. His personnel had given him Sarah's background stats and he already knew what she was like. They talked investments and she enjoyed the fresh tea. From the room she could see Bill had put her car on a TV monitor and it had been pulled into a surgically clean work bay where a nice looking technician was attaching some sort of electrical equipment to it.

After a short period, Bill came into the room with the information on her car. The readout had indicated that after 66,000 miles her thermostat had decided to act up, and added that the car was also due for an oil service. Knowing her seminar was in 15 minutes, he had a driver pull up the Dealer limo to take her there. She was given a special phone that would auto dial the Dealer when she was ready to return.



When she returned the car was clean and on the service pad waiting for her. Bill led her to the billing room where an electronic demonstration showed the days work on her car. Mixed into the presentation of how the part worked, were video clips from the actual repair. She was amazed how many parts a car had as well as the contortions of the technicians needed to perform the repair. The Technician was present and showed her the part he had removed. He answered some questions she had and thanked her for choosing him.

Next, Bill gave her the paperwork. On the document was a schematic showing the inner workings of the part, a clear location of where it was, a copy of the presentation she had just seen, a written description of all the work done, copies of all the communications, and finally the costs.

Sarah smiled at the cost as it matched perfectly the estimate she had been given.... paid the \$856.00 bill, thanked everyone, and headed to her car where that same uniformed man was waiting with the door open. "Was everything done OK Sarah"? He asked. She had only one answer, the same answer she always gave... "Perfect"!

Yes.... perfect service would be available if people wanted to pay for it,

for it's expensive to produce. As cars become more complex and expensive, so does the cost of service. Quality skilled personnel are rare and command higher pay. It would be both difficult and expensive to get a whole work force of them. I exaggerated the above example to illustrate my point, but it does place an outer bracket as to what behavior one could expect at the Perfect Dealer.

Dealers come in several flavors but most have some internal motivational systems in common. The worst, and one that is widespread, is that employees are paid for speed and quantity of work, not necessarily quality. Being paid for profit is common to all businesses but most pay systems are only indirectly linked to profit. Flat rate, commissions, overrides, spiffs and the like tell the worker he will be rewarded for getting more work through. In most cases, he will be insulated from any unhappy results by the fact that there are layers of personnel between his actions and the public. He may get yelled at for poor quality but he is rewarded for volume. Poor quality in the service bays is expected to pay for its own sins by coming back for rework if it fails. This method of self-balance works to an extent, but yields the temptation to cover up mistakes by declaring a new problem.

No one in a commission based dealership is primarily paid to satisfy customer needs. They are ALL paid to produce work in quantity. They may have instruction or pressure to increase CSI (customer satisfaction index) but the overwhelming purpose of their work is to make money. Because they deal in volume, motivation to please only the majority pays off. You MUST go to a Dealer for warranty work. That fact limits the threat, and advantage, of competition.

To make your service visits to a dealer smoother, it helps to understand how a Dealership works. There was a time when dealers wished they didn't have a shop. It was expensive, hard to run and not profitable. Today, shops are even more expensive and difficult to run, but with new car sales' profits so slim, the service and used car sales departments are holding the doors open. Let me take you through the typical dealer service visit. Believe it or not I have left out much of the detail for space limits of this article.

## Dealing with Dealers

It starts with your call to the dealer. I have described the workings of a very large dealership, which in the context of Saab's sales volume usually (but not always) means a multi-brand dealership. In smaller dealerships, all the activities described will occur, but several steps may be carried out by the same individual.

1) The phone operator is first. Since the dealer is large, work is broken into many pieces. The sheer number of these divisions increases the possibility of problems starting from this very first step. She (usually it's a woman) answers the phone 1,000s of times and it is very hard to keep track of all the callers. It's rarely a warm personal greeting but rather a fast prepackaged response.

2) Your call is transferred to the service department. At many dealers the next person you speak with is a service greeter. You're then on hold again until a service writer answers.

3) The service writer answers and makes the appointment, jotting down your original requests. Sometimes the wait on the phone is so long you must either call



back or leave a message for them to hopefully call you back. Service writers are VERY busy people with LOTS to keep track of. Sometimes writers overbook appointments on purpose, but often it's by mistake. It's also hard to perfectly determine the cars' needs ahead of time so it's very easy to overbook work if time slots are not automatically added. Managers frown on dead time not caused by lack of work.

4) The day arrives and you wait in line along with the many other owners that came that day. Some people are in a great hurry. Some cars are dead. Tempers

flare. It's a highly emotionally charged way to start the day for both customers and repair shop personnel.

5) Often the Service Writers are paid a percentage of the service they sell, so an "experienced" writer may even skip over customers waiting to be written up for warranty work, which doesn't pay well, in order to write up the gravy work. You may not have the same service writer you talked to for the appointment nor even the one from your last visit. Lack of continuity here can fix the car but not in the owner's head. Many complaints start here.

6) A service assistant then drives the car to a waiting lot. Hopefully the keys are correctly tagged and put in the right place on a keyboard. A mistake here drives everyone nuts. The driver, often a low paid part timer, might be diverted and pocket the keys. Someone "borrows" him, sending him on a mission, and the keys are gone for hours.

7) Depending on the systems they have, either the information is entered and tracked through a computer or by a paper repair order method. Sometimes both. It

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is very tempting to pay attention to good paying requests and blow off low paying ones.

8) The work then goes to a dispatcher to be given out to the various Techs with skills in the area of your cars needs. From one to as many as 5 Techs may work on your car at different times during its visit. Naturally, each Tech is interested in getting his share of the best paying jobs. Making enemies of the dispatcher is not wise. Techs can fake "hold ups" on jobs in order to line up a series of good paying jobs for the day.

9) Next, the Tech gets the job. This doesn't always go smoothly, as the car can be any number of places. Each technician has an individual personality and may not be skilled in communications. They need good service writers to speak on their behalf. A service writer translates between the customer and the technician. Lack of skill or just plain confusion in either direction spells trouble.

10) Each time the car goes to a Technician an estimate of the problem and its repair must be written. This information often

goes to an estimator, then to the writer, who in turn must contact the owner for approval. That's fine if the owner can be reached. If not, the delays occur.

11) Once authorization is obtained parts must be drawn and installed. If a needed part is not in stock, it must be ordered. All this can stall a job and backlog work into a traffic gridlock at an overly busy dealership. Many mistakes and problems happen here. Repair is not an exact science and what was thought to be a quick repair could go into overtime.... more communications... and more problems. The stream of time gets dammed up and cars get put off.

12) The car is eventually repaired and the bill to you and/or the manufacture prepared. This bill then awaits your payment at a counter, often minus anyone skillful enough or directly involved to explain it to you. It is usually written in what seems like a Swahili dialect that defies understanding.

Now pay attention. The repair of modern cars is VERY... I repeat... VERY complicated. What makes things worse is

the sheer number of parts (some 23,000 plus on a Saab) adds to the probability of both failure and confusion along the process. Cars are so expensive owners expect each one is bullet proof. Owner expectations often exceed the reality of the situation.

Making your ownership experience pleasant also requires your adopting a realistic expectation of the process. Cars



**A 3-bay service area, typical of a small dealer or independent shop.**

are imperfect machines and the people that service them are both no better than the demand that creates them. Perfection in both the cars and their service is also relative to the demand for and the comprehension of its occurrence. Some people are never happy, no matter what, and others haven't a clue as what's

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## Dealing with Dealers

happening. The ability to meet quality demands depends on:

1) the availability of the tools to meet it and

2) the willingness of car owners to pay for that higher cost.

Supply and demand will always eventually balance. The shoppers for quality work will be met by equal amounts of quality shops.

Having said that, car owners still have a right to expect reasonable levels of quality service. However, that service can not exceed the system's ability or the breakeven point of profit for the supplier of such services. Great service can not occur on a poorly made car. It's the low price that motivated the car's purchase, not the car's intrinsic value, and that motivation inevitably follows through to its service. On the other hand, higher priced cars may not deliver proportionately higher quality. Production volume and costs, market positioning, importing and exchange rates all affect the car's price. In car manufacturing all things are not even. Part of a Saab's high price can be attributed to the low production runs and many hands it goes through to get it to you.

Everything in the service process cost money. "Free" loaner cars are not free. Neither are "Free" oil services or washes. Everything you get from the Dealer comes out of your pocket... period! Even the cost of longer warranty periods comes from adding those estimated costs to the car's original price. Service is not a bulk product in a warehouse. It can not be purchased in quantity from Taiwan then resold at a discount. Heavily discounted service coupons must be financially balanced with higher priced items that are sold while you're there. The pressure to up sell is high in order to make up for the loss. Lifetime warranties bring you back in the door to sell you other items. There is no Benevolent God of Discounts writing checks to the Dealer to make up for losses from "freebies".

To get the best service from your local dealership, I recommend the following:

1) Do your research and buy the best quality car you can... or at least be realistic in your expectations.

2) Realize that the present system of Dealership service has its limits.

3) Work the system to your advantage. Be loyal, fair in your demands, and reasonable in your tolerance.

4) Dealers must honor all warranties, but buying a car cheaper at Dealer A then expecting Dealer B to fix it doesn't make friends. Remember that warranty work doesn't pay well at a Dealer and on some items it doesn't pay at all.

5) Find the good personalities at the dealer, from salesman, to writer, to Tech. Introduce yourself. Compliment them to their face and to their bosses. Call everyone by his or her name. Pass those names on. Always ask for them. Stay in front of them. Solicit their help with problems. Don't go over their heads. Exchange pleasantries. Minor gratuities, such as modest seasonal gifts or seasonal greeting cards, will work wonders. It's basic human nature to work harder for people you like and remember.

6) Leave your car. Give them time to fix it. Leave it for several days if the problem is sporadic. Call once or twice each day, but no more, to see how it's coming.

Other than oil services it's almost impossible to work effectively on drop ins.

7) Call once around 1:30 or 2:00 to see how things are going. (a good time to jog memories) But don't be a pest.

8) Ask for clear explanations as to what was fixed and why.

9) Be extra patient on newly introduced model problems. It's new to them too! I usually discourage buying the first year.

10) Pay for what you get and make sure you get what you pay for. Make sure you have a clear understanding at both ends of the service.

11) If you have any problems, ask to go somewhere like an office to talk. Done firmly but calmly differences can be worked out. Solicit the employee's help to solve the problem.

12) Admit it if ever you don't understand something. Keep at it until either you do or you trust the other person.

13) Realize Dealers are usually more expensive because they are run by professional businessmen. Independent shops often are not. However, independents have the communications advantage.

### Saab's Warranty Dealer Reimbursement Policy

Every new car sold in the United States comes with a warranty, usually a generous warranty. Warranty length and terms have been used as a sales tool for decades, and long warranty periods and vehicle quality tend to reinforce each other. Long warranty periods motivate the manufacturers to improve the initial quality of the vehicles, and improved vehicle quality provides marketing the "cover" under which to offer long and comprehensive warranties. Although warranty coverage has become pretty uniform among most makes in the United States, the manner in which manufacturers support the dealer by compensating the warranty repairs varies tremendously. To discover how Saab does it, we interviewed James Uhl, the 9000/9-5 Technical Product Specialist at Saab Cars, USA Inc.

*What can you tell us about Saab's policy for supporting their warranty in terms of reimbursing dealers for Warranty Repairs?*

First of all, Saab recognizes that a great warranty like Saab has, 4 years/50,000 miles bumper-to-bumper, excluding wear items like brake pads, clutch, wiper blades, etc., isn't much good if the owner has to fight with the dealer to have the repairs made. To help prevent that, we pay the dealer what we believe to be the full value of the repair. For labor, the dealer is reimbursed the manufacturer's "flat rate" time for the repair at the dealer's regular hourly repair rate.

*What of the old truth in the automobile service business, that "Warranty repairs pay less than retail customer repairs."*

Perhaps I should clarify what times a dealer is paid for warranty work. The manufacturer, Saab Automobile AB in this

Dealers are usually more technically equipped for service but independent shops can be more personable at it.

14) Call for an appointment and confirm the day before too.

15) Don't be demanding, but be reasonably consistent in expressing your expectations.

TIP: If possible, take your car in to the dealer mid-week. Mondays are "tow ins" and emergencies, while Fridays are put offs and carryovers. Exact times are very hard to meet. Leave the car when possible. Even for just oil changes.

### Handling tough, numerous or persistent problems.

After each repair, make sure it is clear to you what was done and why. Many times the same type of problem can have several causes. It is wrong to assume each complaint has only one solution. As the car ages, the probability of multiple causes can increase.

Always go through the system first and do it politely but firmly. Give the Dealer a chance to fix the problem. If it becomes apparent they can not, go to the

manufacture via the Dealer Rep. Have your records in hand. Follow it up in writing. Lemon laws will eventually protect you. Most Dealers and manufactures are interested in your happiness and bad cars are not good for either party. Especially when it's one like Saab, which does rely a great deal on "word-of-mouth" marketing.

Manufacturers go through good and bad times. Two of the extremes are when sales are strong and profits are high, and when sales are low and profits are too. Saab has lost a ton of money for some time, but with GMs involvement it's eager to improve customer relations along with the quality of the car. GM is willing to keep writing checks to make customers happy and keep the upswing in sales going. As car quality, customer satisfaction, and sales improve, that faucet will be turned off and those losses paid back. What this means is Saab is currently more willing to back the dealer to solve customer complaints for problems that may technically be beyond warranty limits. Under normal times, dealers have dollar limits that are

averaged for a territory. If a Dealers warranty claims creep past that average the rep may put the squeeze on and start rejecting claims, thinking that the dealer or some of the dealer's employees are abusing the system. Thus, dealers that are above the average in claims may be harder to get warranty repairs done from. They may also be less apt to give you courtesy extras to keep you happy.

### In conclusion:

It is in the Dealers interest to care for you, but they can only repair the car if you give them a reasonable amount of time. Dealers are usually big complicated organizations. Expecting too much from one can bring disappointment. But, expecting reasonable service is your paid for right. Many Dealerships are full of skilled and nice people, but they are people none the less. And people, like the cars they work on, are not perfect. I worked in dealerships for many years before I left and started my own shop. My biggest complaint about them was flat rate or commissioned pay systems they use. But that's another story.

case, measures the time for a labor operation. The job is performed according to the instructions in the Service Manuals. The technician is timed for the labor to perform the task. For example, he is paid to open the hood, remove the water pump, replace the water pump, and top off coolant, close the hood, etc. Whatever that time turns out to be is multiplied by a pre-established figure to add in time for the technician to handle the car, paperwork, tools, etc.

The factory time does not cover a technician standing at the part's counter waiting for parts or waiting to be served. It does not cover the time walking around the dealership or dealership parking lot looking for the car. It does not cover the time spent waiting for the job to be dispatched. It does not cover the time the technician spends clarifying a poorly written repair order stating, "Check Water Leak." Too many dealers are expecting their technicians to absorb this cost themselves. The more savvy dealers realize that they can hire a "porter" to do these tasks

which do not require a technician's skill. Some see the porter as an extra cost. The more savvy dealer sees that he's paying \$7 an hour for wasted time, instead of \$60 an hour (average hourly shop rate for Saab) for wasted time. Other dealers provide bonuses to the Parts department for delivering parts directly to the technicians — basing these bonuses on the overall productivity of the shop.

Something else that's important to know is that every dealer has the ability to dispute a labor operation. It's always said that the factory pays horribly, but last year, even though we have 200+ dealers, we only had one labor operation dispute. And you know what, we increased the time that was being disputed!

SCUSA pays the dealer a profit on their parts, too. Warranty will pay a 40% markup on the dealer's cost to buy the part from SCUSA, or suggested list, whichever is less.

*Does this mean that the mechanic is being abused by using the Warranty Flat*

*Rate table, or the customer is being abused by the dealer using other than the Warranty Flat Rate Table?*

Dealerships can use the Saab warranty book for every customer. The last dealership where I worked as a tech did that. The hourly charge rate was \$65, but the costs of repairs ended up costing the customers about the same, because the "flat rate" time was shorter. That policy also eliminated any differential between warranty and non-warranty work. A technician performing a warranty repair made the same as another technician performing an identical customer paid repair.

The time that Saab pays is the figure that is published in the warranty manual. The Chiltons and Mitchell Manuals take those factory times and add roughly 80% to come up with the "recommended" customer pay time. Warranty would never pay that rate. That rate is based on a curve for technicians who are unfamiliar with Saabs and who are not privy to the Saab training courses.

That's just my opinion, but what do I know?



### Effortless Driving?

I recently drove my '63 96 to Dulles Airport and back as it is a relatively unsuspecting looking vehicle (you all know I'm lying here) with very little of value in it (i.e., the CD player, etc., usually targeted for theft at Long-Term parking). The trip up on a Monday afternoon in April was no different from any other...to most folks, anyway. Usually on longer trips I leave the little car back home in her little home and take one of my road-warriors which are more suited to such travel. Needless to say I had already arranged to have a drink with a friend and client up in Northern VA prior to my airplane departure; he is a recent devotee to SAAB and the new owner of a Sonett which we provided him with, so showing off my "driver 96" was a necessity in and of itself. David, as you read this, remember, it's not just a toy but my commuter too!

As I said, I had to take the veritable town-runner onto the highway, and as we all know, the old strokers need a little time to blow out all that stop-and-go sludge which accumulates over time in the internals of the Mighty Three. Somewhere north of Richmond the 96, quite well laden with me and luggage, began to ascend the hills on the interstate with its usual "on the pipe" vigor! Needless to say, we didn't travel much above the posted limit of 65mph, if only for the fair number of Virginia's finest at every other speedtrap.

Speeding in Virginia is, as in most states, the most easily punishable offense you can be charged with. Our neighbor in Charles City is a Virginia State Trooper, who the other day told me of a 19 year old girl running over 90mph on the local Interstate highway. This was not her first offense, either, and when she came to court, she made such a row that the judge ordered her license be suspended as from that moment, and that she was not to drive home on pain of jail time. My friendly neighbour who had stopped her in the first place was asked by the judge to see that she not attempt to drive off from the Courthouse. Bottom line: the attitude returned, Gary caught up with her as soon as she left the parking lot, and

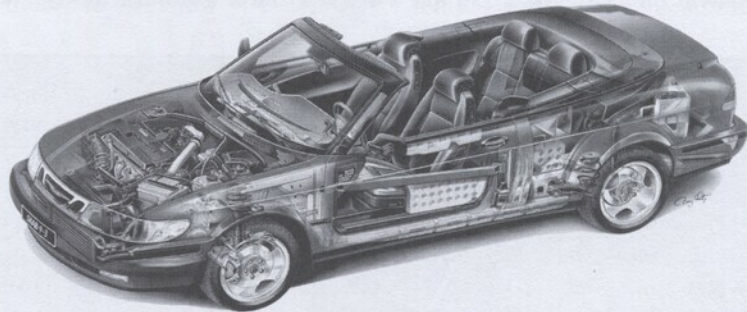
little Miss Defiant spent the next week in jail.

So where does that leave us two-digit SAAB folks out there on the road with these types? Re-entering the interstate somewhere in the concrete paradise that is Northern VA after a quick rest stop, a jello-neck head-bobbing teenage driver of a Honda minivan almost got pretty well acquainted with SAAB structural integrity as he sped by at around 80mph and nearly clipped his rear bumper on my front. This was not the first or the last

experience with poor drivers while making the effort to keep the old Three from being blown off I-95 by a trucker or killed by the driver of a Sport Futility Mommyvan. Floating up into the heavens after my last time behind the wheel of a 2-stroker, I'm sure I'd be much kinder to the semi-rig than the Soccer Mom who caused my fatal accident.

Why, you ask? When was the last time YOU were behind the wheel of a vehicle produced sometime prior to the resignation of Richard Nixon? How about

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a big piece of American iron, which like a boat in the NO WAKE section of your local fishing hole or river needs to be steered a half turn each way every five seconds in order to continue going straight. A 96 is a very unforgiving car especially when its alignment settings have been tweaked for extra backroads fun. Point and shoot, there's no yaw, there's no safety warning alarm, nor is there any sort of automated handling device as found on so many new cars today, there's just a ditch, a Jersey barrier, or a cliff. Keeping a 40-something horsepower 96 on the road is sometimes hard work, and it gets even harder every time other vehicles' road feel and the level of concentration required by its driver to keep it rolling decreases.

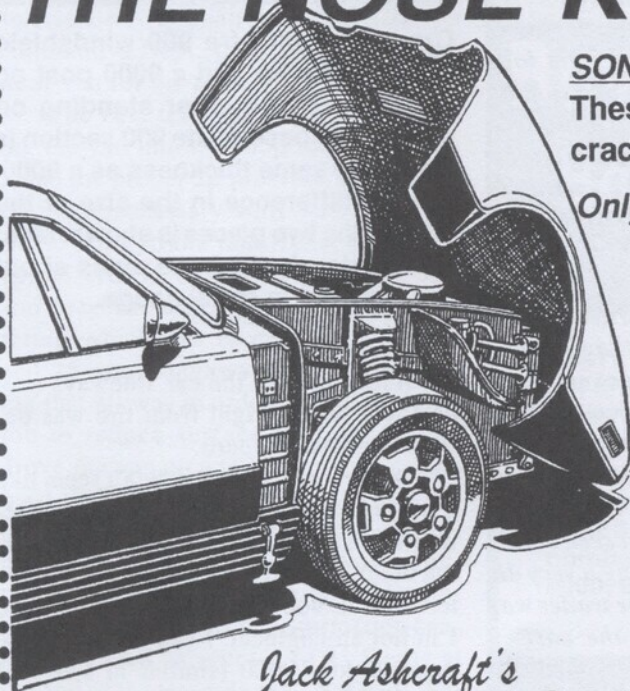
Most folks are by nature lazy, and the easier a car can be (for those of us who buy new) the better. Make it more like your favorite living room chair, equip it with needless heaps of technology, make

sure it is ably equipped with 965 airbags, extra door impact beams, alarms and electronic devices to keep you somewhere within the straight and narrow, or at least make your fall as comfortable as possible. 30 years ago, SAABs were blessed with an innovative design for their day, as well as for an unparalleled level of safety. But drivers are not nearly as conscious of what it is they are doing in this age of digital display GPS units on the dashboard and three cellular phones for the businessman on the go. The very art of driving for many has been reduced to the use of an appliance, to get from Point A to Point B. The more features that appliance has to attract buyers, perhaps the less the buyer cares about the car, and hence slips farther away from being a conscientious participant on the highways and byways. Many, like the girl aforementioned, attempt to defy the system for whatever reason, beyond the logical and comprehensible norms, and ei-

ther pay the penalty or spend more of their concentration avoiding the law than courteously and conscientiously obeying it.

To those of you out there bravely reading this article who are owners of newer cars, try to remember what it was like in the good old days, and remember those of us out here preserving an important piece of automotive heritage. To those of you out there who like me enjoy actually *driving* that old SAAB, Mercedes, Cadillac, or other vintage automobile on more than around-the-block weekly excursions, my advice to you is be mindful and watchful; it is your unfortunate responsibility for that other guy and his errors at all times along with the challenge of keeping your old vehicle whatever it may be, along the same straight and narrow. While I can replace some parts in restoring your car to new, I cannot replace the car itself, and should it be a total loss, that's one fewer left on the road for all of us.

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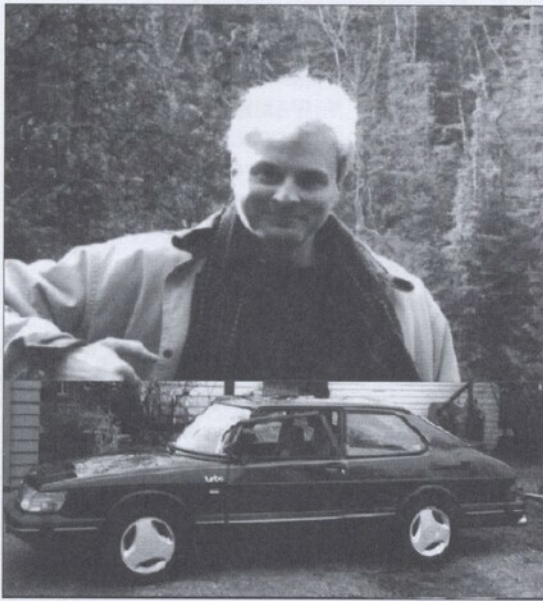
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**FREE CATALOG!**

## THE ALLAN EPISODE

I must say that I'm flattered when I hear from readers who have recognized the opinions expressed in this publication and remember them in practice. There are lessons to be learned from my friend, Graham Allan's misfortune. I'll quote most of his e-mail to me. This accident happened in Minneapolis, MN while driving his very nice 87-900T which is now being repaired and will live again!

*"The accident was interesting in some ways. I think I have your article in*



**Graham Allan with an inset of his very nice 87 turbo that will be able to be restored because of the strength and safety of the 900 windshield post.**



**87 900T showing damage caused by semi trailer at shoulder level.**

*mind somewhere every time I pull up next to (or pass, or whatever) a large truck. It was a useful reminder. I was also lucky (this may be irrelevant) that I learned to drive in Scotland, where I think the standard of teaching and testing seems higher (although before anyone accuses me of snobbery, by observation, there is just as much bad driving in the UK as here, maybe more!). Anyway - I don't say that makes me a good driver either, but my old instructor there managed somehow to drill in awareness of what is going on around you as a very important thing. In retrospect I have more admiration for him, than the UK driving system as such.*

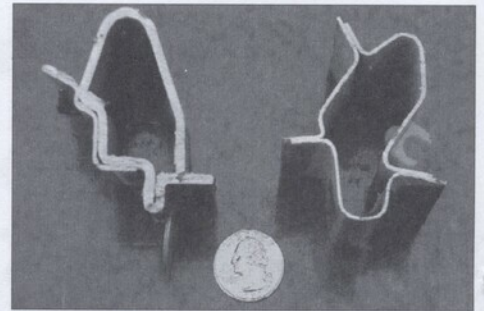
*"Anyway...there were some such defensive thoughts during the setup of my accident, but not enough to save me! The road was quiet, 8 pm on a weekday, still light but the end of daytime. The truck was already stopped at the light as I approached from behind. It was in the left lane (although not the left 'turn' lane) with its hazard flashers going. That was something strange I wondered about but decided it was just stopped there and I shouldn't worry further. I was confident it wasn't turning right, since the right lane was very wide (had a bus stop on the corner, etc., and it's an area with lots of warehouses), the streets are used to large trucks, and there was space for it to turn right from the right lane. So, I pulled up to the right of the truck.*

*"Then the light turned green. The truck's right turn signal was going all this time next to my head, but of course it had been the hazard flashers when I had approached from behind! So I was surprised when it started turning right across me. He'd obviously not seen me either since he was making a very direct turn. The side of the trailer was rapidly approaching the car! I probably could have escaped if I just put the car in reverse and went, but I hadn't been watching my mirrors while at the light, so I didn't know if there was a car behind me. By the time I could look, it was too late...*

*"As for the impact itself, you've seen how little the windshield pillar was bent; it was very slow, very calm, no drama at all.*

*"The only place I really went wrong was not knowing if there was anything behind me, to escape. Tsk, that's one of the things instructor said: wherever you are, whatever you're doing, always have an escape maneuver plan!"*

The cause of the accident was the truck driver not seeing Graham beside him. The truck driver was from Atlanta, lost, and made an illegal turn. The truck's trailer pushed in the quarter panel, broke both the driver's window and quarter window. The amazing thing was that the windshield post was strong enough that



**Cross section of a 900 windshield post on the left and a 9000 post on the right. The quarter standing on edge at the base of the 900 section is about the same thickness as a 9000. A huge difference in the size of the steel in the two pieces is shown. Most all brands of cars have posts about like the 9000 in metal gauge.**

the trailer pushed the car sideways several feet till the right front tire was deflated against the curb.

As Graham, told it, it didn't seem like a big deal. As you can see in the pictured cross-sections of windshield posts, the 9000 is about the thickness of a quarter but the 900 is much heavier. Since I'm not an engineer, I can't know if the much lighter 9000 (similar in size and weight to most all cars today) would have held up as well. Since cars other than the classic 900 have bonded windshields, the glass becomes part of the structural integrity of the car. In the 900, what you see is what you get! And this proves it

will do the job. Do you have another brand of car or van that you drive? Do you think the post would have held? Something to think about! The other factor is that if you can't see the truck driver in his mirrors he can't see you either. If you own a Saab for no other reason, it should be for SAFETY!

**GAS PRICES GOT YOU FUMING YET?**

I'm asked almost every day how good the gas mileage will be on this Saab or that one. I've known but never taken the time to do some simple experiments to prove that the driver is really the one who can control this factor.

Kevyn Berger of WCCO TV (Channel 4 in Minneapolis, MN) did a News Feature on DIMENSION called Gas Price Got You Fuming? You may be able to see the whole report at [www.wcco.dimension.com](http://www.wcco.dimension.com) but I think they may have removed this program by now. Anyway, this is how Kevyn proved who was really in control. She went to Anoka-Hennepin Technical Training Center and with the help of Dave Johnson, who is Chairman of the school's Automotive Dept., they prepped a Dodge mini-van for the test.

The first test was done after bringing the van into the shop to be sure that it had the proper air pressure in the tires, all the unnecessary stuff was taken out of the trunk (trunk junk), checking tune-up, etc. The van appeared to be quite new and they showed a picture of the EPA rating, which was 18 mpg—city driving and 25 mpg—highway. After confirming that all was in order including a wax job to reduce surface friction, Kevyn drove the van on a ten-mile circuit. She used the cruise control and did not exceed the 55-MPH speed limit. It appeared in the pictures that it was a mixture of highway and some city traffic situations. The van's driver information center registered an average of 31.5 mpg at the end of the ten-mile run. Not bad! Actually, very good for something the government expects to get 25 mpg.

For the second test, Johnson added 400 pounds of sand (trunk junk), all of the accessories were turned on, and a

VCR player was plugged into the cigarette lighter so that a movie could be played. While the movie, "SPEED" played in the background, Kevyn cruised the ten-mile circuit with the extra weight and maximum electrical load on the van. The result was 28.6 mpg.

For the third test, the trunk junk was removed but the air pressure was lowered by 10 psi in each tire. The engine air filter was removed and duct tape was used to block off about half of it. The ten-mile run now produced a 22-mpg reading (when was the last time you checked the tire pressure on your car?)

For the last test, the 400 pounds of trunk junk was added, the tires were still under-inflated, the duct tape was on the air cleaner, the electrical system of the van was loaded to capacity, and Kevyn drove the ten-mile route like most of us drive in rush hour traffic. The result was

18.3 mpg—a loss of 13 mpg from the ideal situation. That could amount to \$450 per year savings in gas by doing things right. So now when someone asks me how many mpg this Saab or that one will get, I'll give them an estimate and then invite them to our customer lounge to watch this video tape I purchased from WCCO TV. It's very hard to refute this test.

Did you read Steve and Norma's column (last issue of NINES) about tires and air pressure gauges? You may want to go back and re-read them before you clean out all that trunk junk. I was thinking about some of my two-stroke friends that carry a spare engine when they drive across country. No wonder their gas mileage is not very good. You may not be able to control gas prices at the pump but you can surely control how much you spend! It's not always the car's fault!

*Photographs by the Author*

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Saab chose to hold the press introduction of the 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Wagon in Sante Fe, New Mexico to highlight the Aero's ability to maintain its full performance at altitudes approaching 10,000 feet. "Media Introductions", as they are called, allow companies to capture the full attention of print, broadcast, and "internet" automotive journalists by inviting them to a resort environment and giving them access to company executives and the product at hand. When Saab invited us to attend, they didn't have to ask twice.

To begin, we reference NINES' test of the 9<sup>5</sup> Wagon in the January issue (#243). We observed at that time that the Wagon combines marginally increased carrying capacity, as compared with a 9000 hatchback, with greatly improved refinement. The ride quality, cargo area trim, and noise levels, especially wind noise, are much improved over the 9000. The Wagon also sports features such as the cargo tracks and the roll-out load floor. The Wagon we tested then was equipped with Saab's Low Pressure Turbo (LPT) 4 cylinder 2.3 liter engine and a 5-speed manual transmission. We noted that the combination had ample power except during passing maneuvers, and excellent fuel economy. We also noted that the standard equipment Michelin MXV-4 tires tended to favor ride quality at the expense of cornering ability.

At the time of the previous Wagon report, the 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Sedan had been introduced to the North American market, but the Aero Wagon had not. We speculated that an Aero Wagon would be priced identically to the Aero Sedan because the other 9<sup>5</sup> Wagons were priced the same as their sedan counterparts. This turns out to be partly true for the 2000 model year Aero Wagon. The base price for the Aero sedan and Aero Wagon are the same, but all 2000 Aero Wagons are equipped with seat heaters and the BBS two-piece alloy wheels as "mandatory options." Year 2000 Aero Wagon colors are also limited to Imola Red, white, and black, except for 9 "Midnight Blue" press cars (which had been ordered up prior to the decision limiting the color choice). Beginning with the 2001 model year, Aero Wagons will be available in the full range of 9<sup>5</sup> colors, and the "optional" wheels and seat heaters will be truly optional.



**Saab vs. the Dinosaurs: The 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Wagon on display in the courtyard of the Gerald Peters Gallery**

Our "introduction" to the Aero Wagon came in the form of an evening presentation by Saab Cars' staff which covered Saab's sales goals for year 2000, an overview of the marketing strategy for the 9<sup>5</sup> Wagon, and a detailed description of the product. Saab's sales target for 2000 is a modest 3.5% increase over 1999, to 41,000 units. Behind this modest sales goal, Saab plans a lot of activity in continuing to continue improving product quality, advertising focus, and developing their framework for consistent customer interaction.

The discussion of Saab's corporate plans was followed by a description of the Aero Wagon and a comparison with the other European luxury wagons. Noteworthy details about the Wagon which haven't been covered in recent issues include a revision in the engine mounts for improved engine vibration isolation and reference to the rear seat back being designed and tested to withstand the impact of 80 kg. (176 lb.) of unsecured cargo in a 56 km/h (35 mph) barrier impact crash. Saab also published the specifications of the Aero Wagon's suspension modifications: 15% increased stiffness and damping in the front, 7% and 10%, respectively, in the rear, with an additional 1mm increase from the standard 9<sup>5</sup> sway bar diameters of 18mm and 15mm, respectively. In response to an audience question, Saab reported that approximately 70% of 9<sup>5</sup> Wagons are sold with automatic transmissions, and they predict the percentage will in-

crease to 75% for the Aero Wagon.

The next morning the Sante Fe Police Department escorted a parade of Aero Wagons to the city limits and then looked the other way. The collected journalists followed a route through the Carson National Forest and the Picuris Indian Reservation, culminating at the 8600 foot high Angel Fire Airport to witness a drag race among Saab Aero Wagon, BMW 540i Wagon, and Volvo T5. Along the way there was a stop at the Puye Cliff Dwellings for photos, and another along the Rio Grande Gorge for a demonstration of the Cargo Tracks.

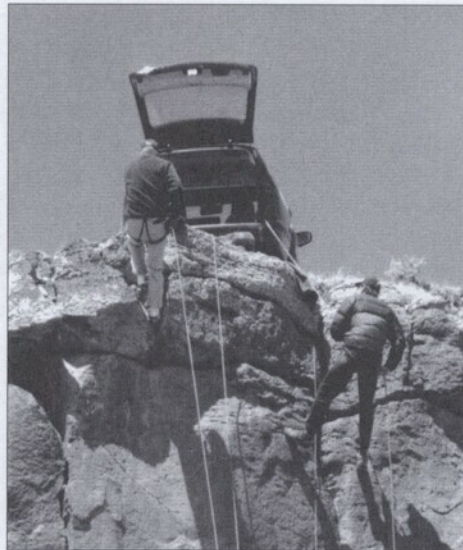
The chosen route definitely highlighted the capabilities of the car. A long uphill divided highway segment was followed by lightly traveled two-lane roads, then to tight mountain roads. Previously stated reservations about engine performance or handling in the base models evaporated away as quickly as the "civilian" traffic disappeared in the rear view mirror. Where the LPT version of the 2.3 liter turbo motor seems to run out of breath near 4000 rpm, the HOT version feels strong and responsive to beyond 5000. The lower profile Michelin Pilot tires stick to the road with no howl or feeling of impending slip during maneuvers far beyond what one would consider sociopathic on a public roadway. The low profile tires and stiffer springs, shocks, and bushings provide a much firmer ride than the standard 9<sup>5</sup>, but the ride is seldom uncomfortable. On smooth roads the ride is silky,

## Aero Wagon

and sharp bumps or broken pavement are handled without harshness by the compliant chassis. Some washboard surfaces transmit a jarring vibration to the passengers, making one feel willing at that moment to sacrifice either some of the shock stiffness or some of the tire performance in exchange for the ability to absorb more of the motion. Or one could slow down...

The automatic transmission version of the Aero is particularly well sorted out. This was our first opportunity to drive a 4 cylinder 9<sup>5</sup> automatic, and we found that Saab has managed to quell all but the tiniest trace of idle shake, the bane of 4-cylinder automatic cars from my sister-in-law's Ford Pinto and the infamous Citation through the 9000 and 900/9<sup>3</sup>. (Subsequently, a brief check of an LPT 4-cylinder 9<sup>5</sup> automatic showed it's idle behavior to be equally civilized.) Beyond that, the shifts are smooth and quick, with seldom a trace of lurching on downshifts. Performance is ample, including on the 2-lane highway passing maneuvers that leave the LPT wagon (and its driver) a little breathless. This is despite the engine's torque level being held back from the 5-speed's 258 ft. lb. (not counting "overboost") to the automatic's 242 ft. lb. limit. The automatic also quiets much of the 2.3 turbo engine's characteristic "growl", which is presumably absorbed in the torque converter. Whether that considered a "good thing" or a "bad thing" is a matter of taste. In any event, the 75% of people ordering their 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Wagon with an automatic transmission will not be disappointed. We inadvertently discovered another feature of the 9<sup>5</sup>. Attempting to drive away while the parking brake is set produced a "doorbell" chime, a welcome reminder for those who drive off without running through a written checklist. (That would include all of us, wouldn't it?)

Climbers showed both the strength of the cargo track system and their faith in the system as they repelled off a cliff while hanging from Saab's wagon tie-down. Our hosts related an earlier display where a 9<sup>5</sup> Wagon was suspended from the cargo track. Saab's cargo restraint system is neither a gimmick nor a decoration. It is a serious and capable load restraint to ensure the safety of the car's occupants which we urge Wagon owners to use when carrying heavy objects. We would.



**Climbers show the strength of the 9<sup>5</sup> Cargo Track load restraint system**

Following the route further, exiting the Carson National Forest and nipping through Taos, we stopped at the Angel Fire air strip for a demonstration of the Aero Wagon's ability to perform at altitude. Instructors from Skip Barber's organization ran 0-60 mph and 0-100 mph "drag races" between the Aero and a Volvo V70 T5 and a BMW 540 Touring (wagon). All three cars were equipped with automatic transmissions. The Volvo features "all wheel drive for better traction" and the BMW, of course, is rear drive. At the time we observed the runs, a heavy snow/hail mixture was falling, resulting in conditions which might be considered most favorable to the Volvo.

At sea level the 282 hp V-8 powered BMW should trounce the two Swedes in a drag race, and the Volvo's lighter weight, higher horsepower rating, and all wheel drive might be expected to result in the Saab finishing third. At the airport's 8600 foot altitude, however, the BMW's normally aspirated engine was "sucking vacuum," causing it to finish a distant third in the 0-100 and 0-60 runs. The Volvo, like the Saab, is turbocharged, but its less sophisticated engine management system controls boost according to relative manifold pressure. This means that if boost is limited to 15 psi, for example, that boost level is added on top the atmospheric conditions. This also means that the Volvo came in second.

As discussed in the Viggen article in NINES #240 (July, 1999), Saab's "Trionic 7" controls the boost based on absolute manifold pressure. This means that the maximum boost level of 15 psi at sea level is really 29.7 psi "absolute" (15 psi of boost added to 14.7 psi of atmospheric pressure). Boost pressures as high as 20 psi can be produced, so if the atmospheric pressure drops as low as 9.7 psi, as it does at altitudes approaching 10,000 feet, the engine receives the same amount of air, and therefore produces the same power, as it would at sea level. This capability is present in all of Saab's 4 cylinder engines for model year 2000, as well as the 1999 4 cylinder 9<sup>5</sup> cars and 1999 Viggens.

After observing the races, we tip-toed back through the winding, now-wet-from-

*Please turn to page 24*



**At the 8600 feet high Angel Fire Airport, the Aero Wagon leaves the Volvo T5 wagon behind in a race to 60 mph.**



**The BMW 540 Touring was left even further behind.**

I used my usual wifely charms when I heard about the New Mexico SAAB trip and informed the editor of Nines that he had no choice in the matter: he was not going without me. Fortunately after 32 years, he wouldn't have considered it, or so he said.

Unlike Steve, as we zoomed along the highways north of Sante Fe and he was proclaiming the smoothness, quietness and power of the Aero, I was watching for the police. With no radar detector and speeds of 100 MPH, I had unpleasant visions of police, speeding tickets, and rising insurance rates. I didn't believe Steve when he suggested that maybe the cops were paid off.

Nor was I particularly calm about the cattle crossing signs. In Ohio we have "deer crossing" signs. I've witnessed the damage done to a car and the poor deer and when they collide at 55 MPH. I could only imagine what would happen should a long-horn decide to cross the highway while we were zooming along at 100. In-between the cattle crossing warning signs were "Respect

the Rattlesnakes" signs. Believe me, I respect the rattlesnakes, signs or no signs.

I now know what tumbleweed blowing across the roads looks like. I know it hurts if it tumbles into one who is wearing shorts, as did the hail that pelted us during the SAAB car race at the Angel Fire Airport. As we huffed and we puffed our way to the top of the Indian dwellings, I tried to remember the explanation of how the SAAB engine uses the sparse air so efficiently. Our human bodies were not as efficient.

New Mexico food is magnificent but I must admit I choked a little on my smoked salmon when the journalists gathered together to brag about how fast they had been driving. The one who won the bragging rights drove 142 MPH.

One of the lectures stressed how SAAB owners loved art and museums. So without feeling any guilt, and indeed with the encouragement of our hosts, we skipped the proscribed route back to the hotel and checked out the sites in Taos. In fact one dinner was presented at the Gerald Peters

Gallery, where there were Saabs in the courtyard along with outside sculptures. Inside were many famous works such as Remingtons, one of which retails for \$1.8 million.

Driving Aero through the countryside on the extra days of our holiday was a pleasure, and we were careful to observe the required 10 MPH through the Bosque Del Apache: a migratory bird sanctuary. We experienced the smoke of a fast moving brush fire along the Rio Grande when driving back to Albuquerque. While small, I could only imagine the damage to the bird nests and environment. The smoke was thick and black.

We returned our dusty Aero to University Motors, the Saab dealer in Albuquerque. They seemed genuinely interested in advertising Nines to their customers, not to mention driving the Aero for a few days before it would be returned to the Denver Press Fleet.

*Norma Goldberger*

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### Shop Manual for Saabs

Saab 900 8 valve 1981- 88 Bentley  
Saab 900 16 valve 1985-93 Bentley  
Saab 9000 1986-95 Haynes



snow, mountain roads to pay a visit to the shops of Taos. The Michelin Pilots stuck to the road very well in that environment, although we confess to driving that leg with the good sense developed over a lifetime of living where "snow happens."

Having selected the third and last "wave" of the press introduction, Saab graciously allowed us to keep one of the Wagons for a few extra days of touring, enabling us to experience the car under conditions approaching day-to-day normal use. The 9<sup>5</sup> Aero Wagon fills the role of every-day transportation appliance as easily and as competently as it fills the role of high performance sports wagon. Our week's worth of luggage, camera equipment, souvenirs, and press materials barely filled the Wagon's "trunk" area with the shelf in place. At the "Atomic Museum" at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque a gentleman in the parking lot stopped us to complement the Saab's appearance.

One feature we especially appreciated in every day use is the electrochromic (self dimming) mirror, a standard feature in SE and Aero models sold in the USA and Canada. The greatest benefit from that feature isn't so much that it dims by itself - we are quite skilled at and able to flip the lever on the bottom of the standard mirror. Rather, the benefit is the mirror returning to the normal state as the following headlights fade away, automatically returning a bright clear view of what else has been behind you.

Thanks to Saab Club member Norm Crowe we had an opportunity to ride in an Aero Wagon during a spirited "guided tour" through Perry County, Pennsylvania at the "Saabs at Carlisle" event. We also drove the Wagon on the familiar "short cut" between the Pennsylvania Turnpike and our home. The experience pretty well confirmed our earlier opinion formed during the Press Launch in New Mexico, except our broken-up Ohio pavement never set up the kind of jarring road vibration which we experienced in New Mexico. Throughout, the Wagon's comfort and civility made as much of an impression as its performance. Its performance is quite impressive.

*Photographs by the Author*



**Saabs lined up at Andrews of Princeton**

In June of 1999 I had to attend a weeklong scientific meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The 16th American Peptide Symposium was being held downtown at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Since I'd never been to this region of the country before, I thought to myself, "What is there to do in Minneapolis? Wait, didn't the entire brake system from my restored '86 900T SPG come from a place called Andrew's Inc. of Princeton Minnesota?" When I got out a map and saw that Andrew's Inc. was located only about 60 miles north of Minneapolis I started to get excited about my trip. When Dave Kennedy at SPG9 in Atascadero CA heard that I would be in the vicinity of Andrew's he asked if I would deliver a few of their modified 900T APC boxes. What a perfect excuse for a visit, especially since I would have one free afternoon during the otherwise long week of scientific lectures, poster sessions and discussion sections.

Upon the arrival of a very warm (88 F) and humid (90%) Tuesday afternoon, I changed into my TSN t-shirt, shorts and, in the Chevy Cavalier rental, headed North out of Minneapolis until I reached State Hwy 169. The route quickly becomes rural and pretty soon I felt like I was lost. I stopped at a convenience store and they said I had not gone far enough north. After another twenty minutes I stopped at a nursery and they said go back, Bricketon Rd. is located under the freeway overpass near a grove of trees. Finally, I rounded a turn beyond the grove of trees and saw four large Swedish flags.

It felt strange pulling up in the rental car with all the numerous SAABS in view. The entrance to Andrew's is a large field outlined by SAABS sitting side by side, from vintage to NG. There were a few new

and used cars for sale further up the main entrance. I parked next to an '85 SPG and was greeted by Chuck Andrews himself! They had been expecting me since Dave at SPG9 had called ahead and told them of my visit. I was shown to the Parts counter where I met Parts Manager Larry Graham



**Chuck Andrews demonstrates the frame alignment rack to the author**

and Chuck's son, Don. I gave Don the SPG9 APC boxes and then Chuck proceeded to give me a tour of the entire facility.

Many subscribers to NINES are familiar with Andrews since Chuck writes a column for this publication. For those of you not familiar with Andrews it is a SAAB-exclusive full service shop founded in 1973 by Chuck Andrews. It began as a one-man autobody shop until 1980, when his son Don joined. The business has grown to include a body shop, mechanical service and a nationwide parts department.

Chuck showed me the service area where they can accommodate up to seven cars. Appointments are necessary and the waiting period for service is two to three weeks. They are busy! Behind the service area is where they keep all the used parts.





### *Saab Spotlight (continued)*

They carry parts for the 96's up to the NG SAABs. Outside the used parts area were racks of used wheels. Sorry, no 9000 aero rims! Chuck then showed me the body shop where they do factory and custom repairs.

Back outside, Chuck pointed down the hill towards his house and said next to it was his warehouse which contained his private collection. I had to be bold and ask if I could see it. Inside sits an immaculately restored 1970 red model 96, which has won numerous awards. Also, a 1974 chartreuse Sonett III, a 1976 silver 99, and a really tricked out 1985 black 900S with custom body work and paint. On the way back to the main facility Chuck opened up the area where they keep all the parts cars. There were two yellow school buses filled to the brim with interiors.

In the main building we were met by Chuck's lovely wife Linda, who had t-shirts and license plate frames for me. One last stop at the parts counter where I passed on a 900T whale tail! I didn't think it would fit in the overhead compartment of the jet for the return flight. After saying my "thank you" and "goodbyes" I walked around out front and visited with all the SAABs, feeling like I was in SAAB heaven. I headed back to Minneapolis around dusk with a memory I'll never forget.

Thank you very much Chuck Andrews and to Andrew's Inc. of Princeton for your hospitality. If readers are ever in the Minneapolis area, it's a great place to stop by and visit.

*Photographs by the Author*

## New Corporate Logo

Saab Automobile is adopting a new corporate symbol. The new symbol has been designed to visualize more clearly the values that lie in the brand name, and is an evolution of the earlier symbol dating back to the mid-1980s. The new Saab symbol consists of a navy blue circular plate with a gold-crowned, red griffin head, below which the name 'SAAB' appears in silver. The original corporate symbol was designed in 1984 by the artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd and was the Group symbol for the then Saab-Scania Group. This has now been refined to reflect more clearly the strengthening Saab brand name and a model range which is the most competitive ever produced by Saab. The new Saab Automobile corporate symbol will come into use on 14 August, and will then be featured on all new Saab cars.

## New Head of Design at Saab

Michael Mauer has been appointed new Head of Design at Saab Automobile AB in Trollhättan, Sweden. In his new position, Michael Mauer will be responsible for the development of the exterior and interior styling of Saab's future car models. Michael Mauer joins Saab from MCC Smart GmbH in Germany, where he was the head of the design department. His earlier positions include General Manager of the design department at Mercedes-Benz in Stuttgart, where he worked on the styling of the Mercedes SLK, SL and A-class, and General Manager at the Mercedes-Benz Advanced Design Studio in Japan. Michael Mauer will report directly to President and CEO Peter Augustsson. He takes up his new post during the spring.

## Real Life Safety vs. The Crash Tests

Real-life safety is still most important to Saab, company officials said, after the Saab 9-3 and Saab 9-5 were both awarded four stars in the latest EuroNCAP collision test. Both Saab models have also been awarded highest marks in the new side collision test. According to EuroNCAP, the Saab 9-5 is the safest car they ever tested.

"The excellent results we recorded in the latest EuroNCAP test are obviously heartening, particularly since this type of crash test often receives wide publicity," states Roger Malkusson, head of the Collision Safety Development Department at Saab. "But it is still important to bear in mind that individual crash tests cannot tell the whole story about the overall collision safety of a car. We develop our cars so that they will be as safe as possible in actual traffic accidents. So we assign the greatest value to collision safety studies made on the basis of realities, such as those continually being run by Folksam in Sweden and the HLDI (Highway Loss Data Institute) in the United States," says Roger Malkusson.

Recent tests reported by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in the United States point out the importance of relying on overall injury statistics as compared to an individual crash test. The IIHS included three models which were also tested by EuroNCAP, two of which were scored higher than Saab by the IIHS. Those include the Volvo S80, the only car in the class to come close to Saab's overall score in the NCAP testing, but which outscored the Saab by a wide margin in the IIHS test; the Cadillac Catera, a version of the Opel/Vauxhall Omega which did relatively poorly in NCAP, while the Catera was rated marginally higher than the Saab by the IIHS; and the Audi A6, which was scored just below the Saab in the IIHS but far below the Saab by the NCAP. NCAP results for the BMW 328i model which IIHS ranked at the top of the European Import category were not available, but the BMW 528i was tested and it scored closer to the Audi A-6 than the Volvo S80.

In the Folksam safety study of cars on the Swedish market, the Saab 900/9-3 is the only car in its class to achieve the 'Gold group', which is what Folksam calls the group of five cars that are 50 percent safer than the average car. The Gold group also includes the Saab 9000, but the Saab 9-5 is too new to be included in the statistics. In the US, the HLDI (sister organization to the IIHS) rated Saab 900 best in its class in terms of injury for the fourth year running. The Saab 9000 is no longer rated in HLDI reports, because it is no longer available as a new model, and there was insufficient data to include the 9<sup>5</sup> in the most recent HLDI ratings.

# Saab News

Saab's sales recovered in April and May, selling at an average rate of 3391 cars per month, a rate consistent with Saab's 2000 sales goals of just over 40,000. The year to date total shows the effects of a weak first quarter, however, and the goal will not be reached unless Saab gets some "blow out" months later in the year like they had in 1999. To put the year in a more favorable perspective, Saab points out that 1520 of last year's 15,028 January through May total was attributed to "fleet sales," of which there have been none so far this year. Thus, retail sales are almost even with last year's result.

Saab's sales of 208 Viggens over the two month period is at a rate in excess of the US allotment of 1000 per year, and picks up some of the slack from previous months. Convertibles continue to show tremendous strength in the 9<sup>3</sup> line, garnering over 48% of 9<sup>3</sup> sales. Niche Saabs: the Gary Fisher Edition Wagon and the "Campaign Convertible" (a 9<sup>3</sup> SE convertible with special paint colors, 17 inch wheels, and performance tires) add their measure, and the 9<sup>5</sup> Aero sedan picked up to almost the same level as the SE model. Wagons made up one third of the total of 9<sup>5</sup> sales.

sedan 9-3 se	289	288	577
viggen sedan	25	27	52
convertible 9-3	542	517	1059
convertible 9-3 se	302	243	545
viggen convertible	38	32	70
campaign convert.	97	116	213
total 9-3	1993	1901	3894

model 9000	3	0	3
sedan 9-5	358	528	886
sedan 9-5se (4cyl)	42	3	45
sedan 9-5 V6 (se)	314	266	580
aero 9-5	156	249	405
wagon 9-5	229	298	527
wagon 9-5se(V6)	172	141	313
wagon 9-5 g fisher	32	37	69
aero Wagon	13	39	52
total 9-5	1316	1561	2877

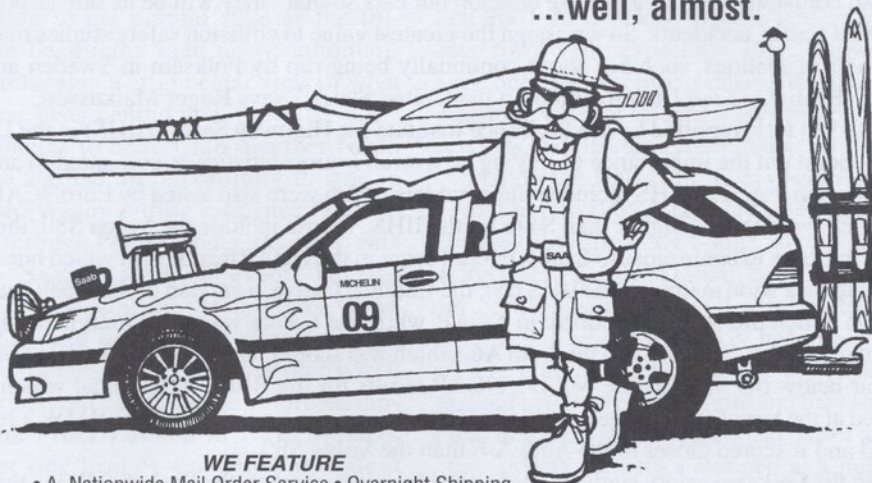
current year (2000)	3319	3463	6782
last year (1999)	2700	3944	6644
percent increase	22.93	-12.20	2.08
Year to Date			13555
1999 Year to Date			15028

	APR	MAY	period
model 900	7	1	8
coupe 9-3	86	77	163
viggen coupe	68	18	86
sedan 9-3	546	583	1129

Sales data provided by Saab Cars USA, Inc.

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#4252300	80.00
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#8583510 lens	40.00
#8583528 lens	40.00
#8583452 assembly	80.00
#8583460 assembly	80.00
900 '87 and up	
#4014957	55.00
#4014965	55.00

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# North American Saab Clubs and Contacts

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## Utah SAAB Club

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## Western Pennsylvania Saab Club

**Andy Bittenbinder**  
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Allison Park PA 15101-  
412-366-6165

# Local Club Calendar of Events and Activities

## Western PA Saab Club

July 15: Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Car Show. The Western PA Saab Club will join numerous car clubs for an all day show on the Schenley Park Golf Course. Tour the many displays, visit the vintage car paddocks, and observe the day-long vintage race time trials from one of the best corners of this fantastic track in the university community of Oakland in Pittsburgh, PA. Spend the night and watch the races on Sunday, the 16<sup>th</sup>. All Saabs are welcome, but must be in place by 10:00 AM for the Saturday Car Show. For information, contact Andrew Bittenbinder: 412-366-6165.

## Central Penn Saab Club

September: The Bridges of Lancaster County. No, Clint Eastwood will not be in attendance, and there are no plans for romantic interludes, but the Central Penn Saab Club will conduct a driving and photo tour of the covered bridges in Lancaster County, PA. There are 23 covered bridges in Lancaster County, where just 5 years ago there were 27. Join the tour and visit them while you still can. The tour will be early September, but the details were still being worked on at press time. Contact George Basehore, 717-944-2915, email [saaber41@epix.net](mailto:saaber41@epix.net), or call Marc Fails, 717-295-9191 (work number) for details (such as the date and departure location).

## Turbo!

October 7: It's not too early to make plans for attending "SaabToberfest", the autumnal semi-annual driving tour through Central Pennsylvania organized by Deb and Dean Lusby. The tour will meet at the Bloomsburg Mall, in the vicinity of Exit 34 of Interstate 81 in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. For further information, email Deb Lusby [blaithin@ptd.net](mailto:blaithin@ptd.net) or call her at (570) 286-9277, **before 7pm EDT.**

## Attention Local Clubs!

Please keep NINES up to date on your planned, or even semi-planned activities! Our closing date is about a month prior to each issue's release, and it takes up to three weeks from the release date for some of our subscribers to receive their copies. People interested in attending your events *will* contact you for more information, but only if they have some idea that an event is being planned. In this issue, we have three upcoming events listed in Pennsylvania; that leaves 49 states, the District of Columbia, and all of Canada unaccounted for in our calendar of events. Let's all work to open communication lines so that more people have the opportunity to join in the activities.



## Saab Romp 2000

by Marc A. Fails

Saturday, April 1, 2000 was the meeting date at Exit 34 of Interstate 81 in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. SAAB Romp 2000, hosted by Deb and Dean Lusby attracted 38 SAABs, and is the spring counterpart to SAABtoberfest (refer to Nines #243). The formula for Spring Romp is fairly simple: organize as many SAAB enthusiasts as possible; meet in Central Pennsylvania; then find the twistiest roads possible to drive.

Because of the growth of these events, the group was split into two smaller processions, leaving the Columbia Mall several minutes apart. As more participants continue to bring their Family Radio Service two-way radios (FRS), communication between drivers has gotten markedly better. After the drivers' meeting explaining typical road tour protocol of turning on your headlights, using turn signals as early as possible, and the obligatory legal waiver, the first group made it to their cars and began to file out on the morning leg of the run, scheduled for about 80 miles.

I had taken the sweep position in the first group and had settled in nicely after about 30 miles when I rounded a turn and found Andrew Winger and his '79 Turbo 4-door along side the road with a dismembered exhaust system. Working on a car on a twisting back road is never a safe proposition, but we managed to position his car so as to get a jack into use, and try to wrestle the exhaust from under the car. After the arrival

Photograph by Marc A Fails

of the second group, group 1 departed and John Mailleau and I continued the wrestling match, assisted by Andrew and several onlookers. Once we had reduced the exhaust to its component form, we put it inside the car and resumed the first leg of the day, only losing about 45 minutes. (yes, the exhaust system was extremely hot!)

The scheduled lunch break was held at the Treverton, Pennsylvania VFW picnic pavilion. This early in the spring, Deb couldn't find any local parks featuring open rest rooms, so the VFW provided their pavilion and the use of the comfort facilities. Participants brought picnic lunches or could purchase lunch from the VFW kitchen. After lunch, a prize drawing was held. Prizes were donated by Kunkle Motors (who also provided prizes for SAABtoberfest '99, but were not recognized), Seth Bengelsdorf & The SAAB Network, SAAB Club of North America, Lititz Auto Service and Lee Smith & Swedish Underground.

After Lunch, Groups 1 and 2 reassembled and departed for the 55 mile conclusion to Spring Romp. I resumed my position towards the back of group 2 when two of the Sonnetts behind me didn't make the third turn. Holding back so that the Sonnetts could rejoin the group, we set out for more twists and turns outside of Treverton. As we briskly accelerated on 890 North to catch up to our group, we made our way over the top of a steep grade, and coming down the hill, 5 cars ahead were on the brakes hard, heading for the shoulder. They missed the turn and so did we. Jon Bartlett in his Sonnett (Drool Bucket '99 Winner) had made the turn and waited for us to U-turn and regroup. Listening on the FRS, we heard group 1 looking for 5 of their group, who also made a wrong turn and were now sightseeing in the countryside.

About 13 miles later, Bill Trench and his V-4 95 wagon overheated and he pulled it off the road. Beginning to feel like Bill Murry in "Ground Hog Day", I once again pulled over to survey the carnage. Jon Bartlett and George Basehore joined me and we found Bill holding a chewed up branch, which had found its way under the car and lodged itself between the water pump pulley and a brand new fan belt. The fan belt was shredded and the branch hit the overflow tank hard enough to crack it. Bill parked the car in a nearby driveway, and after leaving a note of explanation on the car, he jumped in with George and we headed off to locate the needed parts. We had only driven a short distance when we encountered a resident, who happened to work for the local Chamber of Commerce. She directed us to the Advance Auto Parts store in the town of Sunbury, only about 10 miles away.

They had the belt we needed, and we were quickly on our way back. Upon returning to Bill's car, he made short work of replacing the belt. Using a pair of vise-grips, he bypassed the overflow problem. Filling up the radiator with a bottle of water from my picnic cooler, and getting some extra from a friendly resident (who owned the driveway we were parked in), we were ready to go. Thanking the couple for the use of their driveway, we set out to rejoin the group. We headed directly for Shikellamy State Park and Marina, which was the ending point of the SAAB Romp 2000. The state park is an island on the Susquehanna River, and a terrific setting for the end of the day, parking lot discussions and the like.

While many were staying for dinner at the marina's restaurant overlooking the river, some either made their way home or to our next weekend destinations. A closing comment about SAAB Romp 2000: Deb and Dean Lusby put a tremendous amount of effort into organizing both Spring Romp and SAABtoberfest. Even with all of the planning, the unplanned adds excitement to the event. Deb and Dean have managed to attract a following of enthusiasts who enjoy the spirit and comradery and making new friends along the way. If you haven't attended either event, plan on joining us October 7, 2000 for SAABtoberfest.

### Saabs at Carlisle

by Marc A. Fails

May 19-21, 2000, SAAB enthusiasts joined other import owners, vendors and spectators for the last combined show, before the change next year. The custom compact part of the event will maintain the May part of the calendar, while The Import, Kit/Replicar Nationals will move to September 7-9, 2001. This was the fourteenth year for the show; the custom compacts were added in 1996, and have since continued to grow, much because of the popularity of that segment of the automotive enthusiast marketplace.

This was the first year for "SAABs at Carlisle"; a combined effort by the Central Penn SAAB Club, New Jersey SAAB Owners' Club, the SAAB Club of Northeast Pennsylvania and SAAB Club of North America, to show stronger support for our favorite marque. While the weather seemed to be the most logical excuse for the light turnout over the weekend, we didn't see many of the regulars this year, for whatever reason. Fortunately, the hospitality tent came in very useful. With the support of Lehman Motors SAAB, SAAB Cars USA, Inc., Accelerated Response Motoring, Lititz Auto Service and Swedish Underground, Saturday proved to be a great day despite the weather. SAAB Cars USA, Inc. provided a 9<sup>s</sup> wagon for display, while Lehman Motors SAAB provided a 9<sup>s</sup> Aero sedan.

The SAAB festivities started with lunch for about 30 hungry SAAB enthusiasts, provided by Lehman Motors SAAB, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. After lunch, two awards were presented. The Long Distance Award, provided by Dan Saarony and Accelerated Response Motoring in Scarborough, Ontario, was presented to Norm Crowe, who drove his 9<sup>s</sup> Aero wagon 450 miles from Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Steve Goldberger, who rode as a passenger with Norm, checked in at 449 miles, and couldn't account for the missing mile. Runners-Up were Meg and Jim Hutchings from Hubbardsville, New York, coming 300 miles with their 900 4-door and Jack and Pat Terrick from Coreensburg, Pennsylvania with their 900SPG. An honorable mention was given to Rudy Zweibel and his daughter Leah, from Greenfield, Wisconsin, who were in attendance without a SAAB. Dr. Bill Jenkins, from Carlisle Pennsylvania, having driven his 99 Turbo 2.25 miles to the show, was awarded the People's Choice

Award, provided by Diane and Marc Fails. The People's Choice Award is built around the same intricate formula as the familiar SAABtoberfest "Drool Bucket Award": "Which car, other than your own, would you like to drive home?"

Door prizes were provided by Tim Brown and Kevin Booth at Lititz Auto Service, Lee and Lynn Smith at Swedish Underground, Dan Saarony at Accelerated Response Motoring and Mike Melones and Jim Wilson at Lehman Motors SAAB. Names were drawn from the "BFH" Nordic headpiece, with the help of Nick Brown. The "BFH" was on loan for the weekend from the Phil Lacefield, Jr. "Symbol of Our Collective Insanity Tour" (see nines #244 for adescription). Because of the generosity of the many SAAB related businesses, all in attendance went away with a prize or prizes.



As five o'clock neared, many joined for a short jaunt through rural Perry County, Pennsylvania. Lead by Dr. Bill Jenkins, eight cars left the fairgrounds, heading for Little Buffalo State Park. Perry County's claim to fame is that it is the only remaining Pennsylvania county without benefit of a parking meter or stop light, and the residents like it that way. The use of Family Radio Service (FRS) radios between drivers kept the group together and moving along at a brisk, but safe pace. Stopping at the State Park allowed for a leg stretch and sharing of stories, tales and SAAB lore. With dusk approaching, our group headed back toward the Carlisle Fairgrounds to rejoin several who had chosen to remain, but would join us for dinner. Taking a rather roundabout route through town avoided the car show traffic and congestion and got us to a local steakhouse for more SAAB comradery and a fitting end to a great day.

The Central Penn SAAB Club extends our thanks to all who participated and look forward to seeing more SAAB enthusiasts, and their SAABs in attendance next year.

Photograph by Stephen Goldberger

**Launceston, Tasmania:** With the Prologue just twelve hours away, the "Girlz Kick Butt" team of Teresa Davenport and Cheri Huntoon have already put several hundred Tasmanian miles under their little blue Saab Sonett, preparing pace notes for the stages they will be driving this week. Running down the west coast of the Apple Isle, the pair encountered splendid sunny weather---and more than a few wallabies, wombats, and other fur-bearing road hazards after dark! But they were able to return to Launceston for the scrutineering of the 300 cars that comprise the Targa Tasmania 2000 field without hitting any flora or fauna.

The 1968 Saab Sonett II V4 gets more than its share of glances and starts many conversations---the car was never exported to Australia, and only about 10,000 were made in any of its model designations from 1967 to 1974---but the field has plenty of other exotics, from brand-new Porsche GT3s to special one-off Porsche factory specials flown in from the museum in Stuttgart. Rally legend Walter Rohrl is on hand to drive one of the vintage Porsches.

The Prologue is the only event scheduled for Monday, with the actual rally stages commencing on Tuesday. The Prologue is a special stage run through the streets of George Town; it is used to establish the starting order for the rest of the week. During the Prologue, drivers run flat-out to post their fastest time. Then on Tuesday the field hits the highways with the slowest cars starting first, the faster cars behind them at thirty-second intervals---so the fastest Prologue sprinter is the last to start from Launceston Tuesday morning.

Targa Tasmania is a closed-course stage rally, with various sections of public road blocked off as the rally passes through; there are fifty of these special stages. In between these full-chat sections, the cars proceed with the normal Tasmanian traffic over open roads---Touring sections---to reach the next special stage. The special closed stages provide the most excitement for spectator and driver/navigator crews alike, for all fifty stages must be completed within allowed time limits in order for competitors to take home a Targa



**Navigator Cheri Huntoon stands hidden behind Driver Theresa Davenport**

trophy. Since the faster cars are always overtaking and passing the slower ones, the crowds are treated to a splendid array of machinery, from vintage tin (think Essex and Bentley) to modern iron (think fully-rally-prepared Porsches, Mazdas, and even Lexus), in a context they won't see anywhere else in the world.

Because the #443 blue Saab is one of three all-woman teams, this year the organizers have revived the Coup des Dames, the traditional trophy awarded to the top-finishing all-woman crew. In addition to their race for that honor, Davenport and Huntoon are concentrating on taking home that all-important Targa trophy for finishing within limit on every stage.

"Weather may be a factor," says Davenport. "We chose Yokohama Intermediate tires because they have great grip in the wet, and we do expect at least a little rain. The Lotus tends to get a little loose in the wet, but may have an edge if it stays dry. The Minis are great in really tight sections, but the Sonett may have some leg on it in the longer open stretches. And the Lancia certainly has a brilliant rally history that can't be discounted."

**TASMANIA, Australia, Monday, May 8:** The Prologue run through the streets of George Town was a Porsche romp, with "Gentleman Jim" Richards blasting through today's mist-dampened lanes just a tick faster than Peter Fitzgerald, new GT3 against veteran 911. But our focus was with the All-American Girls: How would they fare in their first actual taste of all-out competition? New engine, new transmission, new team; and

the rain started quietly just before they were to start the 4.2-kilometer dash. Starting out very cautiously, with a time of 4:46.47, they hit no curbs, bent no wheels, flattened no tires, rearranged no real estate, and stayed between the gutters. The two have no intention of joining the half-dozen cars put out of action before the Prologue was over!

In terms of other contests, Les Dames Americaines are running against two other all-woman teams, one in a Category 6 Mazda RX7 (which could be favored unless it rains) and the other in a Category 3 Porsche 356 in the capable hands of a highly experienced Targa Tasmania veteran crew. The two posted excellent mid-field Prologue times, with the Porsche showing the advantages of confident experience.

**The first day** of full-on Targa Tasmania stages ran under brilliant blue skies, and as predicted, Teresa Davenport and Cheri Huntoon found their Saab Sonett to be right at home on the lovely, twisty Tasmanian roads. The first stage was still wet from the overnight rain, but it was an easy lope for the entire field. In fact, it wasn't until the fourth stage leading to the lunch break that any reasonably quick rides scored any penalty time (that is, time over the base time for the stage). The scores put the American women right in the hunt, with the Buckingham/Fitzgerald Porsche taking nine seconds to the Yanks' ten.

The third all-woman team, the Taylor/Vajda Mazda RX7, encountered some difficulty that used up their allowed late time before lunch, but at this point we do not know how that will affect their overall score; they were able to return and posted good scores during the afternoon stages. By mid-afternoon, it had become clear that the Browne/Plenderleith 1969 Lancia Fulvia 1.6 HF is THE Category 4A leader; the potent little rally car, with Peter Brown at the wheel, amassed only twelve seconds in penalties all day!

Meanwhile, disaster threatened the Sonett crew. A slipping clutch had slowed them in the morning sections, but mysteriously

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fixed itself after lunch. However, midway through Targa Stage 8, Lilydale, a bang and a clatter arose from the engine, and it lost power; the car could be heard rattling and struggling on three cylinders as it limped to the finish line. Still, the crew completed Lilydale under the maximum time, taking only a minute and eight seconds penalty despite their difficulties---though now they had no choice but to motor unsteadily onward to the final stage of the day in Launceston. "Keep the revs down," advised crew chief Russ Huntoon, husband of navigator Cheri. "Try to nurse it home."

Unspoken, however, were the dire considerations of what might be ailing the V4. The symptoms were those of a broken rocker arm or shaft, or something else in the valve train---and where do you find parts for a thirty-year-old Saab in Tasmania? The Pit Boys---Huntoon, Guy Recordon, and Satch Carlson---headed for the overnight parc ferme at the Launceston Silverdome expecting the worst---and wondering whether they would even see the little blue car arriving under its own power.

Meanwhile, the women persevered, as women do. Though a suddenly three-cylinder engine needs careful coaxing to get under way---the worst possible stress on a delicate clutch---the crew set off through the Launceston streets of the final stage---and finished under the base time for their fifth "clean sheet" of the day! Then they nursed the Saab to the Silverdome where the gloomy crew stood ready, tools in hand, to pull off the valve covers and see what could be salvaged. Sure enough, there was the intake-valve pushrod for the #1 cylinder flopping free---but not because of a broken rocker or shaft. Instead, the valve-adjusting screw seems to have merely backed off from its proper setting, allowing the pushrod to fly out of place; in a trice all was set right, with valves newly adjusted and locked down tight, new spark plugs in place, and new valve-cover gaskets fitted: a turn of the key and vroom! A healthy V4, firing on all corners, and all's right with the world. The team is still on track for their

Targa trophies, with one more day of progressively tougher stages in the northern climes before heading through the tricky passes of the east coast to Hobart on Thursday.

**Launceston to Hobart:** The Sideling is famous for its tendency to lure competitors into flinging themselves at the scenery; even when it's dry, morning dew dampens the corners, and there are patches where the sun never hits; moss grows on the asphalt. When it rains, as it did on the Sideling this year, it can be a treacherous sluiceway of traps for the unwary.



Driving the "wrong" side of the road while spectators look on

Teresa and Cheri were working from pace notes, but not the ones they prepared last week; their guide to the Sideling and the other east coast stages came from 1996, and there is always an element of doubt when using others' notes. Cheri balanced the road book and the pace-note book in her lap, ready to pitch the latter if it proved unreliable. As it turned out, their strategy of caution proved wise; some ten competitors came to grief in the Sideling, most sliding off into ditches, others fetching up against mud banks.

Teresa felt the back end of the Sonett wandering out from under toward the ditch in one right-hander, but kept her focus on the road ahead, feeding power and meeting the slide with just the right amount of countersteer, and powered out of disaster. "Ooo!" said Cheri, who had apparently re-

signed herself to the Yawning Pit, "Good one!" In fact the Sideling, which had been downgraded to intermediate from dry status, was eventually downgraded to wet. This moved the trophy time from twelve minutes to thirteen (intermediate) and finally to fourteen (wet)---a factor which proved important, because the slippery conditions, even with the wet-gripping Yokohama AVS Intermediates, were compounded by the necessity of slowing for the competitors who had put themselves in the ditches.

Friday is a deceptively easy route that brings the cars back to Hobart for a second night. The weather is forecast as mild, and the girls have prepared their own pace notes for tomorrow's stages, but overconfidence has put many a careless competitor off the sides of relatively easy sections. The times are ever more difficult to achieve with any comfort, and at least one Friday stage features two inter-sections which can easily be overrun if drivers and navigators are not paying strict attention.

**Tasmania:** The final day of stages in the Northern Midlands was cool and sunny, for the most part; fortunately, the Yokohama Intermediates work very well on dry tarmac as well as wet, and the All American Girls spent another successful day working their way toward Targa trophies---but not without a bit of education in the capricious ways of Targa Tasmania. With the little blue Saab Sonett running on all four cylinders again, today's glitches would come from non-mechanical error. First, Cheri called "Right three at T," which Teresa acknowledged---before turning LEFT instead. Coming to her senses, she brought the car up short and turned it around before taking out any bunting tape or stray spectators. But today is not the easy, forgiving structure of yesterday. The maximum trophy time was only twelve minutes flat---and the girls flashed across the line just half a minute from there with a time of 11:28.

Everybody is now aware that any mishap can spell the end of the Targa Trophy quest---but as the confidence levels rise and the competitive urge starts to flow, the



line between mastery and disaster gets thinner and thinner. Teresa found more gravel in one corner than she anticipated, sliding sideways to kiss a dirt bank with both left tires. This excursion probably cost less time than the "Right. No! Your other right" at T, but while awaiting their start time at Longford (home of the erstwhile Tasman Series), other competitors mentioned the peculiar shape of their left front tire. . . somewhat flattish on the bottom. A quick check showed twelve pounds---quickly remedied, but the fast dash through Longford's streets could have been interesting.

The pair handled Longford with casual aplomb, however, and returned to the Silverdome, where their pit boys took the suspect tire off to be broken down and remounted with somewhat less dirt and gravel in the bead. The pair will start tomorrow's jaunt down the legendary twisty mountain roads of Tasmania's east coast with new Yokohamas up front---and a renewed focus on concentrating on the task at hand: 31 more stages, to go over the next four days, each to be completed within the allowed time. No off-road excursions. No deflated tires. No burnt clutches, bent valves, holed pistons, or thrown rods allowed!

**HOBART:** The American Girls are back snug at the hotel, their hopes for Targa Trophies up in smoke---literally. It came pouring from the exhaust of their Saab Sonett after they suffered a holed piston in the next-to-last stage of the day. "Still," said Teresa, "we did as we'd been told: Drive it till it won't go any more." The pair had managed the day's stages in good order, finishing below the Targa Trophy times in every instance, and were

looking forward to the final two days of competition, when the engine went BANG. Nevertheless, though the team's efforts came to a sudden end, the pair had good feelings about their performance during the four days they ran Targa Tasmania. "At least we didn't prang it," said Teresa, noting the alarming number of cars that had finished their runs upside down, off the road, or bent.

**Hobart Finish Line, Targa Tasmania:** The all-woman American team of Teresa Davenport and Cheri Huntoon scored a moral victory this evening as they rolled across the finish line under "pit boy power." Under Targa rules, completion of the event requires that final short journey, no matter how many stages have been missed or completed in the previous six days. A cheer went up from the crowd as the little blue car was pushed across the line by the Team America Pit Boy Battalion. Among the rarest of the Tasmanian entries, evidently the Saab Sonett was never exported to Australia, the tiny blue coupe and its cheerful crew (the grandmother and the schoolmarm) drew admiring crowds throughout their excursion. The assembled throng seemed loudly supportive as the Yanks received their finishing medallions, though of course they had fallen short of securing their trophies.

The Yanks, who were on a reconnoitering mission meant to illuminate details and logistics of Targa Tasmania in order to return with a broader American force in the future---this year the Saab crew was one of only two American teams, the other a Porsche entry from Hawaii that crashed out on the second day---have confirmed several elements of their Targa strategies:

1. Good rain tires remain a critical element

of success. Though 2000 was run in a record Tasmanian drought, the East Coast stages of Day Three were run in a downpour, and the final two days of the rally were so wet that only two stages were run under dry conditions. "The Yokohama AVS Intermediates were great in the wet," said Davenport, "but they worked fine for us in the dry as well."

2. Spare parts for a Saab V4 are nonexistent on the Apple Isle. "We got a scare when we thought we might need a rocker arm," says Pit Boy Satch Carlson. "Then ... they holed a piston ... we're probably going to have to bring a spare engine and transmission next time."
3. Targa Tasmania may be addictive. "We may not be able to come back next year," says Davenport, "but there is something amazing about this rally---or maybe about this whole Tasmanian experience. People keep asking whether we're coming back, and without even thinking about it, I find myself saying, 'Of course!'"

*Photographs from the Targa Tasmania Web Site.*

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It all started in Santa Fe, New Mexico during the media launch of the 2000 Saab 9-5 Aero wagon. Dave Young and I were there with other media driving through the northern New Mexico countryside in the newest iteration of the Saab 9-5, and visiting with John Orth (Vice President, Sales and Marketing) and Kevin Smith (Manager of Public Relations) from Saab Cars USA, Inc. The 9-5 Aero Wagon is a brilliant execution of a luxury sport wagon. To demonstrate the variable boost turbo, Kevin Smith arranged for an all-out, flat-out drag race between the Aero, and wagons by BMW and Volvo. The Aero won.



sion, radar detectors, radios, and other gear. On-Star was added to the car for navigation support.

The 9-3 proved to exceed our expectations over the road and on the track. To prepare for the 4,200 miles of road driving, we added red film over the interior lights to preserve night vision, which we used along with Saab's exclusive Night Panel. The Night Panel is no gimmick – it works as advertised and is a feature overlooked by most of the mo-

toring press. To save weight, we removed the rear seats, and at each track practically stripped the car of everything to lighten the load. Safety was a primary goal, and most of our gear or equipment was there for a purpose, with safety at the top of the list.

Along the way, we were never far from Saab fans. Regional club members showed up at Gingerman, Saab USA showed up at Road Atlanta in force, along with a half-dozen other Viggens lined up in the paddock to intimidate our competitors. Steve Goldberger from NINES Magazine visited and photographed the Viggen in competition at Nelson Ledges. And throughout, Saab owners, fans and aficionados would stop and talk about their car, our car, or just wave and honk at us as we drove down the Interstate.

The event began with practice and qualifying at Gingerman on May 6, and then the first two time trials the following day, May 7. At the drivers meeting, Brock said the qualifying order did not matter. Taking it easy, we put the Saab in the show and qualified 98<sup>th</sup>. We learned later it did matter – affecting our starting order at the subsequent tracks. Our first scored time trials at Gingerman were hampered by transmission fluid left on the track after another car blew a tranny.

At Michigan International Speedway three-quarters of the track, plus the infield road course were used. Our starting order in the back of the pack allowed nearly everyone to compete on a dry track – our trials were made in a torrential downpour. Even so, the Viggen stuck to the wet speedway and rocketed through turns three and four, and onto the front straight



Vince Bodiford (L), Dave Young, and the One Lap Viggen at Michigan International Speedway



The One Lap Viggen taking a high speed corner at Nelson Ledges Raceway.

not giving another thought to it for a few weeks.

I learned that the event would be run in May instead of June as it usually is, and that it would start and finish at Gingerman raceway in South Haven, Michigan. It would run over 4,200 miles of highway, with 14 timed events at 7 racetracks.

As Kevin Smith and I began talking more a few weeks before the start, we finally settled on entering a Saab 9-3 Viggen 5-door, which as luck would have it, was available in a press car leaving service and parked in Detroit, Michigan. A week and a half before the start, we were all committed, and the race to get into the race began. Entered in the Luxury Sedan Class, the Viggen was the only completely showroom stock car in that class.

Okay, maybe the first thing you think about concerning a Viggen is not road racing. But maybe it should be. The Viggen truly is a high performance car, much more than a nice yellow badge on the fender and trick wheels. With complete factory support from Saab, the car was entered and prepared for the event at Saab of Troy. There it was fitted with new Michelin tires and a fresh set of brakes. Dave and I mustered the support of Cabela's, the world's foremost outfitter, to outfit our team with night vi-

at speeds exceeding 145 miles per hour – leaving a rooster tail – and the slower cars – in it's wake.

On the front straight at Road Atlanta, a mechanical over-rev cost us the engine. Lucky for us, Saab was on hand. With typical Saab enthusiasm and teamwork, Saab pulled together and found a donor Viggen at the Norcross headquarters to replace the engine in our car. Even with a blown engine, we were proud that we did not leave a drop of fluid on the track. Four hours later, Saab had installed the new engine and we were back in the show.

For any road course enthusiast, driving on the legendary course at Sebring is a thrill. We used half of the course for the time trials here, but were still denied a clean run due to debris on the track and the wreck of the BMW 2002 in our path.

Virginia International Raceway is the completely rebuilt and newly opened "motorsports country club" in the pristine hills of southern Virginia. The field of competitors began to thin here, with one of the Audi A4's in our class losing its turbo and others failing mechanically. The Viggen was strongest here, with the first

of the two timed events proving to be our best in the whole event – placing 56<sup>th</sup> overall – faster than fully half of every car in the show and finally beating the other BMW in our class, a fully race prepared 535. From Virginia on, that BMW never bested our speed on the track. Not bad for a literally showroom stock car against fully race-prepared competitors.

The contrasts between Lime Rock Park and Nelson Ledges couldn't be more opposing. Our performance at both tracks moved us from near dead-last overall to about 81<sup>st</sup>, which is where we ended up finishing the event at the last two time trials back at Gingerman on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Considering the points lost due to the two DNF's at Road Atlanta and a missed sticker stop, we climbed back to a respectable 8<sup>th</sup> in Class to finish. Brock Yates said we easily would have finished 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> in Class, and about 50<sup>th</sup> overall had we not lost the points at Road Atlanta.

So what about next year? We have already talked to Kevin Smith about competing again next year. We did not give the factory enough time to properly prepare this year, but now there is plenty of

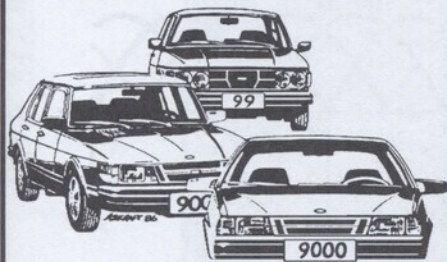
time to talk about things like Brembo brakes, stiffer suspension, three-piece BBS wheels and a reprogrammed Trionic box.

And I think I will also hang onto the Post-It® note left on our panel by the technicians in Norcross after changing the engine – neatly illustrating the shift gate from First, to Second, to Third, Fourth and Fifth gears!

*Vince Bodiford and Dave Young live in Sidney, Nebraska and are automotive journalists and co-hosts of the weekly radio show "The Weekend Drive." Bodiford also regularly evaluates automobiles and writes reviews for newspapers and online at [www.theweekenddrive.com](http://www.theweekenddrive.com). You can reach Vince Bodiford at [bodiford@hamilton.net](mailto:bodiford@hamilton.net) and Dave Young at [dyoung@wheatbelt.com](mailto:dyoung@wheatbelt.com); More information about the team, car, and event are available online. Visit The One Lap of America at [www.onelapofamerica.com](http://www.onelapofamerica.com); Cabela's at [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com).*

*Nelson Ledges Photographs by Stephen Goldberger. Michigan Speedway Photograph courtesy of the Author*

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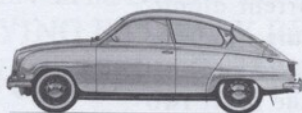
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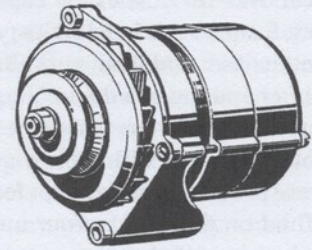
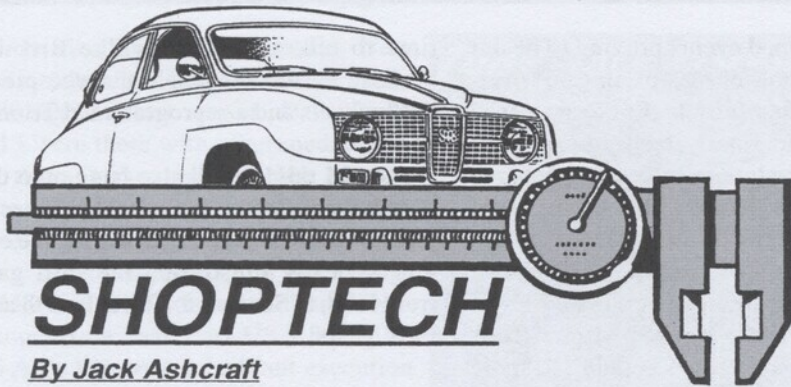
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## THE BOSCH ALTERNATOR FOR THE SAAB V4

The understanding of alternators seems to be limited to replacing the unit if it no longer produces electricity. A sage friend once confided in me that he was quite sure that the internals of the alternator in his British sports car consisted of nothing save blue smoke, sealed in by some latter day descendent of the great English magician Merlin, now enslaved by Lord Lucas, the Prince of Darkness. This man swore this to be true because on numerous occasions the blue smoke had been seen to escape from his alternator and thereafter it no longer worked!

This SHOPTECH series will explain not only what is inside an alternator but also how the parts work and how you can go about trouble-shooting and making them work again. Any incidental contact with the descendents of the fabled Merlin is entirely beyond my control. Good luck.

### PART 1—HOW ALTERNATORS WORK

The alternator is an electro-mechanical device for generating AC (alternating current—like in your house). This current is not useable in the automobile, which requires DC (direct current), so a device called a 3-way bridge rectifier is employed to change AC to DC. The solid line in Fig 1 represents 1/3 the output of the stator windings of the alternator. The current climbs from zero to maximum positive as the rotor and stator windings reach maximum alignment. As the rotation continues, the current diminishes to zero and then the current reverses in the windings and goes to maximum negative value. The dashed and dot-dashed lines represent the current output of the other two stator windings. This rise and fall pattern is called a sine wave.

These windings—electrically 120 degrees apart—are fed to a system of diodes that make up a full-wave, bridge rectifier circuit. The rectifier changes the sine wave pattern to the pulses are all positive, as shown in Fig 2. The remaining irregularities are smoothed out by the inductance of the charging circuit so we wind up with a DC current, which is perfectly useable in the automobile.

Fig 3 shows a diagram of the alternator in schematic form. The rotating (exciter) field windings are fed when you turn on the ignition switch. Current runs through the slip rings to the field windings, which produces a magnetic field around the rotating windings. This magnetic field induces current flow in the stationary stator windings bolted to the outer body of the alternator. Then the bridge rectifier changes the just-produced AC to useable DC current as described above.

Fig 1

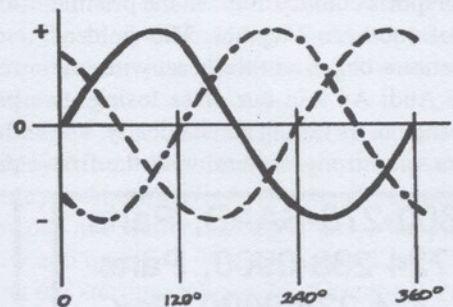


Fig 2

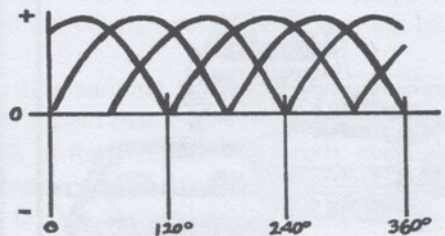
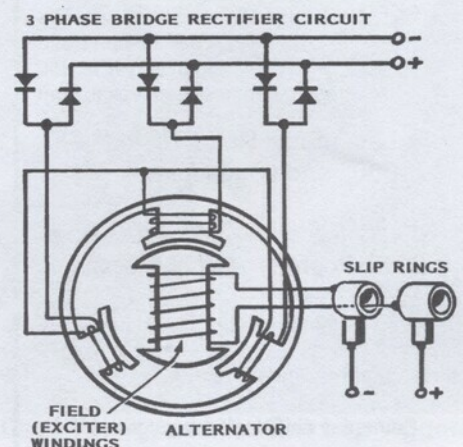


Fig 3





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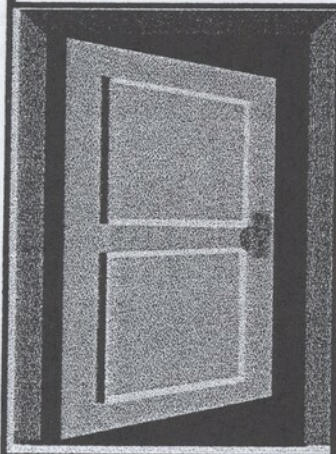
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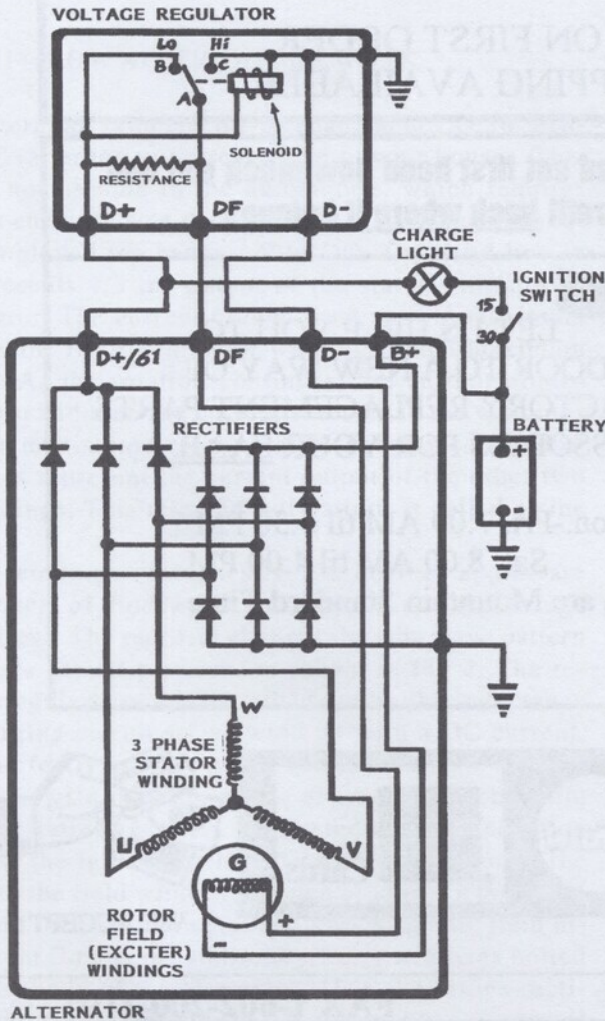
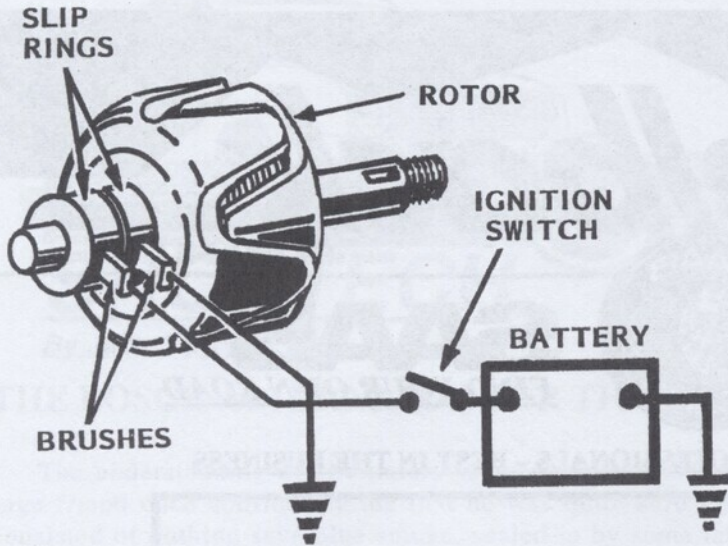


Fig 4 is a drawing of the rotor with its field windings, slip rings and brushes, and the primary circuit that feeds voltage to the field windings to excite it and start the current generation process. Fig 5 is the complete circuit for a typical Bosch alternator, including the voltage regulator, battery, ignition switch and charge light.

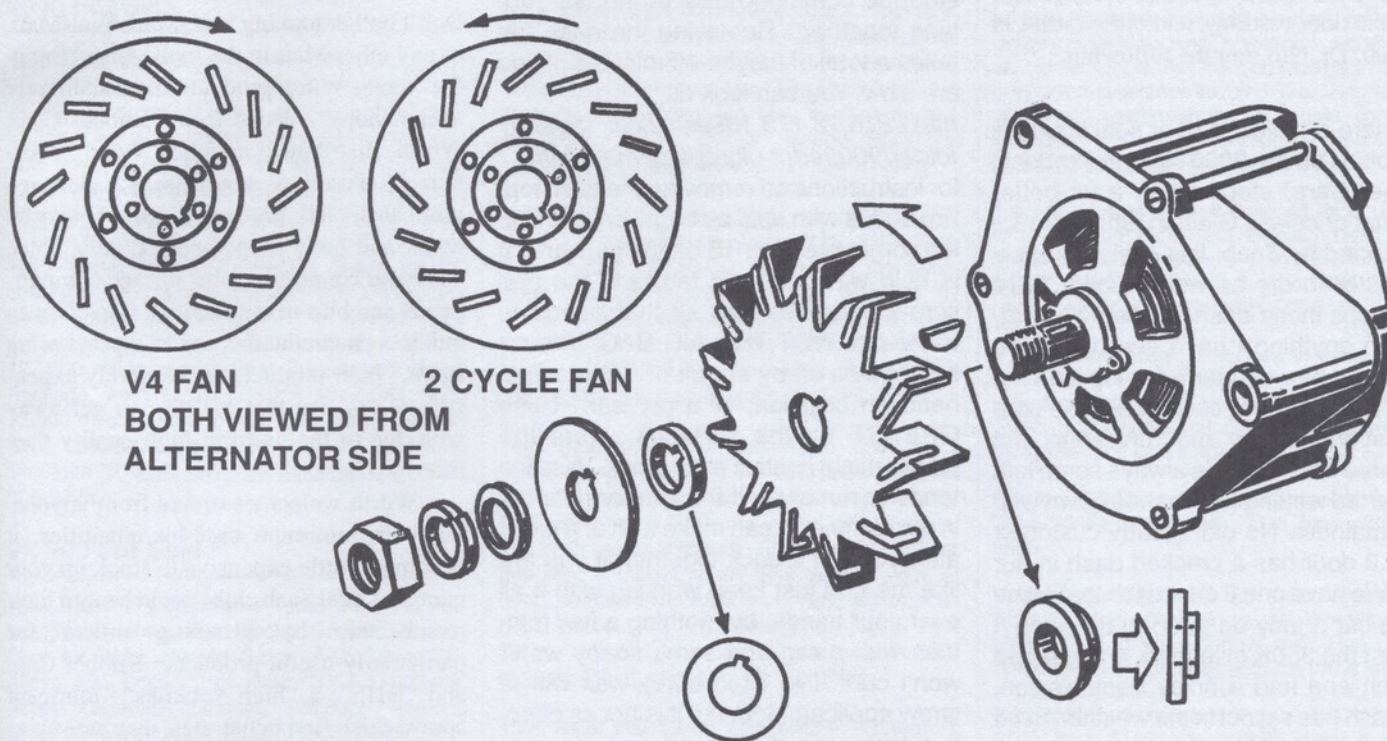
The regulator is designed to prevent overcharging as the rotation of the alternator increases, since the unit tries to charge more and more with increased speed. As the output of the alternator increases, so does the voltage that appears across the solenoid windings of the regulator. At a predetermined voltage the solenoid will energize and move the switch contacts from AB to AC. Field excitation current now has to flow through the resistance, which in turn reduces the current output. At low engine speeds then, the current is carried by contacts AB and at high engine speeds by contacts AC.

It is necessary to understand the importance of the CHARGE LIGHT to the function of the alternator. Under normal circumstances, the iron parts of the rotor hold enough residual magnetism to cause excitement of the field and start the alternator charging. If the car has been in storage or if the alternator has been off the car for a prolonged period, these iron parts can lose their residual magnetism. Without the charge light, the alternator could refuse to charge even though it was in perfect condition! The charge light provides a path for current to provisionally excite the field winding and start the charging process.

It is also important to note that these charge lamp bulbs not be too small. They must be rated at least 1.2 watts for a 6-volt system and 2.0 watts for a 12-volt system. Keep this in mind when you have to replace a burned out charge lamp bulb.

Alternators are sensitive to excess voltage, current or heat. While they generally can operate in an ambient temperature range from -30 degrees F to +150 degrees F, it is important that their fans be installed correctly so air is drawn THROUGH the alternator by the fan. Remember—an alternator does not care which way it rotates EXCEPT that a proper fan must be installed on the pulley end to keep the unit cool.

In 1967-8, Saab used an alternator that turned clockwise (viewed from the front) on the V4 engine cars and one that turned anti-clockwise on the 2-stroke engine cars (Fig 6). The alternator itself can be used on EITHER car, so long as the FAN is correct. Use the wrong fan, however, and you will fry the alternator. Bosch labels their alternators for direction of rotation, (because of the fan required) and gives the maximum current output and other data, as shown.



**Fig 6**  
**EXPLODED VIEW OF V4 FAN**  
**AND MOUNT HARDWARE.**

Electrical connections to the alternator and regulator must NEVER be interchanged in any way or the alternator may be damaged. Battery cables must never be incorrectly connected when a new battery is installed or the alternator can be zapped. An alternator can be damaged if arc welding is done on the car without disconnecting the alternator wiring during the welding process. The earth (ground) connection of the arc welder must be connected to the car frame as close as possible to the area being welded.

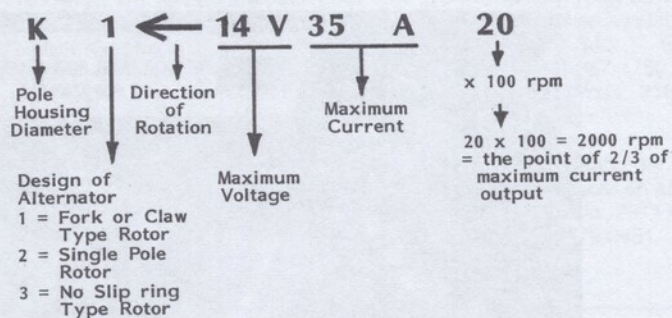
Alternator cooling must not be reduced by the installation of any accessory item, any air deflector plates or other after-market item.

Bosch and most other electro-mechanical regulators must be mounted vertically (see Fig 7). That is, the mounting holes must be at the bottom as shown. Also, the regulator must be mounted in a location where the maximum ambient temperature does not exceed 60 degrees C for solid-state regulators and 70 degrees C for electro-mechanical contact regulators.

**NEXT: PART 2 - TESTING THE ALTERNATOR IN THE CAR**

*Although titled "...for the Saab V4", virtually all of the theory and much of the upcoming diagnosis and repair information is directly applicable to every Saab alternator, from the 96 through the 95. The main difference between later models and the V-4 era alternator is the integral solid-state voltage regulator, which attaches to the alternator body as part of the slip ring assembly.*

-Ed.



**TYPICAL BOSCH ALTERNATOR LABELING**



**Fig 7**  
**TYPICAL BOSCH**  
**REGULATOR**

## Dr. Nio's Saab Klinik

In response to the letter from Mr. Bausch about the door rustlings and other rattles in his 9000, Dr. Nio sent the following.

There are always door seal squeaks and noises on the 9000. Würth Products "Rubber Care" stops those a lot better than that priceless Gleitmo lubricant recommended by Saab. It is easier to apply and faster to dry as well. Rubber Care also keeps those dash cracks away better than anything I have ever tried. We noticed it when we started using it on the 900s. The four door cars would use up a can just on the door and trunk seals, but on a three door, there is always some left. We started wetting the dashes down with the remainder. No old, steady customer with a 3 door has a cracked dash in our shop. We have one 3 door dash that came from a car a lady donated to us when it got past the 350K mile mark and needed a clutch and had a noisy transmission. That dash has sat out in the weather, used as a weight to hold a tarp on an engine, for over two years, and still isn't cracked. Sun faded a bit now, but not the first crack!

I also recommend lubricating dash to

stop the common noise of the bits rubbing together. Removing the dash top takes a total of maybe 10 minutes, if you are slow. You can look at:

[http://216.78.173.139/electrical\\_system\\_folder/9000edubulbreplacement.htm](http://216.78.173.139/electrical_system_folder/9000edubulbreplacement.htm) for instructions on removing the dash top. For 9000s with dual air bags, pry the little left corner plastic SRS badge outward. It is held with a plastic tab, and the one screw underneath is all that needs to come out, NOT THE AIR BAG. The air bag comes off by an act of Congress, a head on collision, or a pry bar. I use GREASE on the surfaces where the pieces might contact each other. Vaseline tends to run away if the interior gets hot in the summer. It can make a bit of a mess after you get it back together, if you are like me and just keep working with it all over your hands, but nothing a few minutes with a rag and some soapy water won't cure. I've used spray wax with a straw applicator too, but it is not as effective as having the top off and greasing any surfaces that rub. In a pinch, for a shorter term fix you can use WD-40 or Rubber Care and let it run into the seams.

Looking for Würth Rubber Care? Don't bother looking in K-Mart, Wal-Mart, or any other Mart in the mall. Like "Snap-On" tools, Würth products are sold directly to the shops. Aside from "Rubber Care, Würth distributes supplies from "Anti-Seize" paste to zinc spray; cleaners, lubricants, and protective sprays; plastic repair and body shop supplies, nuts, bolts, electrical connectors, and storage compartments and bins to put them all into. Not so much a manufacturer as a "purchasing agent," their products are relatively expensive, a practice that Würth can get away with due to the uniform high quality they offer.

Würth welcomes orders from anyone, but with minimum case-lot quantities, it becomes a little expensive to stock up your garage. Local Saab clubs could benefit their membership by grouping orders for particularly useful products. Rubber Care and "HHS", a "high volatiles" lubricant spray which first penetrates, then sets up to a thick, adhesive grease, are two products that I have found to be both useful and unique.

-Ed.

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## 9<sup>3</sup>, 900 For Sale

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**1999 Saab 9<sup>3</sup> Convertible**, black, automatic, 14,000 miles. Excellent condition Black Convertible w/Tan interior. CD in dash, heated seats, Full warranty & roadside service. Moving to London - Must Sell. \$32,000 Pamela Stern, Edgewater NJ [sternpam@aol.com](mailto:sternpam@aol.com) (201) 224-4252

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Note: "TSN" just before the seller's name means a photograph of the item is available at <http://www.saabnet.com/tsn/class/>

**1994 Saab 900S** Convertible, black, standard, 105,000 miles. Last model year with classic body style. Original owner lovingly maintained this vehicle now downgrade to a SUV. Body & paint in great shape. Original top may need replacing. \$10,000. Brad Curlee, Round Rock TX [bcurlee@flash.net](mailto:bcurlee@flash.net) Phone: (512) 244-6343

**1991 Saab 900 Turbo**, black, standard, 65,000 miles. Tan leather, sunroof, power locks/windows, Sony in-dash CD,10-CD changer in the trunk, alarm. Service records available. Serviced by dealer. Cruise control and heated seats need repair. New tires in 1997, new battery & 60,000 service in March 2000. \$10,300 Tina Lee, Houston TX [tina.lee.wg97@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:tina.lee.wg97@wharton.upenn.edu) (713) 975-9605

**1991 Saab 900S**, 4dr., automatic, 208k HWY miles, Edwardian Grey, All accessories for year incl. CD and pwr. sunroof, no rust, newer tires, new brakes F&R, car cover, shop manual and hitch (never installed). GC except: headliner (kid seat damage), small dent leading edge of hood, needs fan for AC to work. 2nd owner w/ all docs. \$4250 or trade for decent mini-van :( **TSN** Rev. Mike Gibson, Indianapolis IN [mgibson@bigfoot.com](mailto:mgibson@bigfoot.com) (317) 209-9594

**1986 Saab 900 Turbo Convertible**. Collector's edition (one 300 made for US) Factory silver metallic paint with black top and graphite leather interior. 5 speed, Clarion Stereo and CD, loaded. 3-point SPG alloy wheels with Michelin Mx4's. 124K miles. \$5,250 obo. Consider trade toward newer 900/SPG model. **TSN** Mike Muennich, Mason OH [muennijm@yahoo.com](mailto:muennijm@yahoo.com) (513) 398-1884

**1985 SPG** Black 5-spd, 270Kmi. Rebuilt trans, turbo, new radiator, steering rack, A arms, dash, more. Service records, CD, Phone. California car, never crashed. \$3500. Fred Anlyn, c/o Terra Linda Travel, 515 Northgate Dr. Suite E, San Rafael, CA 94903. (800) 777-8871 Ext 204.

**1985 Saab 900S** 4-door, lt blue 5-spd., 163K mi, RF fender hit, extra fender included. \$475. Matt Macsek, Easton, PA. (610) 250-8945

## 93, 95, 96, Sonett For Sale

**1969 Saab 95 V-4** Wagon, Special rebuilt & balanced engine. Body and upholstery good. Extra engine, trans, master cyl, radiators, etc. Loss of storage area makes it necessary to sell. Reasonable offers considered. Floyd W Anderson, Sioux Falls, SD 57103 (605) 338-1655 - recorder.

**1968 Saab Sonett**, red, 48,000 miles. Original owner, body and interior in excellent condition, no rust, engine in good running order. \$5,500 Anders Knutsson, Brooklyn NY [andersknutsson@cs.com](mailto:andersknutsson@cs.com) (718) 622-3432

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**1987 Saab 900 Turbo Convertible** Parts Left and right tail light assemblies (complete housing), speedometer cluster (complete housing), new-in-box. rubber molding etc... for convertible. '85 SPG. Complete parts car or very easy restore project new front end, Tires.. Has developed oil leak @ gearbox/engine. ALL gotta go! Moving overseas. Rick Garrison, Naples FL [rjgd4777@earthlink.net](mailto:rjgd4777@earthlink.net) (305) 453-9904

**4 brand spanking new Saab 15 inch** 16 spoke alloy rims from 2000 9-3S. Replaced with 16 inch rims. Fit NG900, 9-3 and 9-5. \$1000 incl. shipping OBO. **TSN** Ravi Menon, London ON CANADA [rmenon@irus.ri.on.ca](mailto:rmenon@irus.ri.on.ca) (519) 672-2946

**5 15" Ronal Alloy** 15 spokes in good and true condition, Almost new exhaust system for '97 900SE. Issues of NINES back to July '87. Sales literature, "Saab Soundings", and other Saab memorabilia. Make offer and take it away. Larry (718) 667-0046

**Clarion CD-Changer** - Trunk mount for 1994 Saab 900SE with cables. Call June, (301) 306-9683

**Various Sonett Parts** for sale: Wiper motor, Starter, Dash with Instruments, Wheels, Blower Motor, Deck glass, Window, etc. Ron Carlson, Spokane, WA, [crb2@uswest.net](mailto:crb2@uswest.net) (509) 487-1388

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**Books & Service Manuals:** 9000 service manual: \$35. 900 (79-98, specify year) service manuals: \$15-\$48 earlier models also available. 9000 hardcover history book: \$40. See [www.books4cars.com](http://www.books4cars.com) or call (248) 357-4750, or Toll Free (888) 380-9277. Alex Voss, 21849 Virginia Dr., Southfield, MI 48076.

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## Wanted

Wanted: Young SAAB Junkie in Minnesota wants a summer car. 99 turbo or ems preferrable. MUST have excellent to mint body good interior, mechanical. Ross Winberg, St. Paul MN [winbeoo3@tc.umn.edu](mailto:winbeoo3@tc.umn.edu) (651) 665-9825

Wanted - Saab Model 93, 95, or 96 with stick on the column in restorable condition or better. Frederick S. Tilton, Littleton NH [ilt@together.net](mailto:ilt@together.net) Phone: (603) 444-5303

Wanted: Seats for 1989 Saab 900 Turbo Convertible. I have the car. What I don't have is a decent pair of front seats for it. The car is mint... My seats are shot. Please help. John C. Hunnewell, South Londonberry VT [kiffaru@sover.net](mailto:kiffaru@sover.net)

In this issue the "Joel Kauffman" saga reveals its conclusion. To those who have subscribed only recently, suffice it to say that Dr. Kauffman doesn't like the 9<sup>5</sup>, to the extent that his review of that model prompted a rebuttal in these pages a year ago. At the time of his previous letter, Dr. Kauffman embarked on a quest to find a better car. He believes that he did find a better car: a Saab 9000! It's amazing how Saab's qualities will hook an owner not just into the brand, but a particular model. "From Two Stroke to Turbo", every model has its following.

In our "NINES Survey" responses, we see how Saab's safety systems - both "active" (preventing the crash) and "passive" (protection during the crash) combine to keep Saab owners sound. Both experiences should be added into the perspective on "crash testing" shown in Saab News. Crash tests aren't "contests". They are most useful for validating the computer models used by all major car makers to design safety into their models. A second use for crash tests is to demonstrate that vehicles meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. As an example of the capricious nature of testing, consider the difference between the "Good" BMW and Volvo, as compared to the "Acceptable" Saab 9<sup>5</sup> in the recent IIHS test: the floor in the Saab buckled upward, pinning the "dummy's" foot. Was this a fluke? Did that particular car have an assembly defect? Does the floor buckle in a car-to-car crash? I'm sure Saab ran this test in their lab, and I'm equally sure they would have modified something prevent its occurrence if the buckling floor had been seen in their lab. The IIHS offset crash test gets a lot of publicity in the US, and every manufacturer wants to do as well as they reasonably can, even if safety is not their priority.

On to exercises which are contests: racing. In an earlier issue, my predecessor Tim Winker decried Saab's lack of support for motor sports in general and those in the USA in particular. Perhaps it was his sage advice, perhaps it was the coincidence of Saab Cars USA becoming profitable and General Motors' full ownership of Saab, or perhaps just "the new century". In any case, Saab took up the challenge of the Car and Driver One Lap of America, fielding a

credible if not competitive Viggen. Misfortune in the form of a blown engine as Road Atlanta pushed the Saab down to the bottom ranks in its "class", but Saab Cars' efforts at least kept the car in the race. On the track, the Saab did well. Vince told me at Nelson Ledges that "A lot of cars that are 'supposed' to be faster - aren't." He thought that "more grip" and "more brakes" would be helpful, but that the car had "plenty of power." But for the Saab to be truly competitive in class, Saab needs to be in a different class. The One Lap classes are based on car type and the original list price of the underlying chassis, not counting modifications. The Viggen's \$37,750 list price barely qualifies it for the "over \$35,000" sedan class. One Lap's rules might allow for a base 9<sup>3</sup> modified to Viggen specs to be a "classmate" of Audi A4s instead of BMW M5s.

Misfortune also befell the team of Davenport and Huntoon in the Targa Tasmania Rally. The rule of racing is that you must finish to win, but the corollary to the rule is that to win, you also must push the machine to its limits.

There are more racing events to cover in upcoming issues. Mike White is campaigning a 1980 99 in PRO Rally competition with the support of Roberti Motorcars, Import Parts Specialists of Boise, ID, City Tire of Keene, NH, Nanuke Systems of Littleton, CO and Nokian Tires. Mike turned in a credible 4<sup>th</sup> in class, 19<sup>th</sup> overall at the Susquehanna Trails Pro Rally (STPR) in early June. NINES advertiser Jerry Sweet did even better, bringing home second place in the same class.

Per Eklund is running under the Saab banner in the European "Rallycross" competition for the third time, having won the series in 1999. In addition, Per will be tackling Pikes Peak in a specially built Saab racing car. Others are out there competing in Saabs, and we make every effort to cover their efforts.

Does this issue look too much like a "mutual admiration society?" In truth, both Jack Ashcraft and Chuck Andrews deserve both the space they receive in each issue of NINES and accolades contained in this one issue. Between the two of them is more years of experience with Saab than I have with breathing. There are many others as well who deserve the "spotlight",

and I hope readers will continue to send in stories about their favorite Saab professional.

Mark Kline is back with a commentary on Dealers' Service Departments. As with his previous article, "Shopping for a Shop" which dealt with independent shops, "Dealing with Dealers" deals in generalities based on Mark's years of experience in Dealers' service departments. The purpose here is to enlighten, not to criticize. By understanding the system which is providing your service, you have a better sense of how to extract the most benefit with the least aggravation. Recognize as well that good service is available at Saab dealers across the continent. I have recently and personally done "everything wrong:" called at 10 AM and requested a warranty repair "by the end of the day" on a car which was purchased not only at another dealer, but in another country. Saab of Thornhill, in suburban Toronto, Canada, took the car in and made it right, and no, I did not use my "Bully Pulpit" as Editor of NINES to extract any special favors.

At the Carlisle Import/Kit Replicar show I had the pleasure of visiting my counterparts at the Volvo Club of America. We exchange publications, and it is always interesting to see what "the other Swedes" are up to. If imitation is a form of flattery, we can be flattered to know that they are looking into ways to add some of the events we hold at our Annual Owners Convention to theirs.

Finally, here is my regular plea about subscriptions and addresses. We were surprised over the past two months to discover errors in updating some subscriptions. The errors were few, but even one is a lot if it happens to your subscription. So we've gone back and instituted a system of double checking - once when the payment is processed (which does not occur prior to the mailing list being updated) and again prior to filing the paperwork which came with the check. Still, it's a good idea to look at the mailing label on your magazine. The issue number after which your subscription expires is on there, and if it doesn't change after you've renewed, please let us know. Do remember though, that when you receive an issue, its mailing label was printed several weeks prior.



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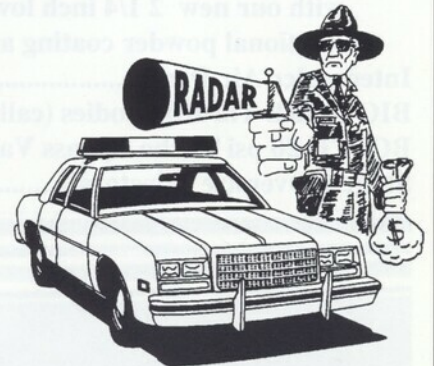
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