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**NINES The SAAB Club Magazine** (ISSN 1530-0730) Issued January, 2002.

**NINES the SAAB Club Magazine** is published bimonthly by the SAAB Club of North America. The SAAB Club is not affiliated with Saab Cars USA, Inc. or Saab Automobile AB.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE** is \$30.00 per year in the US. Please see the form on the inside cover wrap for complete information.

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**Periodicals Postage Paid** at Canton, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to NINES, 2389 Chestnut Hill St. NW, North Canton, OH 44720-5822.

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**Front Cover:** Joanie's Blue Crab Cafe, and 2002 Aero Wagon, Near Everglades City, Florida.

Photograph by Stephen Goldberg

"UnityRibbon" memorial courtesy of Scott Patton and Rodney Stagner  
at <http://www.theunityribbon.com>

**Cover Wrap:** 2002 Saabs at Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Photograph by Stephen Goldberg



## One Person's Opinion

I love Saabs, I really do. In fact, I have been a Saab enthusiast since long before I was ever able to buy one. But I feel that it is the duty and obligation of any self-respecting aficionado to occasionally offer a critique of that which he loves. Indeed, it is because I love Saabs that I find myself wanting a critical article about them. Specifically, my concern is that the Saab of today lacks recognizable brand identity.

In the last few years, automotive variation has become exponentially harder to define. With frequent mergers and the common sharing of platforms and designs across brands, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish automotive brand identity. I'm not talking about demographic identity or where in the spectrum of automotive status a particular brand fills a niche. I'm referring to that special innate feeling all automotive enthusiasts feel about their cars. That knowledge that you belong to a distinct group of people whose ideas about driving and about what they drive naturally mesh. In my opinion, Saab is losing that.

Whenever I see sales figures for Saab as they compare to competing companies such as BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Audi, even Volkswagen, I cringe. Now, I know that Saab should sell fewer cars than those mighty companies, as Saab boasts only a two-model lineup. Yet even within specific model designations, Saab isn't gaining much ground. For 40 grand, why are so many more people buying 5-Series Bimmers, midsize Volvos, and A6 Audis instead of those wonderful 9-5s? As a Saab owner, I'm partially glad of this as it ensures that I will continue to drive something unique and somewhat rare. Yet the Saab lover in me also wonders why these folks fail to realize that they would gain so much value, enjoyment, and practicality if they would only give our favorite Swedish automaker a try. For 40 grand, buyers want to feel that they have bought a heck of a lot more than A-to-B transportation. They want to buy an idea, a way of thinking, and identity for the kinds of drivers and the types of people they want to be. If "most people who test drive a Saab usually buy one," then we're not getting enough people to take a Saab for a spin.

Think about BMW: "The Ultimate Driving Machine." A perfect tag line for an

imperfect automobile. I've driven Bimmers and they are lovely to drive, but try taking a family vacation in one. Drive through a New England snowstorm in one. BMW asks customers to fork over tons of additional dough for CD players and sunroofs because they have successfully created the identity for themselves that their cars are for people who love to drive, and everything else you need to live must be added on. I love to drive too, and my 1997 9000 Aero (which came fully loaded) could take a 540i any day, plus it could drive through 20 inches of snow while carting a college-bound kid and all his stuff in that wonderful hatch. VW has managed to reinvent itself within the last ten years with two simple words and the design philosophy to match: "Drivers Wanted." I like VWs, and I have to admit that they can be a blast to drive. VW has been so successful of late because its publicly stated philosophy, "Drivers Wanted," matches the spirit of the products it is building. Want a \$32,000 family car? You can't do much better than a loaded 4Motion Passat. Audi has its all-wheel-drive and artful interiors, Mercedes has its luxury and panache, Volvo pushes safety, but where does Saab fit in? What is the recognizable Saab identity?

As a Saabophile, I feel as though I once had a clear notion of what the answer to that question was, but fewer and fewer people do these days. I joke with friends that Saabs are impossible to classify and that they are the truest forms of sport-utility vehicles. Safe, efficient, and fun, Saabs have always been cars which make lots of power from little engines, they have always been all-weather cars, they have always been able to cart an antique store's worth of junk around, they have always been kind to the environment and the world's oil supplies, they have always handled like far more expensive sport sedans, they have always been known for ergonomic "quirkiness," they have always been a low-key alternative to status symbol cars, and they have always attracted a dedicated and passionate clientele.

The Saab of tomorrow plans on selling Swedified General Motors Opels and Vauxhalls with console-mounted ignition switches. The Saab of tomorrow already has a vehicle for sport and utility in the 9-5 wagon, yet it may soon sell a jacked-up version thereof with GM's all-wheel-drive.

Where is the sense of corporate mission? Where is the sense that Saabs are about something? My 1999 9-5 wagon is a wonderful and utterly capable car, but I don't get the sense that it conveys any sense of "Saabishness," be it the old Saabishness or a new take on what that should be. Mainstreaming Saab may have done wonders for reliability and it may have even improved sales a bit, but I feel it has cost the company and its products some of the passion the Saab identity once inspired. Saabs continue to offer outstanding value for the dollar, they continue to produce impressive power from efficient engines, and they continue to be fun to drive. They're not very quirky anymore, no matter how many gadgets you can find between the seats.

So, what came first? Did the new Saab cars undermine the old Saab identity, or does a lack of corporate sense of identity manifest itself in the new capable-yet-undistinctive Saab cars? If the new Saab is an edge-less Saab, then that's okay with me. But I'd like to see Saab carve a clear identity from that spot on the automotive spectrum. With the right corporate public message, one which matches its products, I think Saab could take off in an incredible way.

I'm not being nostalgic for Saabs of yore. I am excited about the future of the company and the products of which I have come to be very proud. Opels and floor-started SUVs just aren't Saabs, and they never will be unless Saab solves its two-pronged problem: create a clear and expressible public identity and offer products to the public which reflect that philosophy in everyday use.

I drive Saabs because, for me, they continue to represent the best combination of sport, utility, efficiency, and value in the automotive market. Saabs are complete in that way. So, Saab, build some great cars and send folks a message, both from the driver's seat and from the PR conference room. Saab: find your own future.

Sam Prouty  
Swarthmore, PA

*As reported in NINES, the next 9<sup>5</sup> is predicted to be developed from a new "premium" architecture which will not be used for Opels and Vauxhalls, but rather Saab, Alfa Romeo, Lancia, and possibly*



Cadillac cars. The next 9<sup>3</sup> is based on a more widely used architecture, but the Saab will be the first model based on the architecture to reach market. In this issue's "Saab News" is an indication that Saab's management is making the effort to give the products a distinctive identity and enhance their product offerings. -Ed.

## My Saab Story

### Part I. The Sonett

My interests in Saabs started when I was at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL). I had a friend who had a 1961 model 95 that was never working very well. About this same time, I saw my 1<sup>st</sup> Saab model 97 (Sonett II). This was about 1969 – 1970. I never forgot the cute Sonett II.

I needed some cheap transportation as a college student and bought my friend's 1961 model 95. A junk car dealer in Omaha, Nebraska helped me put the 1961 Saab, with over 100,000 miles on it, in good working order. I drove the model 95 for three years before I traded it in for a more reliable car (1968 Fiat?).

I graduated from UNL, got married, and moved to Grinnell Iowa, in the spring of 1973. This is the most interesting time of my life, "Married Before Children". While living in Grinnell we visited Des Moines a lot. On one visit to Des Moines when I needed some parts for my Fiat we stopped at Lambert's Fiat – Saab dealership. There I got my first look at a Saab Sonett III. The Sonett III had become a nice looking car compared to the Sonett II that I remembered. I had told my wife about this cute little sports car that I saw when attending UNL, and this Sonett was the car I talked about.

We decided to buy a Saab Sonett in the next couple of years. In November of 1974 we found out that 1974 was the last year for the Sonetts and the dealership had only two in stock. We purchased an Emerald Green Sonett on January 24<sup>th</sup> of 1975.

The dealer was very surprised when he found out that we had not test driven a Sonett before the purchase. The first 1000 miles the car was tight, engine and transmission stiff, steering and shocks tight. The 1000-mile inspection was to remove the engine and transmission pans to check

on the wear. The Sonett started to loosen up and became the most fun car I have ever driven. In March of 1976 we moved back to Lincoln, Nebraska where I found a mechanic that fine tuned the engine into a smooth running, quick machine.

The Sonett was given the best of care. It was undercoated when new, at 12 years old and again at 25 years. In addition the car was washed weekly, waxed biyearly, the rubber around the window and doors were protected yearly, changed oil every 3,000 miles and transmission oil ever year. This

car was going to pass the test of time. This maintenance was done religiously for about the first 10 to 15 years.

The Sonett was never used daily, only on special occasions or for a fun drive. The car only averaged about 3,000 miles per year except, for the first 5 years and the 3 years my son used it when he was in High School (1996 – 1998).

The car was completely refurbished in the early 1980s: new cloth for the seats, new paint, new shocks and the steering rebuilt. I entered the Sonett was in some local car

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Left to right: '85 900, Donna Roller, '93 Convertible, Gary Roller, '74 Sonett, Jeffre, '86 900, and Kendra on her '85 900.

shows in the mid 80s, where it turned heads and won prizes, but keeping the car Show Ready meant we could not drive it. We decided instead to use it as a leisure car and not preserve it for shows. The Sonett was too much fun and needed to be driven.

In 1997 the transmission broke, and I searched the Internet for a used one. I found one, shipped it to Lincoln and had it mounted. The used transmission did not have the freewheeling working, and after 6 months it went bad. Fearing this was the end, not having the money to purchase another transmission and having it installed, I got brave and called the person I got the first replacement transmission from to see if he would replace it. After all, he did say if I had any trouble with it to call. He said he would replace it with another used transmission but wanted the two broken transmissions for the used one. We met for the first time in Dubuque, Iowa, and spent only a little time together, a nice person. I am back on the road again with the most fun car I know.

## Part II. The Year of Buying Saabs

It started with Central States Saab Club. I was looking for activities with Saab enthusiasts. In February, 2000 I met Kyle Poppert, and he was interested in seeing my '74 Saab Sonett. He was advertising an '85 Saab 900S 4 Door in his newsletter RESA, and I was looking for a vehicle for my 15 year old daughter. This would be her car when she turned 16 and a great way for her to learn to drive. My wife was the first to fall in love with this fun to drive 5 speed. She was getting tired of driving the '89 minivan. As late winter turned to spring Donna was driving the car more than the practice driving my daughter was doing. Spring was coming and I was finding lots of interesting

Saab web sites on the Internet. Tom Donney Motors looked like a good destination for a spring drive with my Sonett to view Saab village Fort Dodge Iowa. There I met Tom Donney and his used car lot of Saabs.

Donna and I went with Tom Donney and friends to Blä Rok and Donna noticed some nice looking 900T's on Donney's car lot. On the way home from Blä Røk we decided to purchase another Saab for Donna's daily driver, make the old van my daily driver, and keep the Sonett as special use vehicle. In July we bought an '85 900T 3 Dr. Automatic for Donna. July found us driving the 900T and the 900S as the daily drivers and my son needing a car for college and work. He was using his bicycle, the minivan, or the 900S for transportation. In August it was back to Tom Donney Motors; this time we purchased a 1986 900T 3Dr. 5 speed.

Fall found me driving the 900S more than the van, since my daughter was not yet 16. Driving with her to many activities gave both of us an opportunity to know the 900S. Starting in January, 2001 I hardly saw the 900S at all. Daughter was now 16 and on her own. That winter was heavy on the snow side in Nebraska, and the minivan was sliding all over (new tires needed). I was thinking about buying a classic 900T convertible some day, and the thought of nicer weather on the way made the urge greater.

Donna thought a convertible would be fun. In February, 2001 I bought one more Saab, this one a '93 Saab 900T automatic convertible, and sold the '89 minivan. After one year and four Saabs, this is a happy Saab family.

Gary Roller  
Lincoln, NE

## New Saab, and a Question

Well, Grumpy's replacement (Sven Jr., a 1996 9000 CSE) is in the garage. Wow! THIS is a nice car! A wonderful driving machine. I'm still cleaning up the leather, but the rest of the car is in pretty nice shape. The tires are a bit of a mystery: It's got Pirelli P5000's on the front, and P6000's on the rear. Handles pretty nice, though.

One other mystery item: there's some kind of strange bracket screwed to the floor at the rear of the front passenger footwell. The guy that owned it before took delivery in Sweden and drove it in Europe for a couple of years, then brought it back here. It had been serviced regularly someplace in Belgium. Looks to me like it's some kind of rack for a small automatic weapon of sorts. The owner is a now-retired Navy Captain, so I'm sure there's some kind of story here. I'll have to email him and see if I can find anything out.

Dennis Sweeney, who sold me the car, asked me to raise an issue for NINES readers and the master techs. He says he can't keep 94+ 2.3L engines in stock anymore, they go out as fast as they come in. The screen in the oil pickup is a very fine mesh, and he finds sludge buildup is blocking the screen causing loss of oil pressure and engine failure. They're rebuilding one now that has only 57K on it with two ruined main bearings. He notes the catalytic converter is right underneath the oil pan on the 9K. Is it the screen, placement of the cat, the extended oil change interval, or a combination causing the problem?

Mobil 1 oil man, every 3K. How many more reasons do you need to switch? How about a heat shield add-on to protect the engine? Any "hidden" warranties concerning this out there?

Jeff Sutherland  
Mogadore, OH

*This may be a subject for a heat transfer analysis, but without performing one, we have some observations. During normal operation, the amount of heat generated in the catalyst will be proportional to both engine speed and vehicle speed. When a lot of heat is generated, there is also a large flow of exhaust gas to remove it. The oil circulates rapidly at high engine speeds, and there is considerable air*

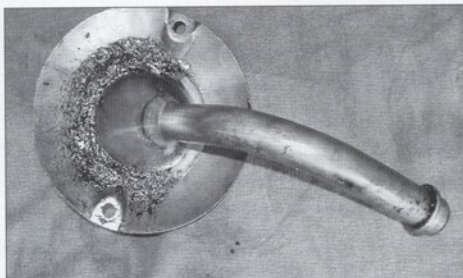




A clogged oil pick up screen from a 2.3 liter "900S". Photos courtesy of Chuck Andrews

flow under the engine. All 2.3 liter engines feature an oil cooler, and higher engine speeds increase the rate of oil flow through the oil cooler.

When the car is stopped, the residual heat in the catalytic converter, due to its relatively small mass, is small relative to the heat capacity of the big lump of engine. For the residual heat, to "cook" the oil, it must first transfer through the thick, heavy cast aluminum oil pan, which is in direct contact with the transmission housing and the water cooled engine block. We notice when doing



A top view of the oil pickup. Note the sludge-like material which has collected.

oil changes that the catalytic converter cools much more quickly than the oil. If the residual heat in the converter were a problem, one would expect the converter to be warm for a longer period of time.

There are other heat sources that may have a greater effect on the oil. The turbocharger, although water cooled, is going to heat the oil. Saab engines spray oil directly onto the underside of the pistons as well. The high oil temperature in these locations means increased oxidation rates, which shortens the time before sludge forms. Long drain intervals are, therefore, more suspect than the placement of the catalytic converter in our opinion.

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# Ramblings and Demands

by Phil Lacefield Jr.

## Perspectives

There I was, cruising along I-80 across the barren wastelands of Wyoming, Nebraska and Iowa, trying for the second time in less than a year to drive a former Carl Nation 900 from Orem, Utah to Ohio – this time an '87 convertible of excellent quality and pedigree. The brand-new top was down, the sun was shining, the roads were relatively deserted and the mileage was increasing with every gas stop I made. This trip, while spectacular in its desolate beauty, wouldn't be much out of the ordinary for even myself, who has experienced numerous trials and tribulations in getting Saabs back from various places cross-country, except for one unique element: the date. It was September 18, 2001.

Like everyone else with a pulse that day, the events of New York City and Washington, D.C. were still fresh in my head. Again and again I continued to replay the horrific scenes in my mind, never quite comprehending the brutality of what had occurred. The days since had been long and difficult, with concentration waning and everyone I worked with bumping into walls from the prolonged shock of what had happened.

Surreal as the past week had been, this particular long-distance drive was a much-appreciated break from the torturous days before. Everyone alive on the planet that fateful fall day will have their very own "where were you when" tale to tell future generations. I, however, will prefer to tell the "where was I the next week" story. After having to cancel a business trip scheduled for September 12, I managed to get my family on a plane to Salt Lake City the very day our airline system kicked itself back online. Since my ticket was on a different airline than the two Lacefield ladies, I managed to get into SLC with only a nine hour delay, while their unfortunate trek took three different airlines and almost 24 whole hours to complete.

Airline security was tighter than this seasoned traveler was used to seeing, but not overpoweringly so. The biggest difference I noticed from my uncountable business flights of the past year was the overwhelming sense of a mild panic among the travelers, a feel of "Will my flight be next?" and "How safe am I

out here?" Tension was very high at all service counters and gates, and I traveled that day with the certainty that my future flights would never have quite the same feel to them.

After barely a day to get the 900CV ready for its 1500-mile slog, I set out pointed east with a pile of CDs next to me and no need for a road map. But this drive turned into something much more than a simple go-get-'em trip; no, this time I noticed along the way flags draped from practically every overpass along the entire length of I-80; truckers gathering at truck stops to huddle, exchange news and then back slaps and words of encouragement and patriotism with virtual strangers. I witnessed random acts of kindness, from travelers picking up trash in rest stops "because it needs doing" to total strangers helping push an out-of-gas Mazda into a gas station, then pooling their dollars to help the driver, an airline passenger from Seattle who was attempting to drive home with no money, buy a full tank of gas and a hot meal. In all the years I've been traveling for business and pleasure all over the world, I have never seen such amazing acts of solidarity and support. We are a fortunate people, to be surrounded by such beauty.

This made me all the more happy to get in the convertible and start driving. Taking a car out on the open road entails its very own set of dangers, many of which include threat of certain death from random lunatics piloting massive vehicles in unsafe and unpredictable manners, just like the airline industry. But what makes driving cross-country so much more special in my book is the overwhelming freedom of it all. Freedom to take any exit you like, or none at all. Freedom to take the road less traveled, via byway and scenic route, through tiny towns and deserted burghs. Freedom to choose what music is best suited for that particular chunk of tarmac, even if it's the simple music of tire noise. Freedom to control your own destiny, to point your car in a direction of your choosing and arrive at your destination exactly when you feel like arriving there, come hell or high water. And, most importantly, the freedom to live or die by your own terms, not at the hands of a band of fanatics who have decided to use you as a tool to punish others.

My heart goes out to those who perished in the World Trade Center and Pentagon

attacks, and at the same time rejoices that none of our precious community of Saab friends were directly affected. I especially feel for the passengers in those planes, riding along helplessly to a course not of their choosing and meeting their fate at the hands of others (with the remarkable exception of the heroes on the Pennsylvania flight, who showed bravery to which I can only aspire.) These commuters will never again know the joy of scooting along their favorite road with the top down, wind in their hair, loud music and good times with friends and family. The thrills of a decreasing-radius curve or the tranquil beauty of the Coastal Highway are lost to them forever. Yet there I was, cruising at near-triple digit speeds, enjoying the wonder that is America. Where was the justice in that?

It is for them, in their memory and in their honor, that I will continue to enjoy these things and to pay tribute to the freedoms that I have so far taken for granted. I encourage us all to do the same – continue to do the things we love the most, remember and appreciate our hard-earned freedoms, and never, ever forget those who cannot do the same.



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### Amateur Archaeology

I think that all old-car guys have a somewhat recessive gene that otherwise would have put us in the position of those who hunt out treasures in the Pyramids and such. Case in point: I stripped the interior out of my 1974 99 Combi-Coupe this weekend and found many relics of its past. From gas station receipts to band-aid wrappers, all remnants of its past lives in Holland and travels throughout Europe for 27 years before getting on the boat and coming stateside, these were not just trash. They were a record of the car's past.

I clean out numerous older cars and not just Saabs at that. Finding a matchbook from a fancy restaurant in California or a 1979 road map of South Carolina under the back seat is not something you merely throw out and continue on. They tell a story about the car you are driving or restoring. Moreover, these sorts of relics tell stories about the people who once owned your car, and looked at it less as a collector's item or funky old car and more as their mode of

transportation, or their leisure-time fun vehicle. The story of my 1972 96V4 is a similarly interesting one. It was sold new at a SAAB dealer not 40 miles from here, bought back some years later for the dealer principal's wife as her own personal car, then relegated to storage until I purchased it some years later. Like many cars in this area, for obvious reasons, this 96 was fitted with air conditioning at the port or at the dealer at the time of prepping for new sale. While pulling the AC console down for some dashboard wiring work, I found a wadded up newspaper wedged in between the AC and the dash, ostensibly there to solve a rattle. It was dated July, 1972. I pulled it apart and read the breaking news, only 29 years too late. Soon, I realized that 20 minutes had passed, and I put it aside and continued working on the car.

Many of you may be cleaning up or even restoring your older SAAB this winter, or thinking about a project to get ready for next year's convention in Ohio. Taking time to do the job correctly is paramount, including having the right parts and the

right service information to do the job once and do it right. But taking the time to better understand the car you are working on and enjoying a part of its past will better help the art of the personal restoration you are doing. True, much of a concours-quality job is nuts and bolts and hard line reality as you contemplate what will make the car drivable while true to its past. Many of you devoted to your cars are inclined to do this sort of work. But all of us, to varying degrees, are inclined to do modifications for either modernization or personal reasons. This is not to be discouraged either, and it would seem to segue into what I have been saying this entire time. Enjoy the task ahead of you, and enjoy the car and its past. Understanding this will help you better grasp the fundamentals of the job without it turning into a cold hard job instead of a 'vehicle' for pleasure and relaxation. And as you need help or just want to discuss that note you found in the seat pocket with me, I'm here for you.

*Email or write us of your favorite "archeological" find! -Ed.*

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## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Recently, I was reading an article in the Northern Automotive News (Oct. '01 issue) about convenience stores and discovered some interesting facts. The article stated that if you bought gas recently, the overwhelming odds are that it was purchased from a convenience store. 79.5% of the gasoline sold in the U.S. is purchased at one of these stores. Self-service gas started in 1947 but the "Energy Crisis of 1973" really spurred its growth. In 1971 only 6.8% of the convenience stores sold gas but as of today 78% sell it. 48 states have self-serve gas with only New Jersey and Oregon requiring full-service. These statistics got me thinking about service and service stations.

When I was in High School in 1959, 60 and 61, I worked evenings at a Standard Oil service station. I pumped gas and did all the things that we were required to do back then. I remember one customer with a '49 Chevy who came in once a week and bought \$1.00 worth of regular gas. He had me check the oil, anti-freeze and air in all four tires. By the time I washed the windows and checked all those things, I had a workout. While checking these items, I was trained to look for needed services like:

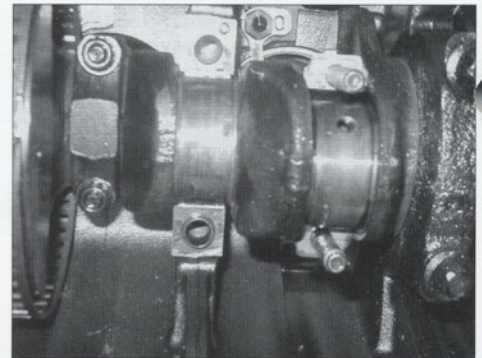
- 1) Low or dirty oil. Was it time for an oil change?
- 2) Low anti-freeze. Was there a leak or did the car need a water pump or hose replacement?
- 3) Tire condition. While I checked the air pressure, were the tires okay?
- 4) Window Washing. Are the wiper blades in good condition?

In those days, a grease job and/or an oil change was accomplished usually every 1,000 miles. Tires typically lasted about 10,000 miles so there was a definite market

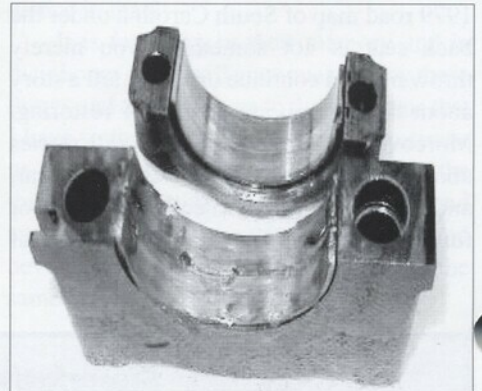


This full service station was built in the 1920s according to the "Pure Oil" design standard.

for that service. Of course, our "service station" made some money by pumping gas, but most of the profit was made in the service bays. In the station where I worked, one bay was used for car washing and the other was used for light service work. In a



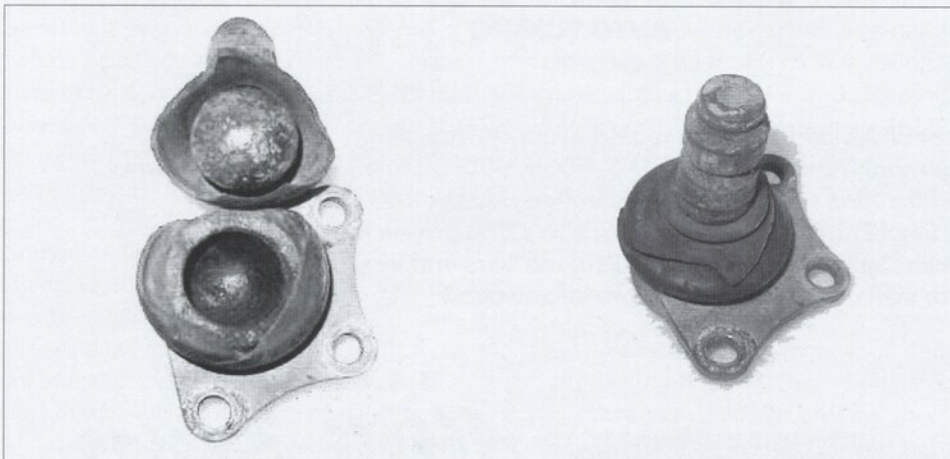
1996 900S with 30K miles. Crankshaft showing a main bearing journal(left) and rod journal (right). The main bearing journals are junk. They have been overheated and the metal galled, scored etc. from lack of lubrication.



Main bearing cap showing bearing insert worn into the backing material. The wearing surface is long gone. The main is all copper colored, (totally destroyed), and the rod bearing is near normal in appearance, (dull gray), with the appearance of normal wear.

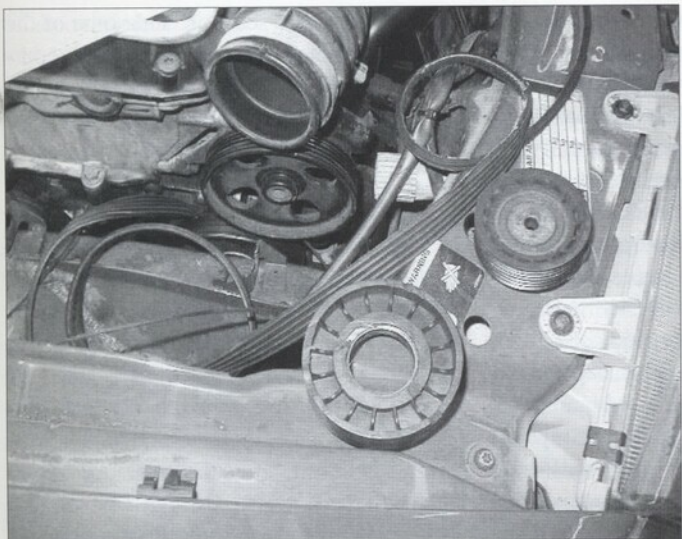
sense, we provided a security blanket for the car owner if we did our job. I'll bet there are a number of you who had your "start" in car care by pumping gas like me. On the other hand, I'm sure there are some of you who don't remember ever seeing a real, full-service station.

Linda and I found this full-service station in Moose Lake, MN, which is located not far from Tim Winker's house at Bear Trap Junction. Tim lives about 6 miles from Twig which is "just past the sticks!" In our state, self-service is the **rule** not the exception. You might have to go a long way to find full-service. This quaint gas station was built in 1928 (Pure Oil design). It had an outside open pit for grease and oil service. It must have been brutal working



Ball joint from a 1989 9000CD with 159K miles. Notice the torn boot that should keep the dirt and water out (right). Ball joints should be inspected at least every 5000 miles (when the tires are rotated) and any with torn boots should be replaced at once. (Left) With contamination and wear, the ball pulled out of the socket, allowing the tire and wheel to fold in under the fender. The ball and socket are all rusty with no evidence of any lubrication. A crash was the result. It is a Saab so there were no personal injuries.





1996 900SE with 66K miles. The large idler pulley is supposed to have a bearing in the middle like the smaller pulley in the photo. The bearing seized breaking the plastic pulley which destroyed the belt whose remnants are still jammed behind the water pump. A no drive situation!

on cars outdoors during a Minnesota winter! Sometime in the 1930's the bays were added to the station. The current owner is Duane Anderson (a Swede, of course). He started working at the station while still in High School and has been there for 42 years. He may retire soon, but I would think that Ron Isaacson looks like he may be next in line and maybe Aron Broker will follow in his footsteps. It looks like the station has been full-service since its inception and will remain so as long it is open for business. When we arrived, Linda drove our 9000 up to the pump and Aron immediately appeared to pump the gas for her. She popped the hood, and he offered to check the oil just like in the "old days!" While Aron took care of our car, another vehicle arrived at the pumps and Ron came out to serve that customer. Everything was done with a smile and some banter. What a treat! We've gotten rid of full-service to save a few of cents per gallon. Here the service costs nothing extra at \$1.13 a gallon. On our way out of town, we noticed that we could have paid the same gas price just a block away at a convenience store.

Your Saab may have an oil and/or brake fluid level warning light and maybe even a coolant level warning light, but it really takes more of a look than that! Next time you gas up, look around and see if anyone in sight has a hood open. If the drivers don't check things over, who will?

There is no cheaper or easier way to preserve the value and reliability of your Saab than to check the fluids and tires regularly. Other NINES columnists and I have written for years about these simple tasks. The pictures provided of the broken and worn-out parts were taken in November but could've been taken 40 years ago. The same failures still happen today and many are caused by neglect. If

you have trouble remembering or need a reminder to have the regular mechanical service performed on your car, you can obtain

a free web page from our web site at [www.andrewsofprinceton.com](http://www.andrewsofprinceton.com) or one of the other service providers. The page will have all the safety recalls for your Saab and the Technical Service Bulletins listed. You could then receive an e-mail reminder for oil changes and other scheduled or recommended services.

Come on now! It's easy! Make your New Year's Resolution. "I resolve to open the hood and check the fluids on my Saab. I'll also check the air pressure and condition of my tires often!" (Maybe even the space-saver spare, Stephen?) If you don't know how to check the fluids, look in your owner's manual or ask your friendly technician who will be more than happy to point out what needs to be looked at.

Have a safe and prosperous New Year. One more thing. I'd like to share the following email. We are pretty proud to be chosen.

To: <[chuck@andrewsofprinceton.com](mailto:chuck@andrewsofprinceton.com)>  
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*And congratulations from NINES! -Ed.*

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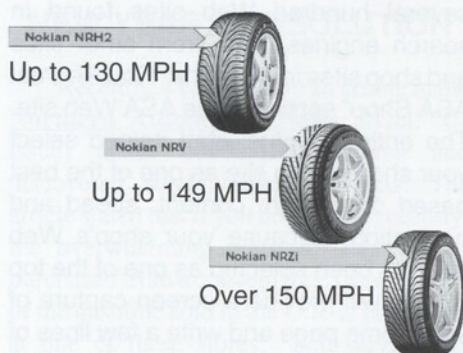
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Nokian Tire Company has redesigned their line of summer tires over the past few years. Starting with the NRV from about 1999, the NRH2 from around the beginning of 2000 and the NRZi this past summer, Nokian covers the range from moderately to extremely "sporty" with a line they call S3: their 3 summer tires. These tires seem to be variations of a common theme, rather than being distinctly different products. All feature directional treads, with continuous diagonal ribs emanating from a central circumferential groove, culminating in lateral shoulder "blocks". In the case of the NRV and NRZi products, the circumferential groove is offset laterally toward the outer shoulder, resulting in tires which are not only directional but also asymmetrical. One buys NRV and NRZi in "left side" and "right side" versions. The cross sipes which are quite prominent in the advertising copy for NRV and NRZi are in reality quite shallow, and are barely visible in the photo showing a brand new NRV on our Saab. Tires with an aspect ratio of 55% and below feature "rim flange protection", a ridge molded into the sidewall just out from the bead seal to help protect the wheel against curb scrapes.

The NRH2 and NRZi feature Nokian's "Driving Safety Indicator." Numbers are molded in the tread which indicate the remaining tread depth by wearing away in sequence. The NRZi circumferential groove is a twin groove surrounding a circumferential rib, and the sidewall contains a disk which changes color as the temperature approaches the freezing point. The entire S3 line uses what Nokian calls "Termo Silica" tread compound, which maintains flexibility and traction at low temperatures, and the NRV and NRH2 share the

UTQG (Universal Tire Quality Grade) rating of 280-A-A. All the tires in the S3 line feature rayon cord bodies, with twin steel belts and a "Jointless Nylon Belt" overlay. Nylon overlays between the steel belts and the tread are almost always used in tires rated as "H" (130 mph) and above. Nylon has a negative temperature coefficient, contracting as it becomes hot. This counteracts the tendency of steel belts to expand as they become hot, and thus a tire with a nylon overlay is less susceptible to tread separation. Rayon tire cord maintains its stiffness and strength at high temperatures better than polyester tire cords, and therefore rayon is generally used on the highest performance tires. To my knowledge, Nokian is the only manufacturer still using rayon cord on "H" rated tires, and manufacturers are increasingly using polyester cord on "V" rated tires (149 mph).

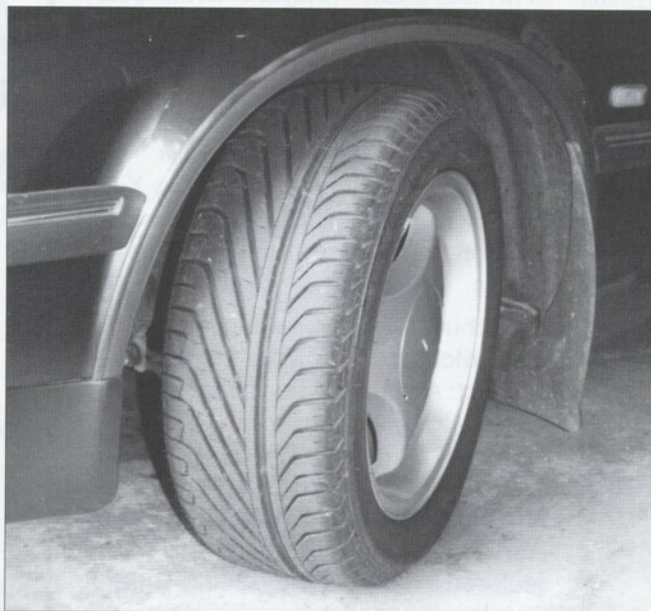
As background, let me state that for most of the past 13 years I have driven Saab 9000 models, with tires from Pirelli, Dunlop, Bridgestone, Goodyear's "Kelly Springfield" subsidiary, Michelin, and Michelin's "BF Goodrich" subsidiary, as well as winter tires from Continental's "Gislaved" subsidiary and Nokian. Tire sizes I've previously driven on include 185-65-15, 195-65-15, 205-60-15, 205-55-15, 225-50-15, and 205-50-16, with speed ratings from "T" (118 mph) through "Z" (over 150 mph). I have driven many of the

brands through 4 seasons, and some of the "M&S" labeled tires have actually performed worse in snow than some of the tires not so labeled. My current Saab is a 1997 9000 CSE.

I had been driving on Nokian NRH2, size 205-60-15, for the better part of a year, including through the winter months (more on this later) when Nokian offered a set of NRV tires for evaluation. Saab Cars USA facilitated the test by contributing a set of "Super Aero" 16 inch rims for the test. Thus, I was able to extend the comparison to include the 205-55-16 size, which was standard equipment on the 9000 "Aero" and the 1998 9000 CSE. Both 205-55-16 and 205-60-15 have the same load rating and rolling diameter. This means they require the same inflation pressure, and neither introduces speedometer error.

I was able to perform a "Thumb Test" to a range of different Nokian Summer tires: that is, I pressed in the sidewalls of deflated tires with my thumb to get an idea of the sidewall stiffness. In every case, the "bead filler" area (the part of the sidewall close to the rim) was very stiff, as was the shoulder. The width and softness of the sidewall between the bead filler and the shoulder then varied according to the speed rating and the aspect ratio (the ratio between the width of the tire and its height) of the tire in question. NRV tires in 205-55-15, 205-65-15, and 205-55-16 sizes, and NRH2 and NRW in the 205-60-15 size, were available for "the Thumb". The lower profile "55% aspect ratio" tires were quite stiff, but the tall "65% aspect ratio" NRV had a surprisingly soft sidewall; it was softer than the 205-60-15 NRH2. One tends to believe that the "softer" the sidewall feels, the softer the ride will be and the less precise the handling will be. I am certain that is an oversimplification of tire design, but the tendency is certainly there.

Compared against the whole range of summer and all season tires with which I have experience, the part of the Nokian S3 family I have tested ranks right at the top. The NRH2 in the 205-60-15 size offers a very smooth ride: well damped over sharp imperfections and with the ability



Nokian NRV tire, mounted on a "Super Aero" rim and installed on a Saab 9000.



to accommodate an irregular road surface without jarring. Despite the smoothness, the tire handles well, with a light steering feel and relatively little squeal on hard cornering. The tires were mounted on 7 inch wide rims, which are one inch wider than the standard 9000 wheel. This has the effect of stiffening the ride slightly and improving the handling slightly, as compared to an installation using the standard 6 inch wide rims. Driving on the NRH2 at high speeds in heavy rain was no problem.

The NRV tire in the 205-55-16 size retained the damped feel of the NRH2 over sharp imperfections, and in that regard they were better than the original-equipment V rated 15 inch Michelin tires. To be fair, though, the original tires were essentially worn out, which can increase harshness. In terms of handling, the NRV

in the 16 inch, lower profile size is quite a bit better than the 205-60-15 NRH2. I evaluate this based on the perceived level of control when, for example, I am driving hard through an expressway on-ramp. The 16 inch NRV maintains steering precision beyond speeds at which the 15 inch NRH2 becomes vague. The handling comes at a price, however. Although the NRV are well damped over sharp imperfections in the road surface, the ride over undulations is quite firm, and over some washboard surfaces can even be jarring. The NRH2 tends to absorb such roughness. Part of the handling improvement and the ride firmness is due to the aspect ratio of the tires. An NRV in the same 205-60-15 size as the NRH2 I tested, would most likely perform somewhere between the NRH2 and the 16 inch NRV.

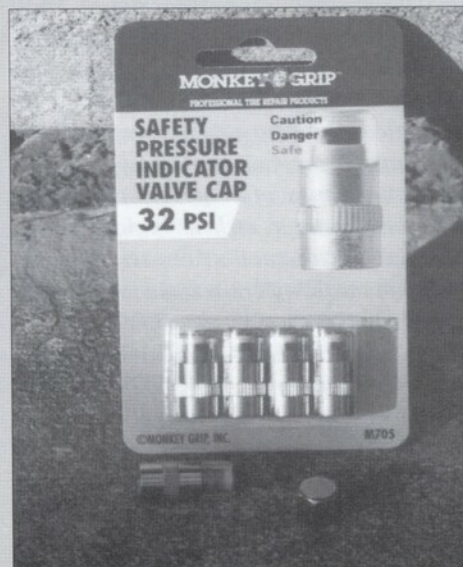
Reference was made earlier to using NRH2 tires in winter weather. The Nokian tires covered in this report are described as "summer tires", but they use a tread compound said to retain flexibility and traction at below-freezing temperatures. Although the NRH2 tires are marked "M&S in North America" on their sidewall, neither Nokian dealers nor company representatives encourage their use in snow. Their concern is well founded. While careful driving in light snow and slush was not a problem, the level of traction in those conditions was not very high. I had access to a third car with true winter tires, so when the weather became severe, the Saab stayed parked in the garage. That will not be the case this winter. Nokian winter tires will be on the Saab. No doubt I will have something to say about Nokian's winter tires next spring.

## Tire Pressure Indicators

Hopefully by now we are all aware how important it is to establish and maintain correct tire pressures. The indispensable instrument in performing this task is the tire pressure gauge. It may be the electronic gauge that we prefer, a high quality "bourdon tube" dial gauge like the one we keep as a reference standard, or a simple pencil gauge which has been calibrated against a gauge of known accuracy. Tire experts recommend checking pressure at least once per month, and remind us that a tire loses about one psi of pressure for each 10° F of temperature drop.

Those who routinely check tire pressures are still subject to punctures, valve leaks, or rim leaks which can cause tires to slowly lose air. Unless this were to occur just before one's routine pressure check, even a conscientious driver is likely to drive some distance on a dangerously underinflated tire. That is because a modern, low profile radial tire does not appear to be underinflated until it is very drastically short of air. Vehicles with extended mobility, or "run flat" tires are always equipped with an electronic dashboard warning to indicate an underinflated tire. These systems can be purchased by anyone and installed on a vehicle, but the relatively high price tends to discourage it.

A relatively inexpensive "gadget" that fills the role of an expensive tire pressure monitor is the "Safety Pressure Indicator Valve Cap." Sold in our local K-mart under

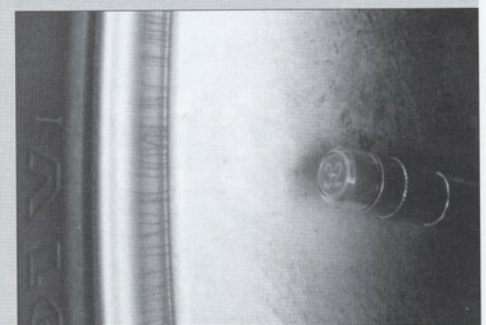


the unfortunate brand name "Monkey Grip", this device uses the tire pressure to move a spring loaded, green colored sleeve within a clear cap. The sleeve covers red and yellow bands, which then become visible as the pressure drops. When used as instructed, the driver can determine at a glance whether a tire is dangerously underinflated, because a yellow (or yellow and then red) band will be visible.

The Indicator Cap is not a substitute for regular tire pressure checks, as the instructions clearly indicate. First, the claimed setting is 32 psi, a value which does not equal the recommended inflation pressure in all cases. The package implies that the product is made in several different

pressure settings, but only the 32 psi model was on the shelf. Second, it fails to indicate overinflation. Third, the indicator is incapable of displaying slight underinflation of two to four psi, sufficient to impair fuel economy and tire longevity, but not so low as to be dangerous. What the cap does is allow the driver to quickly visually determine that the tire pressures are safe.

Before putting the caps on all of our tires, we equipped a single tire with one. After a two week period, we measured all four tires, and verified that the tire with indicator cap maintained its pressure as well as those with a standard metal cap. It did. One caution is that breaking the clear plastic covering may well result in the loss of air pressure. This is powerful reason to make a rule of checking all four caps before driving away if the car is equipped with them. For the \$10.00 or so that a set of four indicator caps costs, we consider it to be a worthwhile investment in driving safety.



Pressure Indicator Cap shows "all green" for pressures above 30 psi.



# Enhanced 9<sup>5</sup> Driving Report by Norma and Stephen Goldberger

Last October 12, we had the pleasure of attending the SAAB press release of the 2002 enhanced 9<sup>5</sup>. Our flight seemed to come with minimal additional security, and our plane was 100% full since so many flights had been canceled. SAAB representatives met us at the Atlanta airport and accompanied us outside where we were driven in a bright red Viggen to our downtown hotel, the Georgian Terrace. The driver happened to be the father of the transportation service's owner and a furniture manufacturer's sales representative. As we talked he told us we had to be from the Midwest, where Steve probably relaxed by changing the oil on his car by himself and building a deck in his spare time. Bingo. He sure got that one right. He said we were not typical of the other journalists he escorted for the introduction.

Gathering at the King Plow Art Center in Atlanta, Dan Chasins, President and COO of Saab Cars USA, Inc., introduced the meeting, giving an overview to the press about the 9<sup>5</sup> in particular and about Saab in general, including their philosophy, business plans, and recent accomplishments. That was followed by Simon Padian, Lead Designer of the Saab 9<sup>5</sup> program, who went over the enhancements to the 9<sup>5</sup> in detail.

The reception both before dinner and during dinner included Swedish cheeses and delicacies. Cloudberry, for example, comprised one of the desserts and also a hot mildly alcoholic drink called clög (pronounced clug). Dinner was in a downtown art gallery where we gazed at Erik Carlsson's restored Monte-Carlo winning

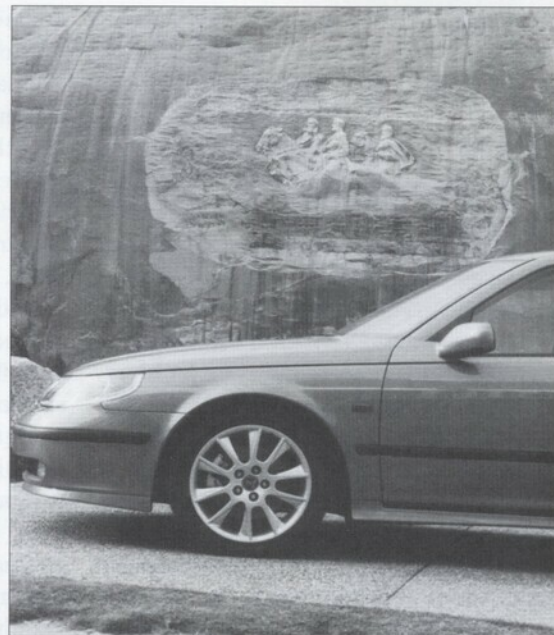
96, number 283, saw a film on the new features of Saabs and heard Erik tell some of his many famous stories. He particularly seemed to enjoy talking about flipping his Saabs over and winding up on the roof.

The hotel suite included a full kitchen, washer and dryer, TV sitting room and bed with a feather comforter. It seemed to be a condominium. We were however up several times in the night, from a car accident outside of our window, a little later a fight, and then later still someone shouting a speech. The hotel was also next to a hospital with its ambulance sirens. It didn't help that my mother's cardiac by pass surgery had been rescheduled for the same day.

The next morning we were given navigation routes and 2002 cars to drive. The navigational maps were excellent telling us precisely when to make our turns with the distance precisely calibrated. Our first stop took us to Stone Mountain where we stared in awe not only at the engravings of Confederate Generals and their horses etched high into the mountain but also at the Aero set in front of the mountain. We were treated to the ski lift which took us to the top of the mountain which had numerous explanations of the geological formation and mountain flora and fauna.

We've complained about the somber color palate that Saab has used in recent years, and we are pleased that brighter colors are available in 2002. Cosmic Blue (almost as bright as the Viggen's Electric Blue) is back after a hiatus, Laser Red and Sun Green return, and Polar White (a cream colored off-white) replaces the long-running "Cirrus White", which was actually a light grey. Saab's "white", at least since the 99, has always had a tint, presumably so owners can find their cars in the snow. The new Hazelnut Metallic promises to be a rich looking tone (there were none of those in the press fleet), and silver, Steel Grey, Midnight Blue, and black remain in the palette for those so inclined.

We drove a stunning Cosmic Blue Aero 5-speed sedan for the first part of the ride and drive, followed by a Silver Linear



President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis and Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson carved into Stone Mountain.

(LPT 4) automatic sedan. Saab counts almost 1300 changes in the enhanced 9<sup>5</sup>. We haven't seen the list, but most of the changes are out-of-sight. We've driven a



Getting the feel of the Monte Carlo Rallye winning Saab 96.

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number of 9<sup>5</sup>s over the years, and the smoothness and refinement of the design has never failed to impress us. We're certain that a current owner would find the differences, but as owners of an older model Saab, the enhanced 9<sup>5</sup> felt to us as "good as ever".

One area where Saab felt they had some work to do was tuning the suspension in the "base" and "SE" models, now termed "Linear" and "Arc." The combination of ride and handling in the previous Aero model has been well regarded, while the rest of the line has been perceived by some as having too soft a suspension. Our experience with "base" models, especially the base Wagon we reported in NINES #243, had been favorable, but the SE sedans we got to drive while our personal 9000 was being "debugged" exhibited an underdamped feel that we found less comfortable than the firmer Aero ride. We have also felt that the OE Michelin MXV4 tires used on the earlier non-Aero models in the US diminished the 9<sup>5</sup>s handling capability.

Quoting from Saab's press release: "We looked at what we had achieved with the Aero - which seems to have been universally liked - and then applied that car's sportiness to the rest of the new Saab 9<sup>5</sup> range," comments Sonny Bergman, head of vehicle dynamics. "But we also took the opportunity to upgrade the handling and performance characteristics of the Aero model at the same time. After all, there's always room for improvement." The press release continues to describe the stiffer front springs for the Linear and Arc models, reinforced front strut mountings, stiffer but lighter front subframe, light weight aluminum steering knuckles, and firmer rear suspension. They also make reference to a new generation of Michelin tires that have been specifically tuned to the requirements of the new Saab range.

We found the Linear sedan we tested to be quite pleasant, with only a bit of suspension tremor on major bumps. The Linear sedan seemed to be equipped with the same Michelin MXV4 that had graced every base 9<sup>5</sup> and many of the SE models since the introduction in 1998, and they made the same audible protest during turns that I would consider "moderate." The Aero was equipped with Pilot Primacy tires bearing an XL (extra load) rating, and this combination was much better suited to lively motoring,

while still delivering a comfortable ride.

Probably the biggest changes from a North American owner's point of view are the new 5-speed automatic transmission and the Aero seats. The Aero now features a proper sports seat, much like the seat used in the 9<sup>3</sup> Viggen. Like the Viggen seat, the side bolsters are much more pronounced, holding the driver in place during vigorous driving. The Aero seats are full leather, including the sides, the backs, and the front and rear pockets, not just the seating areas as on the Linear and Arc. The leather used in the Aero is heavy bodied, like the traditional Saab material, compared to softer leather used in the Linear and Arc models.

The new automatic brings Saab's offering right to the state of the art in conventional automatics. When driving an automatic, those accustomed to driving a manual shift vehicle usually know what gear the transmission is in and can anticipate the shift points. Not so with the new 5 speed. It goes about its business efficiently and smoothly, and you quickly learn to ignore it altogether. According to Saab: The new five-speed automatic gearbox features a clutch within the torque converter. In higher gears this clutch bypasses the torque converter and directly engages the transmission, eliminating some of the frictional losses associated with traditional torque-converter automatics. "It's good for fuel consumption," according to Saab's powertrain expert, Bengt Wallin, "because with this type of transmission the efficiency is so much better. The gain is 2 per cent. You couldn't have direct drive all the time, because it would lead to unacceptable booming. So this slipping clutch is an excellent combination of responsiveness and efficiency."

We didn't notice a "slipping" torque converter clutch. What we did notice is that the torque converter stays locked in top gear, unlike those automatics where the torque converter is constantly locking and unlocking according to load. We like the locked behavior better, since it provides engine braking at highway speeds and better speed control in hilly areas. It has become fashionable to provide manual gear selection for automatic transmissions, following a trend established by Porsche and their "Tiptronic" version. The enhanced 9<sup>5</sup> does not follow that trend.

A departure from normal is the "sport"

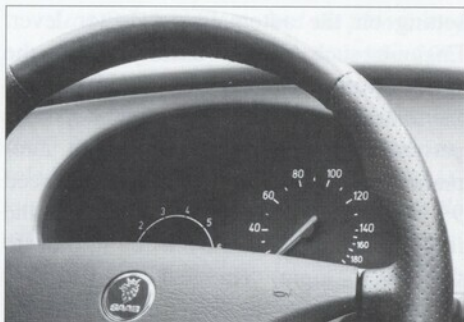
setting on the automatic's selector lever. Engaging such an option usually changes the shifting program in the transmission: holding the transmission in a lower gear for sportier performance. The previous 4-speed automatic performs that way. For the enhanced 9<sup>5</sup>, the button functions by changing the response of the "drive-by-wire" throttle to the driver's input. This makes the car feel sportier by giving the driver more "oomph" for a given amount of "push" to the accelerator pedal. This strategy is quite effective, provided that the driver leaves the car in its "normal" setting for "normal" driving, however spirited it may be. This is what we did during our extended test drive. Using the "normal" setting, we found the Aero to be powerful and responsive. In the fast paced Miami, Florida freeway traffic, we used the "sport" setting and could maintain our place in the flow of traffic with the same ease as gliding through the residential areas of Naples, Florida. We think that those who engage the sport setting routinely will simply accustom themselves to the more aggressive throttle response and fail to appreciate the difference.

The new automatic transmission is sealed for life, with no stated need or provisions for periodic fluid changes. At the 2001 Saab Owner's Convention, Technical Trainer John Moss stated that the transmission fluid for the new transmission is extremely difficult to obtain due to the special additives needed to accommodate the slipping torque converter clutch. We normally disapprove of "maintenance proof" automotive components, but given the unique requirements for the transmission fluid, "permanently sealed" is probably a good thing, at least until the special fluid becomes widely available.

It seems the manual transmission shift mechanism also received some attention in the enhancement program. Sports car magazines have often described Saab's light, smooth shift feel as "rubbery and remote". The 2002 model we tested with a manual transmission had a much crisper, more positive feel than previous 9<sup>5</sup>s, or 9000, NG900, or 9<sup>3</sup> models, for that matter. One could also feel a lot more engine vibration through the shift lever.

In terms of what you see from the driver's seat, 2002 is the first year that U.S. models (9<sup>3</sup> and 9<sup>5</sup>) are using the non-linear speedometer scale that the European 9<sup>5</sup> has





Non-linear metric calibration speedometer.

used since its introduction. In addition to the new (for the U.S.) scale, the backlighting and instrument function are completely revised, using LEDs and stepper motors. This will come as great news for anyone who has dealt with the intricacies of replacing dashboard light bulbs or fragile galvanometer instrument displays. The metallic finish dash on the Aero and the lighter colored, matte finish of the wood dash lighten up the interiors. The Aero's metallic dash finish along with the plug-in radio, ventilation, and display, lighting, and seat heater panels, gives it an especially high-tech, aircraft oriented ambience.

When we returned to the cars we were asked to switch and experience a different SAAB. We then followed another navigational map to a small plane airport where we again feasted on a Swedish lunch of, for example, salty-sweet shrimp on a slice of

bread. Here we were given an explanation of the ESP system and asked to drive 40 mph with no brakes around some red cones making a sharp left and then a sharp right., first without the ESP working and secondly with the ESP.

The press introduction concluded with a simulated emergency lane change maneuver conducted on a runway at the Peachtree-Dekalb Airport, near Atlanta. Tests were run with Saab's new stability augmentation system (ESP) engaged and disabled, and we can say for certain that the stability augmentation does something. We might also attribute our tendency to knock over all the cones despite ESP to the reality that ESP is primarily designed to help on slippery roadways. The 9<sup>5</sup> has so much traction on dry pavement that if one is driving wildly enough to "get the car sideways", one is really beyond help. We will try a repeat test once winter provides suitable conditions.

Randy Risley, whose job at Saab is Manager of Technical Training, was pressed into service demonstrating ESP. We first experienced the drive with Randy, and then Steve very proudly knocked over almost every red cone in his path. I alas, chickened out twice and couldn't force myself to make the sharp left that makes you feel that you're riding on 2 tires. I asked, and apparently this is not gender specific or so the instructor said. The ESP does make one feel as if one is not going to flip over and that one is in better control of the vehicle.

Following the press introduction, Saab kindly loaned us one of the press cars to evaluate for a week's worth of "Real World Vacationing." We appreciate their giving us the opportunity for such an evaluation. It's easy in the excitement of a brief introduction to miss both positive features and annoyances. We were



Demonstrating ESP at the DeKalb County Airport. After taking these photos, the author was informed that "stepping one foot on" the adjacent runway would have resulted in a substantial fine and removal from the premises.

given our choice of the press fleet. We chose a SportWagon for its capacity. We own a Saab hatchback, and we have become accustomed to being able to drop the seats to carry large loads. The 5-speed automatic is a brand new product, so we felt obligated to choose it. Since an Aero SportWagon with the automatic was available, we felt it was



The interior of the 9<sup>5</sup> Aero showing the brushed-metal finish dash and the Sport Seat.



our duty to evaluate the new seating.

We drove our borrowed the SAAB to visit Largo and then Miami. The Aero drove



The SportWagon is definitely the Saab of Choice when visiting the "Wagon Wheel".

very smoothly. It was easy to keep up with the traffic which averages 85 in a 70 mile an hour zone. We packed our radar detector for the trip. The glove compartment which is refrigerated kept our low fat yogurt and fruit cool. (We try and eat healthy for at least 1 meal per day). It was heart warming to see all the red, white and blue ribbons on people's mailboxes, and cars and the "United we stand" or "Proud to be American" on most of the store signs throughout Georgia and Florida. (It was just like Ohio). We were, however, 2 out of 4 visitors to Parrot Jungle and 2 out of maybe 200 at the Miami Seaquarium. We stayed in South Beach in an Art Deco hotel which rented for 49.00 a night, (normally 185.00) and parked in the municipal lot. SAAB has a clip on the driver's side of the windshield where the parking ticket

receipt conveniently rests. A very nice touch especially since it has to be visible on exiting the lot.

We visited 2 SAAB dealers in Miami to introduce them to NINES, and their mechanics and sales people swarmed our Aero noticing every feature which had been changed from the 2001. They were going to receive their 2002's in a few weeks. One group of mechanics asked to look at the engine and then proceeded to ooh and ah over all the changed features which they said would help them maintain the car more easily.

The only criticism came from one mechanic concerning the OnStar system. Saab has no training for the system,



The 2002 Aero attracted a lot of attention at the dealerships where we stopped.

so if there is a problem, it requires the mechanic to trouble shoot while on the phone with the OnStar technical staff. He said this is time consuming, and we're sure it's annoying to techs who pride themselves in their ability to take care of problems. Both dealers agreed to put up posters of Nines for potential new subscribers to read. We also left sample copies in their waiting rooms.

I have to admire the majority of people who drive in Miami. The highways are hopelessly congested, traffic accidents are reported on the radio constantly as routes to be avoided and there are crazies who drive at 90 mph on the city highway in congested traffic and cut over 3 lanes without signaling to make

their exit. We saw several close calls.

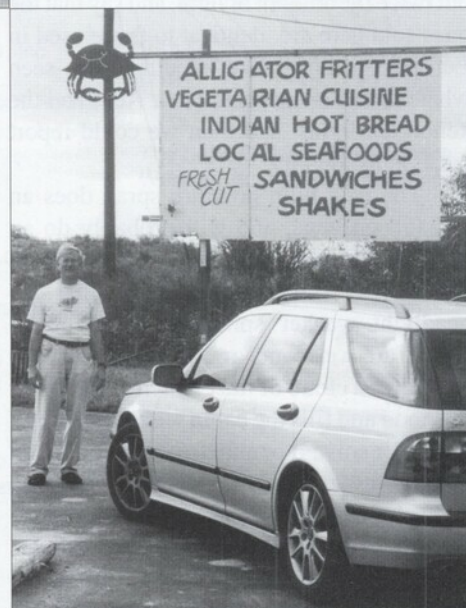
From Miami we went to the Everglades to play with the alligators. My they are splendid reptiles to see at a distance. We stopped for lunch at a restaurant recommended by the avian biologist tour guide and found on their wall a picture of a Volvo taken in front of their restaurant. The owner of the restaurant told us that the Volvo picture had been used in the Volvo "S80" new car brochure. Steve felt compelled to outdo the picture with the Aero and Joanie was very pleased to think her restaurant might be publicized in a car magazine again. We were delighted to try stone crab claws for the first time. We passed on the alligator fritters.

Our server warned us not to speed on the country roads because she had received 3 tickets driving her truck. It was my turn to drive in a 55 mph zone and without feeling anything I was doing 75. When I reluctantly forced myself to slow down we saw the most unusual birds, including anhingas in trees, and stopped a few times to take pictures.

Our trip back from the Everglades through Naples to Largo was relatively uneventful until we passed a construction site 91 miles south of Largo. Steve was driving, and we have no idea what we drove over. As the ride became bumpier and bumpier we felt it best to exit at the first opportunity and pull into a gas station. It was early evening and a gas



The Saab 9<sup>5</sup> refrigerated glovebox. Sliding a lever (arrow) opens a passage to the plenum downstream of the evaporator. To be effective, the climate control must be set to "Auto" and the fan must be set to medium speed or above. That ensures a constant flow of cold air into the "refrigerator".



We passed on the alligator fritters.



station was the safest place to check a tire given the construction site which had us driving on the shoulder. Our rear left tire was indeed flat. We had a spare but no pressure gauge. The gas station attendant lent us one from off the sales rack which showed the spare to be 52 instead of 60. As Steve changed the tire, a man drove up in a truck filled with tires. He said he would charge us a \$35.00 service call to check the tire's leak and 2.00 for a plug. He assured us if he could fix the tire the plug would hold to Atlanta (591 miles). While I played with his short haired Daschund, he checked our tire, declared it unpluggable, and charged us nothing. He said we could not drive to Atlanta on the doughnut. He also measured the spare with his professional quality gauge, which showed the spare to be correctly inflated to 60 psi.

The car was equipped with the standard halogen headlights, which use an elaborate reflector and a clear cover, rather than the older plain reflector with a molded glass lens. The beam pattern on these new design headlights is as close to the classic European "E-code" as any DOT lights I've seen. They have a pattern which is low to the left and rises to the right, to illuminate signs and objects on the side of the road without glaring oncoming traffic, and they spread a uniform pattern across the roadway, without "hot spots." On high beams, with four bulbs burning, the lights are excellent. Saab says the xenon electric arc discharge lamps put out twice the amount of light, and say that the ones sold here are identical to those used in Europe. Maybe we would have seen whatever we drove over if our Aero had the xenon arc lights, and then we could report back on its identity.

The new high pressure spray does an OK job on bugs, and will probably do an excellent job removing salt and road dirt in the winter. One peculiarity is that the headlight washer sprays in short bursts which are a second or two apart. It also generates a cloud of mist which comes over the hood and fills the cabin with the smell of whatever solvent or anti-freeze is contained in the washer fluid. Perhaps the climate control should be programmed to engage the "recirculate" mode for a few seconds whenever the washer functions.

We drove back to Largo, home of my m-i-l, and worried about making our flight the

next night from Atlanta. The new Aero uses a different 17 inch tire than previous years, and Steve knew the local Saab dealers would not have in one stock. It would be hit-or-miss finding one at a Michelin dealer. Besides, could we afford the time to go to one of the dealers, given we were 500 miles away from returning the Aero and meeting our plane? We left the next morning early and with trepidation. Would we make the plane, or would we blow another tire and then what? The only good news is that a full size tire fits in the spare tire well of the Aero's trunk, so we had no trouble with our luggage. We have never learned to pack light and took our snorkeling gear so we could swim with the sharks. We did snorkel but saw no sharks.

We drove at a snail's pace, afraid to break the 50 mph top speed rule printed on the spare by more than 10 or 15 mph. We knew that if it blew we'd definitely have a major problem making our plane home. Everyone passed us except for the other cars we occasionally saw who were also traveling on their doughnuts. One truck that whizzed past us crashed into another truck up ahead and we saw only truck damage. Two SUV's that sped past us subsequently collided and both landed upside down with all their glass over the highway. Those people were taken away by ambulance.

I became very proficient at initializing the trip computer. When we were traveling at 60 mph, it told us we would make our plane. When we stopped immobile for each accident or traveled at 2 mph past the police, the arrival time indicator became quite anxiety provoking. It averages the last 20 minutes to compute the arrival time, and 10 minutes of immobility drove the estimated arrival way past our flight time. We had to clear the computations as we crawled past each accident and re start it again when we started moving.

Purely on purpose to test OnStar, we left the map of Georgia in the suitcase in the trunk. As we approached a sign showing 475 in one direction and 75 in the other we asked OnStar what to do. We heard the riffling of papers as we thoughtfully decided to pull over to wait for the answer at the nearest gas station, which conveniently had a big ad for Blizzards. Besides we needed gas, although it is surprising how little one needs

in an Aero driving 60 mph.

The Onstar operator asked us which Atlanta airport we were going to and we quickly blurted out the international one. She then gave us 3 choices and we recognized the correct name. She advised us to take 475 which then reconnected with 75. I thought it prudent to double check with the gas station cashier. She told us 475 was bumper to bumper due to construction and to just keep on 75. She said it would be longer but faster. Local info is the most accurate. The Onstar operator was correct but her data apparently doesn't have the latest in construction hold ups. She was friendly and polite however and clearly meticulous in checking out her info.

We found the airport thanks to many well marked signs from 75, but finding the valet parking facility that services Saab's press fleet had us driving in spirals around and around the airport. Good thing we left early because it took us 30 minutes to find the place. The checker looked at our car and asked if we knew we had a flat and were driving on a spare!

In every day use, the 9<sup>5</sup> Aero SportWagon was a delight. As pointed out above, everyday use exposes both good and bad that can escape notice during a brief introductory drive. This is our third extended driving test of a 9<sup>5</sup> wagon, and we have yet to find an annoyance.

At the beginning of the press program, Dan Chasins set out four core values that Saab believes embodies their product: Performance, Control, Safety and Design. He added that while those values are embodied in every Saab, it is the Aero which most typifies them. Fortunately we did not test the safety features, but we can certainly vouch for the other three after our trip. The performance of the Aero has always been outstanding, and starting with 2002, the automatic transmission Aero gives nothing away to the manual equipped model in torque or horsepower. Control, with front wheel drive, secure and stable chassis, has been in every Saab since the first. Design, we feel, includes the full range of comfort and convenience features, many of them unique, along with the attractive yet clean Nordic styling. To that, I would add that the Aero Wagon, with its cargo capacity and flexibility, is today's ultimate embodiment of Saab's core values.



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"subscribe" in the subject line  
and the body of the post.

VSAAB, The Vintage Saab Mailing List

http://www.vsaab.com

The Saab Club of North America

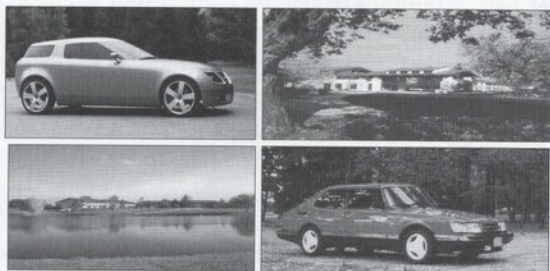
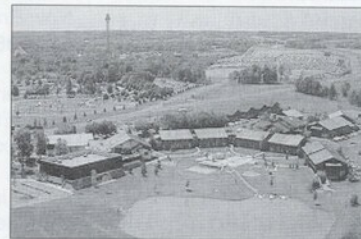
Website: http://www.saabclub.com



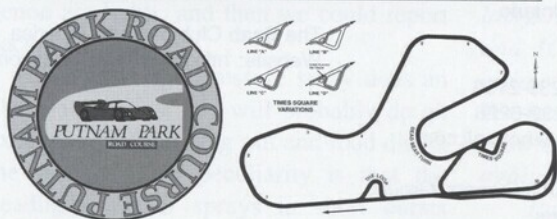


## 20th Annual Saab Owners Convention August 1-4, 2002 - Cincinnati Ohio

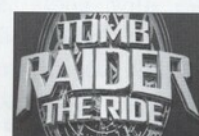
It's been twenty years! The 20th annual Saab Owners Convention will be held from August 1st through August 4th, 2002, at the Kings' Island Resort & Inn just northeast of Cincinnati, Ohio. Set on a 22 acre parcel of land adjacent to I-71, the full service hotel is located right across the street from Paramount's Kings' Island Amusement Park. With 288 guest rooms and suites (and over 1000 parking spaces), the hotel features an abundance of resort amenities including indoor and outdoor pools, Jacuzzi, putting green, fitness room and more.



But who cares about all that, really - let's face it, we're here for the Saabs! And an amazing lineup of Saab events and celebrities has been slated to appear to help celebrate the 20th annual party, including Erik Carlson, Per Eklund, Simo Lampinen, Peter Backstrom, Bob Sinclair, Dan Chasins and more! If it's in the USA, the new Saab 9X Concept Car will be on display! The return of the Saab Parts Tent! Seminars and Tech Sessions! A two-day concours d' elegance! And SCCA-run autocross! A driving school and two days of track sessions at Putnam Park Raceway! Camp Saab for the kids! Jeffersonville Outlet Malls for the wives! A freshly-restored 1989 900 SPG to be given away! Tours of area businesses, the U.S. Air Force Museum, and much much more!



This amazing event is sponsored by the all new Saab Club of North America, and will also feature the first election of regional officers and the board of directors, so come prepared to vote! Tickets are \$125 for participating adults (\$85 for non-participating spouses, \$65 for kids ages 3 to 10, kids under 3 FREE!) and will go on sale online beginning February 2002 at [www.saabconvention.org](http://www.saabconvention.org). Driving School/Race Days tickets are \$300 per participant (maximum 60 cars) and will be available for sale there as well. For questions or to be placed on a mailing list for more information, email to [SOC02info@saabclub.com](mailto:SOC02info@saabclub.com). We hope to see you there! SCNA Executive Director and [saabclub.com](http://saabclub.com) webmaster: Phil Laceyfield Jr.





## The Saab 9<sup>X</sup> - a vision of the road ahead

Saab's 9<sup>X</sup> was introduced to the public on September 11 at the Frankfurt Auto Show, which was very unfortunate timing. Built under the auspices of the Saab Advanced Design Studio (SACC), headed by Anthony Lo, and styled under the direction of Michael Mauer, Saab's Executive Director of Design, the 9<sup>X</sup> is Saab's third ever "Concept Vehicle," following after the first prototype Saab automobile in the late 1940s and the futuristic EV-1 from the 1980s. While events overshadowed the original introduction, press releases from Saab and articles in other publications have revealed information about the vehicle and its potential for reaching the sales floor.



The removeable roof panels and fold down tailgate provide exceptional load flexibility. The 9<sup>X</sup> in this mode is reminiscent of the Chevrolet "El Camino" of the 1960s.

Michael Mauer, explaining the Saab 9<sup>X</sup>, asks: "Is it wrong to expect a real driver's car to be more versatile? I believe today's drivers want a true driving machine to provide something more. They want exciting, sporty cars, sure, but they also want practicality. This car is an interesting solution." It is a car that symbolizes the arrival of a new, more feature-focused design emphasis. "I believe the motor industry's old segmentation approach to products is now effectively dead," says Mauer. "It is no longer enough to have, say, a sedan, a roadster, a wagon or an SUV that are each good at satisfying just one particular need. Today, people expect a vehicle that can perform several different functions and roles. It is an expectation that presents an exciting challenge for designers. We are seeking to deliver new breeds of vehicle."

The Saab 9<sup>X</sup> breed offers a unique fusion: high performance driving, roof fixed or roof removed; wagon-like load carrying potential and - as the "fourth" dimension - the open deck versatility of a pick-up. It is a multidynamic vehicle delivering all-weather driving enjoyment and the ability to meet a variety of leisure or more mundane load-carrying needs. The execution is a master class in clever design and innovative packaging.

*This kind of design flexibility was present from the first at Saab. Its pioneering use of front wheel drive opened the way to much greater passenger and cargo capacity than the compact outside dimensions would suggest. The 900 and 9000 hatchback designs continued the combination of sporty, compact packages capable of carrying tremendous loads. -Ed.*

At the SACC in Saab's Trollhättan headquarters, small teams of engineers, designers, technicians, IT and marketing specialists work together closely on a project-led basis. The informal atmosphere helps encourage the teams to adopt new perspectives, thinking 'out of the box'. SACC has no permanent staff; those who work there are on temporary assignment from other departments within Saab. The SACC team created a platform to accommodate the Saab 9<sup>X</sup>'s diminutive external proportions and its four-wheel drive layout. To ensure an excellent weight distribution, a low center of gravity and a low polar moment of inertia - all essential for the quick reflexes of a high performance car - the SACC team were able to install the engine and gearbox almost completely behind the front axle line. The Saab 9<sup>X</sup> is projected to use a new generation, all-aluminum, 3.0-liter V6 turbocharged engine, delivering at least 300 hp and extremely high torque values. This engine is not yet in production and a prototype unit is currently in use. It is linked to a six-speed, sequential change, manual gearbox and four-wheel drive.

*With a few exceptions, front drive cars have placed the transmission and final drive behind the engine, causing the front wheels to be located well back from the front of the car. The front wheel and its housing then present safety hazards and packaging difficulties. The "big lump of engine" in front of the axle line challenges suspension engineers when it comes to handling properties, and the long front overhang begs for damage against curbs and parking barriers. At the 2001 North American International Auto Show, General Motors showed the Buick Bengal, a concept vehicle with the transmission and final drive in front of a transverse mounted V6, resulting in a minimum of front overhang. Although the distance from the front bumper to the windshield base is not out of proportion to current vehicles, having the front wheels so far forward creates the appearance of a very long hood. When we saw the Bengal concept car, we felt that having the engine behind the final drive would make it impossible to integrate all wheel drive, an increasingly expected feature, into the package. Apparently, Saab has found a way.*

*A "sequential change manual gearbox" is essentially a "motorcycle shifter" - pushing the lever one direction shifts down, the other direction shifts up. Want to skip a gear? Push twice. Together with Saab's drive by wire throttle and now discontinued "Sensonic" self actuating clutch, the sequential shifter promises to offer a clutchless manual shift and fully automatic shift in a single unit. Such a device could approach the fuel efficiency of a continuously variable transmission without gambling on an unproven drive technology, and provide most of the sporting appeal of today's manual transmissions. At the same time, a fully "manual shift" version, with a clutch pedal, could be offered using essentially the same hardware as the "automatic" version. -Ed.*

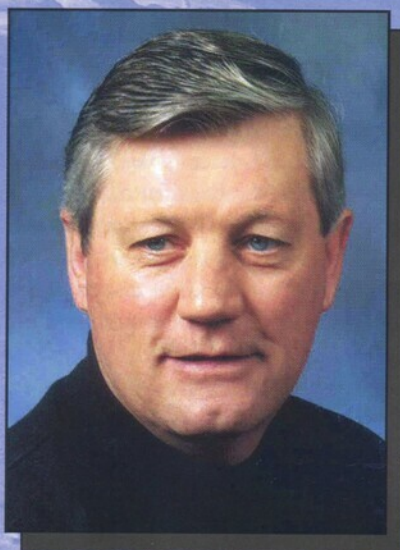
Externally, the Saab 9<sup>X</sup> represents a unique variation on the traditional two-door, two-pillar coupe layout. Saab genealogy is immediately apparent in the dramatic wrap-around windscreen, which conceals the A pillars and is integrated with the door windows to give an uninterrupted sweep of glazing right round to the B pillar. Allied to a high waistline, it gives the car an unmistakable Saab identity. In the same way, the grille is an extremely bold extrapolation of more traditional Saab proportions. The 'cocoon-like' styling of the interior, the four, low-slung bucket seats and prominent transmission tunnel reinforce the Saab 9<sup>X</sup>'s



**FOCUS**

**SAFETY**

**DEDICATION**



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Gaede'.

Dennis Gaede, President  
Nokian Tyres North America

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When I joined Nokian Tyres 10 years ago, I asked our Engineers what our Company's position was regarding tire **SAFETY**. They told me that their mandate was to increase the **SAFETY** level of our tires by 10% per year without question. I asked them why such an aggressive position was taken. Their answer was direct and without hesitation, "because our families will be driving on our tires".

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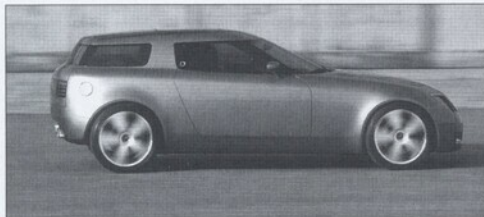


performance mission. The instrument layout and interior ambience also evoke a subtle hint of Saab's aviation antecedence. However, Mauer is quick to point out that his team consciously refused to play 'the retro card' when adopting a design theme for the Saab 9<sup>X</sup>. "I think so-called 'retro-styling' is something of a soft option these days which can be overplayed to the point of cliché," he says. "We are looking ahead with this car - not backwards. The emphasis on performance and versatility, alone, echoes a strong Saab tradition. And there are other features, of course. However, we should not be prisoners of our past."

*We are struck by the way the short rear overhang and strong "B" pillar harken back to the Sonett II. -Ed.*

The Saab 9<sup>X</sup>'s handling and performance are expected to place it firmly at the head of the compact, sports coupe class. Again, the design team were clear that the Saab 9<sup>X</sup>'s credentials as a pure driver's car should not be compromised by the need to incorporate talents in other areas. "We wanted to create a car which, in itself, should be a joy to drive," says Mauer. "For example, I would like the owners of this car to want to get up in the morning and head off to work half an hour early, perhaps, so they can take a little detour, just for the sheer joy of driving."

The roof system comprises two tinted glass panels and it can be deployed to allow a number of permutations for driver and passengers. Both panels will be electrically-operated, allowing the front section to slide back over the rear panel which, alternatively, can also slide forward over the front section, although this panel is fixed in the show car. In either mode, the side windows of the doors and rear screen can be raised or lowered. Both roof panels are also completely detachable and, for maximum effect, the rear roof rail



The short rear overhang and wide "B" pillar are reminiscent of the Sonett II. The wrap-around front glass evokes memories of the 99 and Classic 900 windshields.

can be easily removed as there is no top-mounted tailgate. This allows for a completely open, unobstructed rear deck because, unlike a sedan, hatchback or conventional wagon, the Saab 9<sup>X</sup> does not have roof reinforcements connecting the small 'C' pillars. The structural integrity of the car is ensured by the permanent roof rail, a stressed cross-member, connecting the substantial 'B' pillars.

The benefits of this layout are optimized by another key innovation: the extending rear load space. Taking inspiration from the sliding floor feature of the Saab 9<sup>5</sup> Sportwagon, the Saab 9<sup>X</sup> tailgate can be lowered to create even more load space." Load-securing tracks, another feature adopted from Saab 9<sup>5</sup> Sportwagon, allow leisure items and all sorts of cargo to be stowed safely and securely. The

system is extremely flexible in use and for additional practicality the team has also introduced new hard-wearing materials for the rear of the car. The purposeful looks and stance of the car are reflected in the frontal

styling, dominated by a bold interpretation in polished aluminum of Saab's traditional grille, within which the eight headlamps are located. These use fiber-optic technology and are extremely small, yet will provide a powerful spread of light for safe night driving. "We've adopted fibre-optics to provide more freedom for design," says Anthony Lo. "Headlamps with reflector units can take up a lot of room and get in the way of other structures under the bonnet." A smoked glass panel extends right across the rear of the car and this covers thin, neon-strip rear lights and indicators, as well as the number plate. The overall effect contributes to the car's clean and uncluttered lines.

"The front airbags are mounted in the A pillars," says Lo, "so there is no need for a large boss on the steering wheel, which has given us the freedom to put a bit more design into it." Driver

## Another Opinion on the importance of the 9<sup>X</sup>

I've taken a close look at photos of the 9<sup>X</sup>, although I haven't yet seen the car up close. I'm happy to see Saab develop a prototype that offers the possibility of a niche model or two aimed primarily at the more enthusiastic members of the Saab family - plus, of course, like-minded enthusiasts who aren't yet driving Saabs or even considering them. Early in my watch, back at the beginning of the '80s, a huge problem was that Saab simply wasn't on the shopping list of enough car buyers. To me, coming out with a Convertible looked like a good bet to change that situation. The introduction of the two door sedan, which in my opinion wasn't well suited to the North American market, made development of a convertible possible at a reasonable cost. Happily, Saab's top management agreed. History confirms that the launch of Saab's 900 convertible brought a great number of new prospects to dealer showrooms, many of whom wound up buying conventional sedans. The convertibles were also a huge sales success, of course, and remain so.

For Saab as a part of the giant General Motors Corporation, a major risk lies with losing some of its well known brand character in the drive for higher production and sales volumes. The risk, of course, lies with moving inexorably toward the middle of the road in design. During the '80s I had many discussions of modular design with Björn Envall (then head of design at Trollhättan); an approach that is exemplified in the 9<sup>X</sup>. Modular design offers the possibility of exciting lower volume models for true hard-core enthusiasts, while at the same time providing a platform for the sort of more pedestrian higher volume models Saab desperately needs to achieve its goal of attracting a much wider audience.

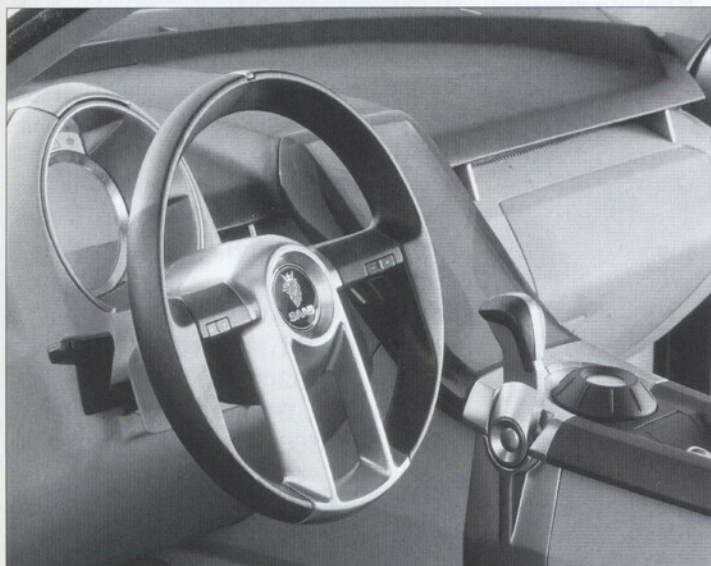
While the 9<sup>X</sup> obviously is a "show car" intended to test public reaction, I like the proportions very much. I'll be watching its continuing development with interest - assuming it is slated to become a serious program.

*Bob Sinclair, Chairman and CEO (Retired)  
Saab Cars USA, Inc.*



information is concentrated in a single, large binnacle, via digital displays, on a 'need-to-know' basis as in modern fighter aircraft. However, the team adopted an analogue appearance for the rev-counter with a sweep that turns a deeper shade of red as the upper limit of the engine's power band is approached.

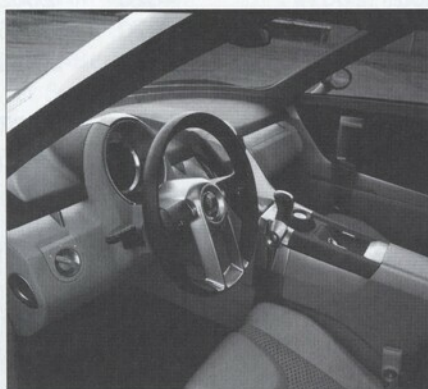
"We've tried to introduce a little emotion in some areas. For instance, there is also a single red button under a glass hatch on the transmission tunnel for starting and stopping the engine. The ignition sequence includes a driver display where a 3D model of the car is scanned as a systems 'health' check. You can customize the computer to have your own suitable 'all systems go' type of message."



Pillar mounted air bags allow for a stylish steering wheel. The "soft panel" instrument display and unified control knob allow an uncluttered cockpit. Note the sequential shift lever.

There is a noticeable absence of gauges, switches or buttons because many ancillary functions are incorporated within a single control on top of the transmission tunnel. Best described as an automotive 'mouse', this controls the air conditioning, telephone and 'infotainment' systems. It is turned and clicked in response to on-screen prompts from the central fascia display. The Sat-Nav system is also controlled here but, for driving safety, its instructions are displayed in the driver's binnacle.

Another interior innovation is the use of lighting. The lights, in fact, never go out inside the Saab 9X. Day or night, there is a welcoming faint blue glow within the cabin, giving an ambience similar to the interior of a passenger aircraft. The diffused light emanates from thin, almost invisible openings within the fascia and doors and appears to



Illumination and ventilation both emanate from the dashboard slots.

have no direct source. These same, narrow louvers also provide ventilation and air conditioning, dispensing with the need for separate air vents.

"The ambient lighting is designed to make the interior warmer and more inviting," explains Anthony Lo. "It also has a more practical use by making it rather easier to find things at night inside the car. We think it is more relaxing for the driver and passengers to be able to see and enjoy the interior of the car rather than sit in complete darkness, which is what normally happens at night."

## Into the Future

Mauer describes the Saab 9X as a 'signpost' to the future. "Saab must continue to push out the boundaries of design," he says. "Of course, we will not specialize in producing only 'niche' products such as the Saab 9X. We see other opportunities to put together features from different types of vehicle. Some interesting solutions are possible. There are no major technical obstacles to prevent the car going into production and I very much hope we produce it, or something very similar. This car is an icon for the future of Saab - it shows where we are going. It is real, physical proof that Saab is embarked on a very exciting journey." Peter Augustsson, Saab Automobile's President and CEO, adds, "The Saab 9X and future Saab products are aimed at customers who place a premium on good, original design that is not derivative or commonplace. These people are busy professionals, often running their own businesses and increasingly involved in active leisure and sporting activities. They don't follow the crowd in what they do and they want products that reflect that independence, whilst also meeting the needs of their lifestyle."

In the November 12, 2001 issue of AutoWeek, the 9X was the cover story. In that article, Bob Lutz, former CEO of Chrysler Corporation and recently named Vice President of Product Development at General Motors, was quoted as saying "Great proportion. Good stance. I love it," upon first seeing the car at the Frankfurt Auto Show. AutoWeek also declared that the large diameter, low profile tires would be "Extended Mobility" (run flat) designs from Michelin. The 9X tubular aluminum platform was said to be the basis for future Saab, Opel, and Alfa Romeo. If true, then the 9X has parts in common with the next 95, increasing its likelihood of being produced and making the car an example of Saab's future.

## Saab 93X - Cross-over coupe concept to debut at Detroit

By the time you read this, Saab will be showing another concept car, this one closer to possible production than the 9X, at the North American International Auto Show. Dubbed the 93X, it is described by Saab as a "cross-over coupe", combining sporty styling with multi-dynamic features to demonstrate that AWD vehicles with off-road capabilities can retain a strong, athletic on-road appeal. It is the first time Saab has shown a car with an off-road dimension (*notwithstanding Erik Carlsson's Baja 96 - Ed.*) and the Saab 93X could see Saab enter a new, sub-SUV segment of the market.

Full details will be revealed on the Saab stand in Detroit. NINES will be there and will print those details, and photos from every angle, in NINES #256. The drawings show how the styling

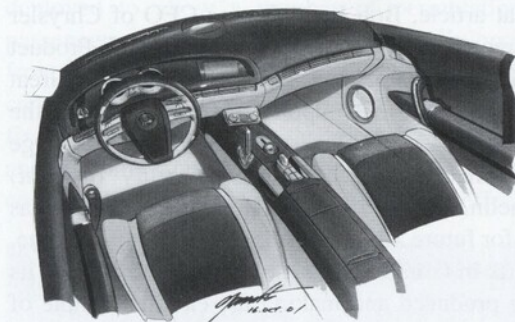


concepts introduced in the 9<sup>X</sup> might be applied to an upcoming production vehicle. The sweeping, wraparound windshield leads into what appears to be a modern but not radically different hatchback coupe. Inside, the 9<sup>X</sup> computer screen "soft instruments" and pillar mounted airbags seem to give way to a more conventional gauge cluster and steering wheel mounted restraint. The interior sketch shows the sequential shift transmission and tall center console from the 9<sup>X</sup>. One might wonder if the dash shape is characteristic of the next 9-3 sedan, scheduled for introduction in autumn, 2002. Whether this is a concept that develops into a "Sonett IV" remains to be seen, but rumors of such a product have been circulating recently. Saab emphasizes the compact proportions, and says avoiding the large wheel clearances traditionally associated with an off-roader effectively disguises the car's "command view" (*raised ground clearance - Ed.*) stance.

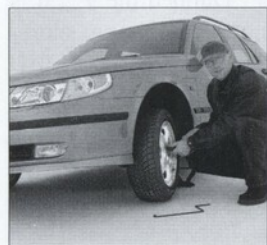


The bumper, grille, and headlight treatment are derived from the 9<sup>X</sup>, along with the wrap around glass windshield.

"The Saab 9<sup>3X</sup> concept represents a further expression of the sporty, multi-dynamic design philosophy already established by the Saab 9<sup>X</sup> performance concept at the Frankfurt auto show," says Saab Automobile's CEO Peter Augustsson. "The 9<sup>3X</sup> will also show aspects of the design language you can expect to see in coming products." The Saab 9<sup>3X</sup> is the next step in Saab's product plan, initiated with the 9<sup>X</sup>, of introducing at least one new product or concept every year for the next six years.



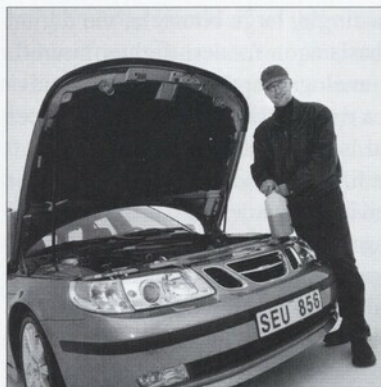
The 9<sup>3X</sup> interior carries the high dash tunnel and the sequential shift from the 9<sup>X</sup>. The dash and door treatments are derivatives of today's 9<sup>3</sup>.



Winter Tires for Winter Conditions.

## Winter Driving An A to Z Guide from Saab Automobile AB

For drivers and their vehicles alike, winter is the most testing time of the year. Difficult driving conditions greatly increase the risk of an accident and even routine journeys can become hazardous experiences. Scandinavian winters are



Keeping the washer reservoir full is an important part of safe winter driving.

among the most severe in Europe and place extreme demands on the abilities of cars and their drivers to perform reliably and safely at all times. Saab Automobile of Sweden designs and builds cars for such conditions and Chief Test Engineer Torbjörn Christensson has written a seasonal A to Z guide of simple "do's" and "don'ts" that will be useful to all car drivers. From Anti-freeze to Zero temperatures, we have reprinted the guide on our web site, [www.saabclub.com](http://www.saabclub.com).

## Sales

	OCT '01	NOV '01	period
coupe 93	52	14	66
viggen coupe	14	14	28
sedan 93	872	111	983
sedan 93 se	778	301	1079
viggen sedan	31	32	63
convertible 93	6	8	14
convertible 93 se	680	366	1046
viggen convertible	85	48	133
campaign convertible	0	1	1
total 93	2518	895	3413
sedan 95	811	751	1562
sedan 95se	448	216	664
Aero 95	285	241	526
wagon 95	455	264	719
Gary Fisher edition	0	1	1
wagon 95se	246	182	428
Aero Wagon	57	52	109
total 95	2302	1707	4009
IDS	9	4	13
total (2001)	4820	2602	7422
last year (2000)	3970	3855	7825
percent increase	21.41	-32.50	-5.15
total year to date	32235	34837	
previous year	32595	35726	

Sales in October and November mirrored August and September. October's excellent results, the best October in Saab's history, was followed by a seasonally weakened November. Note that the year 2000 results from October on were boosted by a fleet sale of 2500 9<sup>5</sup>s into the Enterprise rental fleet, but there will be no rental fleet sales in 2001.

Photographs and drawings courtesy of Saab Automobile AB



## Swedish Car Day, 2001



"Dreaming of Sunny Skies"

Despite the rain, and a chill in the air, Saab enthusiasts came out in droves Sunday, October 14th, for the second annual Swedish Car Day at the Museum of Transportation in Brookline, Massachusetts. Models ranging from 2-stroke 95s and 96s, through a wide variety of Sonett V4s and IIIs, through the 99s, 900s, 9000s, 9-3s, and 9-5s were all present. In all, well over 100 Saabs showed up, with some estimates in the range of 115-120.



Some of the vintage Saabs attending Swedish Car Day.

The New England Saab Association and the New England Sonett Club were on hand to help out and present awards. Charles River Saab, the sponsor of the event, presented awards for Best Saab overall, and held a raffle for Saab goodies and certificates. Saab Cars USA ensured



The "Push me Pull you" 900.

that the latest 9-5 Aero was present, and an additional crowd-pleaser - a Saab 900 with 2 front halves grafted together - was also there, compliments of John Moss and the folks at the Tech Training Center in Connecticut. A NESA raffle included a variety of vintage and contemporary Saab items including shirts, pins, and toys as well as a couple of great auto books donated by club friend Creighton Demarest. The NESC gave awards for best pre-1975 Saab, and longest distance traveled by a NESC member.



Bill Trench's restored 1963 96 won the NESC "Best in Show"

The weather was not always cooperative, but that didn't seem to discourage anyone, as Saabs continued to drive in through the day. (The Volvo contingent was notably thinner than last year, although Lance from Cannondale was back again with his jumping bike show.)

A few of the highlights:

- Bill Trench's mint 1963 96, which won the NESC award for Best in Show
- Too many gorgeous Sonetts to list them all!
- A 1975 blue 99LE 4-door "barn find" in immaculate condition, with 28K miles
- Mike Connelly's 1985 SPG pearlescent prototype
- A classic 900 convertible with in-dash DVD player
- John Moss's push-me pull-you 900
- 2002 9-5 Aero

All in all, the event was a huge success. One can only wonder about the turn-out had the weather been better, but there's always next year!

Chris Mills  
Keene, NH

Photographs by the author

## SAABtoberfest 2001, or Ode to a 93B



Open for display at SAABtoberfest.

Oct 6, 2001 brought the third annual SAABtoberfest (and fourth annual Pennsylvania fall tour). This year, Deb and Dean Lusby took a much needed break, ceding the organizational reins to Lee of the Swedish Underground, wherein the event was officially dubbed a Volvo/SAAB tour. True to its billing, one Volvo actually showed up, though I think this was one of Lee's employees.

Attendance this year was around 50 cars with only two vintage SAABs represented, the freshly restored Bill Trench '63 96 and the 2000 Saab Owners' Convention concours winning Bruce Turk '58 93B. I made the trip out from New Jersey in my recently acquired '86 SPG and, as in prior years, the skies opened on the way. Driving along at a safe and sane speed in the pouring rain, I was passed by Bill and Joanne Clark in their blue '99 Viggen, whereupon I turned up the wick just a bit to caravan with them for the remainder of the ride. Again, as in prior years, the skies cleared and the sun came out at the start point, revealing a blustery cold SAABtober day, perfect for attaining maximum boost in a SAAB Turbo. For me, this was not to be (more on this later).

But where was Bill Trench? Having posted pep rally messages to vSAAB (the vintage Saab Internet mailing list) prior to the event we were convinced of his participatory intent, but alas, the little gray 96 was nowhere in sight. Then word came via a late arrival that Bill was on the side of the highway struggling with engine prob-



lems. I'm not sure if the spark plugs failed or if the heavy rains did him in, but Duane Dostie pulled over to offer moral support and Bill eventually arrived in time for the official start.

Bill's car runs so quietly. Not so Bruce's 93B with the deleted rear silencer and breathed on GT750 engine which when started produces an aural assault (or a sweet symphony, depending on your vintage tastes). Bruce wanted someone to keep him company on the tour and though I was looking forward to christening my new (to me) SPG, I knew an opportunity when I saw one and signed up as co-driver in the 93. Did I mention that Bruce promised me a turn at the wheel?

After a delayed start, we were off and I was immediately impressed with the 93's



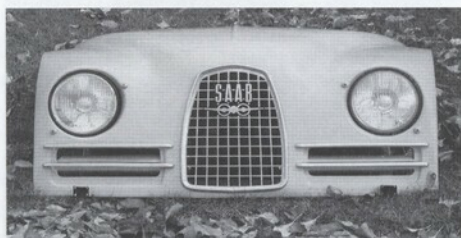
The starting line as seen through the front window of a 93B.

acceleration, a far quicker car than my long gone lost and lamented '66 96. Never having driven a 3 on the tree, I paid close attention to the shift pattern (pull towards you and down for first, push away and up for second, push away and down for third). Other charming touches on the 93 include the pull cable starter and white Bakelite knobs on most of the controls. Stir in the right-side-of-the-column directional lever with manual canceling feature, tick-tock windup dash clock and suicide doors and you have one real unique automobile here folks, absolutely topped off by the restoration talents of Mr. Turk.

Did I mention it's fast? In best "You couldn't let up, ever" fashion, Bruce ran the 93 at nine tenths most of the time, doing a great job keeping up with the turbos, though giving poor Bill Trench a real run for his money. You see, where Bill's car is a really sweet running stock 3 speed two stroke, the 93B is anything but stock. The GT engine seems able to run and run and run to dizzying RPMs, at which the driver and

passenger can only guess because the car lacks a tach. Surely, there is a point where even a two stroke will destruct, and this engine, I believe, is fully capable of reaching it. It shows no signs of running out of steam no matter how hard it is pushed. What a wonderful morning ride, listening to the ring a ding, holding onto the underside of the seats for support (no grab handles). Luckily, in a nod to the Lime Rock track days, Bruce had seen fit to install shoulder belts, although the car did not have them when new.

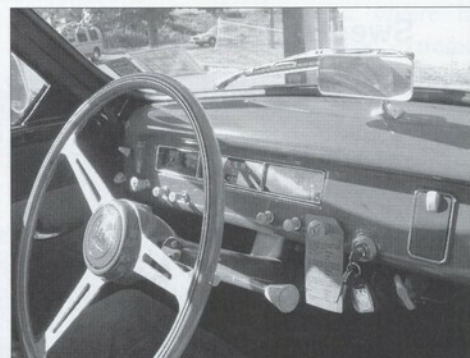
The lunch break brought some more engine troubles for Bill's 96 with the



The eternal joy of vintage car ownership. Bill Trench gets advice and help from Bruce Turk.

familiar (to me) rapping of the crankshaft grease cup when the retaining spring has popped out of its groove. The stroker faithful know this problem is fairly easily rectified and this was done during the lunch break.

I declined Bruce's lunchtime offer to



The cockpit of the Saab 93B, with its "three on the tree" column shifter.

take a quick dry run before the afternoon leg and before long we were back on the road, this time with me at the wheel of the 93B. Holy smokes, was that fun. Some of you might dream of a chance to drive a restored vintage SAAB in a safe and controlled setting. This would be a memorable treat you could share with your friends/spouse. I, on the other hand, was largely unprepared for what lay ahead of me. This was SAABtoberfest. We were in the middle of a line of SAAB 900 Turbos and I was driving a 1958 three cylinder SAAB with bias ply tires and a much hotter engine than this car ever had in the day. Wheee! I have not driven so hard or so close to my limits since track days at Lime Rock, and that was in a far more modern automobile. The 93B was certainly up to the task as we consistently ran out of driver long before we ran out of car, and this time Bill had no problem keeping up. I don't think I held up the Turbos too much, and sliding the little 93 through the turns was a real thrill with Bruce entreating me to get back on the gas sooner and sooner as we exited the turns. "Now! Hit it!". Time will fly when you are having a lifetime experience and soon we had put 20 nearly flat out (for me) miles behind us. My permanent grin at the next rest stop was evident to all as I handed the controls back to Bruce, feeling completely fulfilled.

The next leg involved a hill climb section for which I was glad Bruce was driving since it was quite a challenge for the 750. As we neared an uphill hairpin marked 10MPH Bruce calmly said, "hold on to something." I just had time to clamp my hands under both sides of the passenger seat as we were thrown into the turn, apparently without lifting the throttle one iota, clipping the gravel on the entrance as well as the exit of the turn, pulling higher cornering forces



than those skinny tires had any right to do. "Are you ever concerned about stone chips on this paint job?" I asked. "No," he said, "when I'm doing this I just want to have fun." It may look like it but folks, this car is no garage queen.



Bruce Turk bids farewell.

shall never forget. Readers: If you haven't been to SAABtoberfest, be sure to block out your calendars for next year's event!

Thor Carlson  
Newton, NJ

Photographs by the author

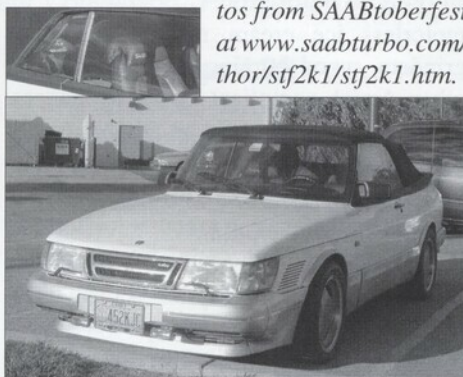
This story was previously published in *NEWS* (New England Writings on Saab), the combined New England Sonett Club/New Jersey Saab Owners' Club newsletter.

You can see more photos from SAABtoberfest at [www.saabturbo.com/thor/stf2k1/stf2k1.htm](http://www.saabturbo.com/thor/stf2k1/stf2k1.htm).



This could be an advertising poster!

still pulling strongly at who knows what crazy RPM, reinforcing my conviction that the 750 puts out more power than this car can ever use. Bruce: thank you for a drive I



Voted winner of the "Drool Bucket," no one remembers whose car this is!

## Driving Tour of Amish Country



Participants in the tour of Amish Holmes county, Ohio.

On November 3, 2001, Saab owners from Cincinnati, Cleveland, Akron, N. Canton, Canton and Columbus gathered to enjoy a beautiful, sunny "Indian Summer" driving through Amish and Mennonite Ohio. Organized by Dan Orzano and sponsored by the Central Ohio Saab Club, we in Northeastern Ohio took advantage of the trip's proximity. Steve Smith from Vermont is temporarily living in Columbus and thus his Vermont plates qualified him as the "long distance" champ. Jay Davis and his son Jay Jr. (JJ), Saab Master Tech and Saab Service Manager from Dave Towell Saab, respectively, along with their wives, earned the "Busman's Holiday" award by

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Horsepower vs. horsepower. The Amish recognize the inherent superiority of front drive.

spending their day off with Saabs and Saab owners. Chad Dinger, a member of the Central Ohio club, dressed in a Scottish kilt and on his way to a wedding, drove up with the group and stopped to say "Hi." This prompted one of the wives to ask if we were supposed to wear something special for the get together. Phil Lacefield Jr. attended along with his wife Sasha, daughter Rhiannon, and the omnipresent BFH Viking Helmet.

The 19 people in 10 Saabs met at the Millersberg Chamber of Commerce. From there we went to the Wendell Forge Foundry, where we watched skilled artisans create beautiful metal dishes with intricate designs. Check out [www.wedendellaugust.com](http://www.wedendellaugust.com) to see their goods, or [www.apubs.com](http://www.apubs.com) to check out the list of Amish tourist sites in the area. From there we scattered to Berlin, Ohio for an hour and a half, where some of us sampled each and every one of the 50 cheeses at Heini's Cheese Chalet and Amish Country Mall, tasted some Heini's fudge, and tasted the samples of breads and cookies at Kauffman's Country Bakery. We reassembled at Der Dutchman Restaurant in Walnut Creek for an Amish lunch and pictures in the parking lot. We admired the sparkling clean engine in Bill Wagley's SPG (they don't shine like that from the factory!) and talked about SAAB mechanicals while taking pictures.

Those of us who wanted drove to Lehman's Hardware store where we saw such appliances as hand crank blenders,

motorless ice cream makers and meat grinders, wood burning cook stoves, and other Amish-compliant home appliances. Some crossed the street to admire Amish quilts, furniture and to taste hand cranked ice cream. This SAAB outing was a friendly way of getting together for both the technical and the sightseeing SAABers. The

only driving difficulties we encountered were dodging the horse-drawn buggies on the country roads and the throngs of tourists pouring across the street wherever and whenever they spied something better at the Amish souvenir shop.

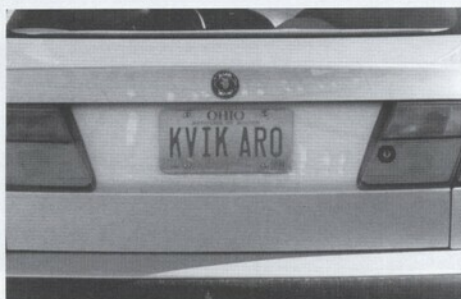
*Norma Goldberger  
North Canton, OH*

*We encourage all local clubs to tell us of their outings well in advance so we can help promote*

*the event. Send us pictures and a small write up and we'll be glad to publish them.*



Swedish Axes for those who must cut trees without chain saws.



The license plate hints that Norm Crowe's Aero Sedan has been endowed with Nordic Tuning's power enhancing modifications.

## CARLISLE Import Kit/Replicar Nationals

We hope that many of our subscribers will be attending the 2002 Carlisle Import Kit Replicar Nationals, May 17-19. As in previous years, the Central Penn Saab Club will take the lead in organizing a program of activities on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. This will include lunch, door prizes, a Saab "beauty contest", and an afternoon driving tour through the neighboring countryside. Saab owner participation blossomed to fourth place overall last year from "disgraceful" the previous year. Let's put our participation numbers "over the top" for 2002.

Preregistration for show car and two adults, three day admission is \$10. This fee will be offered until April 26th. After that date, and at the gate, the show car registration will be \$20.

You can download a registration form and a map from the "events" page in the web site at [www.saabclub.com](http://www.saabclub.com).

*Stephen Goldberger*



On October 10th, The Saab Network quietly turned thirteen, having grown from 100 users on its first birthday to 158,958 visitors during this past September alone. That is, TSN was logged onto from 159,000 unique IP addresses in September. All the users who receive a fresh IP address when they log in are counted as a unique IP each time they visit the TSN web site. All of the AOL users count as about 5 uniques because they all come in through one of 5 different proxy servers. All users behind the same firewall count as one unique user, etc. etc. As far as advertising standards go, you can equate a unique IP address to a user. There were also 12,193,377 "hits" on the TSN site and 2,068,799 pages downloaded from it in September.

*R. Scott V. Paterson  
Menlo Park, CA*

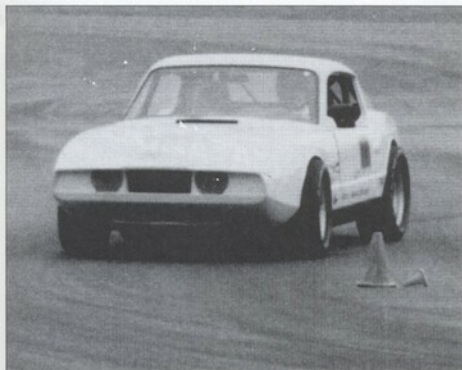


# Saabs in Competition

## Autocross

Ah, spring fever - - competition fever, that is. It wells up inside those of us who have the desire, and the expendable time and money, to push our cars in extreme driving situations. I've been developing and improving my bright yellow '73 Sonett competition car "Rika" for over three years now. Backed by the financial and technical support provided by AutoScandia, of Herndon, Virginia, Rika has become a highly competitive and well-recognized SCCA Solo II (autocross) platform in the mid-Atlantic area.

It's taken those years to get it right, so in preparation for my first autocross event of 2001, I was able to do something that I hadn't yet done with the car prior to other season openers - - almost nothing. I only changed the crankcase and transmission fluids, and recharged the battery. That's a milestone in a high maintenance race car's life cycle! I also didn't have the time, or money, to do anything more because I'd just quit my job and moved with my family from



Another shot taken at the 2000 Saab Owners' Convention. *Photograph by Stephen Goldberger*

northern Virginia to the southwest side of Richmond, Virginia.

I'm fortunate now because two major sports car clubs in the Richmond area organize many autocross events, and the events are run throughout the year. When I was in the Washington, D.C. area, the small local clubs were limited by the non-availability of usable parking lots and the weather-shortened competition season. So, I'm ready to jump into the fun of running an event every couple of weeks, at least while my racing engine holds up.



Steve Church in his race modified Sonett III at the 2000 Saab Owners' Convention. *Photograph by Stephen Goldberger*

## April 29

An April 29th event, organized by the Virginia Motor Sport Club ([www.vmsc.org](http://www.vmsc.org)) and held at the Virginia Motorsports Park (VMP) in Petersburg, VA, was my first event of 2001. Unfortunately, Sunday noise restrictions have been instituted at VMP, so nothing loud can happen before noon. Rika is loud. I pre-registered to run in the last "heat" of the day. That satisfied my wife's desire that I attend more church on Sunday mornings, and I don't fire the car up before noon.

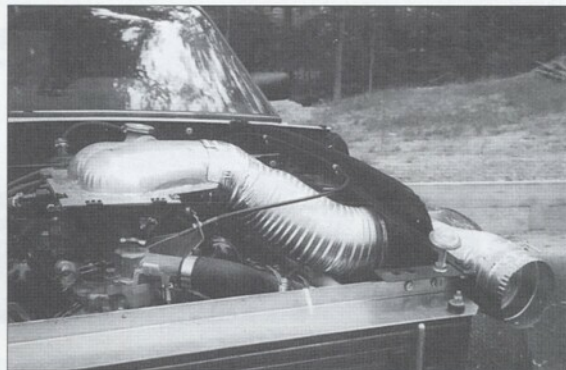
VMSC is sometimes criticized for setting up courses that curve endlessly and,

therefore, handicap high power-to-weight ratio cars so small sports cars can reign. Such a course was laid out on April 29th. The only straight away was about 50 yards long, and it finished with a misaligned slalom. The rest was an endlessly swooping layout. Maybe I'm supposed to do well on these types of courses. More challenging for me was the fact that this

was my "season opener," and I needed seat time to refresh my memory about Rika's handling traits and idiosyncrasies.

Rika started well, ran well, and was, as always, a handful to drive. Along with an array of suspension modifications, Rika has about 130 horsepower, provided by MSS (Jack Lawrence, proprietor, Motor Sports Service) components, running through a Saab Rally limited slip differential and 10" wide racing slicks, and a fast-ratio manual steering rack. When the cones of a tight course are flying by at 40+ MPH, the realities of this front-wheel drive setup make themselves very apparent!

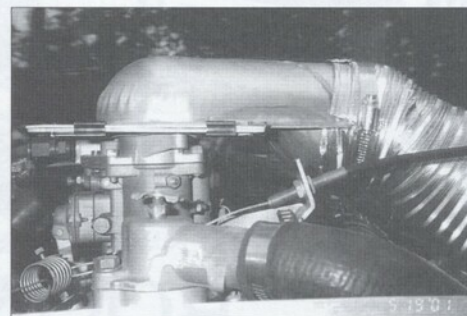
I went "off course" during the first of my three runs. Oddly, it happened in the one-and-only straight away, because the exit from proceeding slalom didn't point the drivers toward the slalom at the end of the straight. I wasn't the only driver to go off course in that section. I don't know about the other folks, but it was the cones set very wide to the left and right of the straight that threw me off. Autocrossers are usually trying to stay as close as possible to one of the two cones of a gate, with the



A view with the hood removed showing the custom made air intake. *Photographs of the air intake system by Steven Church*



Close up views showing the intake to the carburetor. Steven Church shows a talent for the application of office supplies in automobile racing.





## Saabs in Competition

cones set about 20 feet apart. These mysterious cones were 50 feet apart and technically meaningless.

In the end, I was the fastest of the three Prepared Category cars that competed. But I was readily beaten by hot shoe drivers in late generation two-seaters on DOT-approved racing tires. Not a great showing, really. On a positive note, though, the car didn't break (I haven't experienced trouble-free driving these past three years, remember) and I ran the car for the first time in 2001.

### May 20

Circle track racing in a Sonett? Well, sort of. A very local event held on May 20th gave me a chance to see how my '73 Sonett "Rika," which is configured for autocrossing, would behave on a paved 1/4 mile, banked oval, stock car racing track. Southside Speedway, on the southwest outskirts of Richmond, VA, is a true "hometown" track that provides enough seating for only a few thousand people, and dirt parking lots for the fans and team trailers. This is circle track racing country, of course, so to see racing trailers in the side yards of houses is commonplace, along with the big trucks or

sport-utes that tow them.

The weekend was a crazy one for weather, and rain threatened all day but never dropped during the event. The end result was a track that was slightly slippery because of the humid air and the layer of tire rubber and engine lubricants that had been laid down during the stock car event held there the night before.

I was registered to run during the afternoon "heat." I like to discover the minimum time that had been set by the fastest car that had run earlier, and use that time as a target time for my runs (even though my car doesn't necessarily compete in the same category or class with that previous competitor). A 70's-vintage, open-wheeled race car with a big rear wing (a Royale FSV, for those that know the genre), driven by Glenn Bunch (an old-time Saab enthusiast, ironically), had set the "fastest time of the day" (FTD) with a 54.6 second run. Did I have a chance of beating it? My reputation has been growing lately. Since I now have a well-developed and very fast car, I threaten to set the FTD at events I attend, except for the times generated by the open-wheeled cars. Was there going to be something different about a circle track

layout that would benefit me, penalize them, and give me FTD today?

No problems were lurking in the engine bay or chassis, thus I was able to line up with the other cars when I needed to. I'm beginning to like this problem-free "tow it, drive it, then tow it home again" routine. Maybe the endless little nightmares that plagued the first three years of the car's life are finally over (now that I've re-engineered half of the engine subsystems!).

The event began with a very tight course that was laid out within the small infield (the pits) of the main track. Rika flew through it like a champ, sometimes with the rear end hanging out a little. I'll guess that I spent no more than about 15 seconds driving the infield course. It finished with a sharp left-hander that put us on the pit lane exit to the main track. The car did that maneuver mostly sideways, bouncing and skidding across uneven concrete-to-asphalt transitions. What about that concrete barrier to my immediate left when mid-corner? I just kept moving my right foot downward and steered where I wanted (and needed!) to go.

Main track dead ahead, with its wide open asphalt calling for a wide open, twin-

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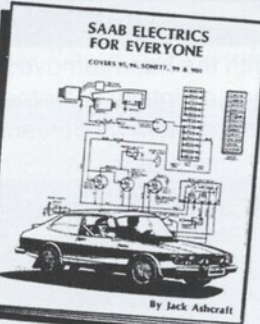
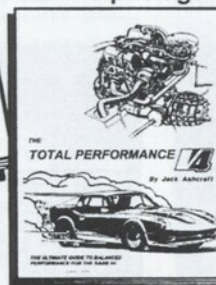
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barrel Solex carb (provided by MSS). I tried to drive the entire first run in second gear, but hit my 7,000 RPM rev-limiter well short of the turns. I went to third gear during the latter three runs, and then kept testing my courage with every corner entrance. My times kept going down with every run, with my foot to the firewall on the short straights, and progressive braking into the corners to avoid locking the rears.

So, did I beat the time of the open-wheeled car with the big wing? Get real! My best run yielded a 62.5 second final time. No, I couldn't miraculously "find" eight seconds of time (that is, reduce my time by over 12%) to catch him. He was probably doing 90+ MPH in the straights compared to my 70 MPH. And I kept thinking, as I rounded the corners, that this competition wasn't worth me possibly losing my handle on the car and smacking the concrete wall that surrounds the track. My car, and the AutoScandia (of Herndon, Virginia) sponsorship that supports me, is worth too much. Maybe I'll stick with competing on parking lots with no obstacles to hit but rubber cones.

## July 1: Autocross Management and "Walk-Throughs"

A July 1, 2001 "Fact of the Day:" The summer heat has very much increased in central Virginia! Air conditioning is a good thing to have when sitting in the middle of a huge parking lot, in 90+ degree weather, waiting to run in an autocross event. Maybe I should roll down the windows of my AutoScandia-sponsored '73 Sonett autocrosser? Wait ... I don't HAVE any windows in this car anymore. I took them out, along with the entire door frames, when I built this race car. Oops. Some days it really pays off to autocross in a licensed street car that has fully functioning AC and a strong blower.

Having to sit around for a little while, waiting my turn to run, is understandable. Autocrossing clubs do their best to balance several variables during each event. They have to consider: the total number of cars that will be allowed to drive in the event; the time available for the event; how many "heats" (groups of cars) will be needed to keep the event manageable; and, providing each competitor a "walk-through" of the

course before the competitor drives speedily through it. There's going to be some "down time" because of these event management challenges.

Different clubs handle these variables differently. Some clubs dictate that all similarly classed cars must run together during the same heat within a predetermined heat chronology. Other clubs simply jumble all different kinds of cars together (from different classes) into the heats to suit the time of day each competitor wants to drive. Depending on the approach, total heat duration could vary from 30 minutes to almost two hours. But the general idea is to limit each heat to around an hour, and have four or five heats over the course of the day.

And clubs have to allow walk-throughs to occur sometime during the day. Almost without exception, autocross competitors never get to drive through a new course prior to the time they drive through it for competitive timing. Rather, they're allowed to walk through the course, with a map, to learn it and memorize it, before driving through it. No wheeled devices are allowed during a walk-through; no bicycles, scooters, skateboards, or roller blades. Nothing but your feet.

Walk-throughs are important to an autocross competitor - a course is nothing but a bunch of orange cones standing around in a big parking lot if a driver doesn't know the path through them. More importantly, the course has to be ingrained in the driver's mind, because when he/she is maneuvering through those cones at 40+ MPH ... well, it isn't like a casual Sunday drive through the park.

If an autocrossing club allows 15 minute walk-throughs before every heat, then the

length of the event increases by at least the number of heats multiplied times 15 minutes. What do some clubs do to avoid excessive walk-through delays? They limit the number of walk-throughs to two; one before the start of the event, and the other between, say, the second and third heats. The Virginia Motor Sports Club is such a club, and they put on this particular July 1 event.

Why is this discussion important to this event article? Because I never had a chance to complete a walk-through of the July 1 course. I didn't get to the event in time (remember my previous article wherein I said I was trying to go to church before most events? ...) even to catch the second walk through period. So, I physically ran (remember the air temperature?) through various sections of the course before the fourth and fifth heats. I drove it during the fifth heat.

Why is that such a big deal? Because the course was a bit tricky, with two slaloms, and a Chicago Box (an in-out maneuver through a confined space) near the finish. And a "Figure-Z" lost a lot of drivers at first because it required almost a 180-degree left turn followed by a 180-degree right turn.

I guess I have an innate ability to visualize multi-dimensional objects - I'm a mechanical engineer, the university Registrar once said. So, despite never completely walking this course, I never got lost driving it and put in a very respectable time, as well. But that doesn't mean that in the future I won't try my hardest to get to events earlier and do the most important thing an autocrosser should do - walk the course many times!

Steven Church  
Moseley, VA



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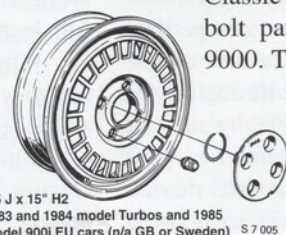
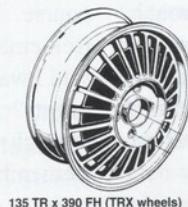


## "The wheels on the Saab go round and round..."

Wheels. We curse at them when we have to clean them, but few other things can have as great an impact on the appearance and individuality of one's Saab. Today, Saab offers complete catalogs of accessory wheels with which you can customize your 9<sup>3</sup> or 9<sup>5</sup>. There is no limit with the current cars as to what you can buy.

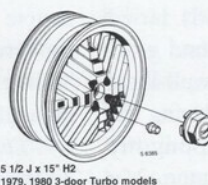
It wasn't always so. Back in the early days of the 99, a prospective buyer had few choices in the wheel area. There were the standard steel wheels, with hubcaps, but to get anything else, one had to go to the Sport & Rally catalog, and pick up a set of the Minilite alloy wheels.

Around 1972, Saab introduced the 'EMS' Alloy wheel with the introduction of the



a distinctive snowflake or "soccer ball" pattern, and at 5" wide are as much as one inch wider than the stock wheels. Saab also used this same wheel casting for the 99 GLE, using gold paint in the places the EMS wheels use black paint.

Over the years, alloy wheels became more and more a standard feature on Saab cars. After the EMS wheel, there came the 'Inca' alloy on 99 turbos and 3-door 900 turbos, the 'TRX' alloy wheel (usable only with metric-sized tires) on 5-door 900 turbos, the 'Manhole Cover' or '21-spoke' wheel, and, in 1985, the ubiquitous 15-spoke 'Sunburst' or 'Teardrop' wheel. Finally, Saab changed the Classic 900 in 1988 to use the same bolt pattern and lug bolts as the 9000. This makes the wheels of the early cars incompatible with the later cars, and vice versa.



## Wheel Tech

There are several items that the prospective wheel buyer should know before starting to look for wheels. This diagram will show the main points of interest for the Classic Saab owner.

Cast or stamped into a wheel will be a designation very similar to this: "5 1/2 J x 15 H2 E40" or "5 1/2 J x 15 H2 ET40". What does this mean?

**Wheel size:** The 'size' of a wheel is usually stated by using the width and diameter. In our example, that would be the 5 1/2 J x 15 (the 'J' refers to the rim flange designation, and should not change on Saab OEM wheels). If you see something like: "135TR x 390FH x 45" as the wheel size, this is a metric wheel designed for the Michelin TRX wheel/tire system. These wheels cannot accept standard tires (and vice-versa). Saab sold TRX wheels in the USA from 1979 to 1981, mostly on the 4 and 5 door 900 turbos.

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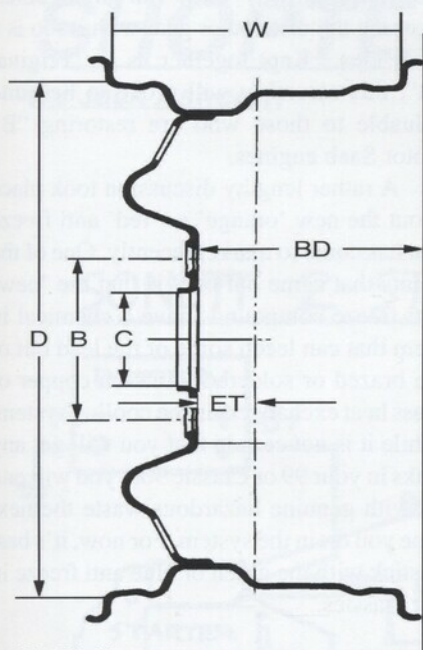
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**Offset:** Offset refers to a distance between the plane of the mounting surface and a parallel plane centered between the bead seats. Offset is said to be positive when the mounting surface is closer to the outside of the wheel, and negative when it is closer to the brake or inside of the wheel. In the wheel designation above, the numbers after

Dimension will tell you how close things will get to your other important wheel well items like brakes, steering arms, control arms, springs, etc. This dimension on modern cars like Saabs is more important than offset.



W: Width  
D: Diameter  
B: Bolt Circle  
C: Centering hole  
ET: Offset  
BD: Back Dimension

the 'ET' or 'E' refer to the offset of the wheel. I have yet found no explanation as to the difference between 'E' and 'ET'. I have wheels that all fit the same car, and have both designations. The Bosch Automotive Handbook 4<sup>th</sup> Edition lists 'ET' as the designation. Possibly the 'ET' is the newer designation.

Offset is often bandied about as the be-all and end-all of fitment specifications. It isn't quite. Offset is designed in to maximize the life of the wheel bearings. Using the 'wrong' offset could adversely affect the life of the bearings by directing excessive forces through them, or changing the way the forces pass through the bearing. Now Saab wheel bearings tend to be pretty beefy, especially on the 75 & up cars, so this shouldn't really be an issue, at least when staying with Saab OEM wheels.

**Back Dimension:** The Back Dimension is taken between the hub mounting surface and the inside wheel lip. The Back

*Example:* Saab sold the Ronal 8-spoke 'Silver Spoke' wheels in 5 1/2 inch width, and in 6 inch width. The Offset of the 5 1/2 is 40mm. The offset of the 6 inch wheel is 32mm. The mounting surface of the wheel had to move about half the increase in wheel width to keep the tire away from important items inside the wheelwell.

**Bolt Pattern:** This term refers to the number of bolts (or stud/nut combination) used to hold the wheel to the hub, and the diameter of the circle that they lay on, relative to the center of the wheel. Usually printed as '4x4 1/2' or '4x114' (metric).

**Centering hole:** On most modern wheels, there is a machined hole in the back of the wheel where it mounts onto the hub. This hole mates to a corresponding flange on the hub. This arrangement centers the wheel and takes some of the stress while mounting the wheel to the hub.

**H2:** This spec, like the 'J' refers to a construction feature of the wheel. In this case, meaning it has two 'humps', which help to prevent the tire from completely coming off the wheel.

## It's right there on the wheel

Some of other important information you need is cast or pressed into the wheel itself. Depending on the wheel, the information (and the designations from above) may be in one of several places: Center 'lugnut' area (most alloys with hub caps), inner rim of the wheel, facing out ('Silver Spoke' alloys, Shelby alloys), and on the back (brake) side of the wheel (most early steel wheels, EMS alloy wheels). The first thing you are likely to see is the part number. Normally underneath or next to the word 'SAAB' or the Saab logotype. Standard Saab 7-digit part numbers,

usually.

On many of the Saab wheels, the wheel's manufacturer has put their logo or mark. Ronal has produced a lot of the OEM Saab wheels, and their logo can be seen on Silver Spoke, Aero, Inca and Sunburst wheels, among others. I've noted marks from Ronal including 'Ronal' and Ronal-II'. Another manufacturer, particularly of the Sunburst wheels of the later bolt pattern, is Fundo. Often there will be a 'JIL' logo on the wheel. This is an approval mark, and indicates the wheel was made to certain specifications.

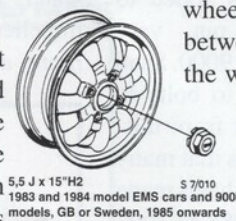
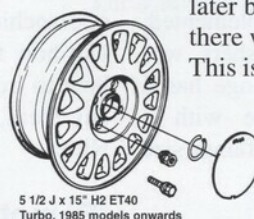
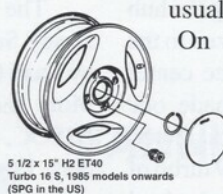
## Alloy wheel centering

Through 1977, Saab wheels were all centered with the lug nuts. The steel wheels' tapered nuts would draw the wheel to a 'centered' position relative to the studs. Similarly, the flange nuts used on the EMS, Shelby and Minilite wheels centered the wheel to the studs via a snug fit between the nut and the stud hole in the wheel. This method is fine with the steel wheels, but with the alloys and their flanged nuts with the protruding 'snout', this can cause problems, such as enlarging of the stud hole in the relatively soft alloy.

By machining the center hole in the wheel to be a close fit to the corresponding ring or lip on the hub, the only job the lug nuts now need to do is hold the wheel to the hub. Enlarging of the stud holes is minimized, if not eliminated, and Saab was able to switch over to a conical lugnut for the later alloy wheels which is compatible with the steel spare.

Centering holes first appeared on the Inca 99/900 turbo wheel, the TRX 900 turbo wheel, and EMS wheels from mid 1978 on. It is important to note that although the EMS wheel did not outwardly change, the early wheels (1972-mid 1978) will not fit over the centering ring on the later hubs. The wheels can be machined to fit, by opening up the space where the centering ring would sit.

Saab did use one interim method of wheel centering. Perhaps as an expedient while waiting for the hub-centric design to be implemented, Saab used a special washer





between the hub and the nut holding the hub to the CV joint. This washer was sized to the center hole in the wheel where the center cap mounts. Only two sizes were made, one for the EMS wheels of 59.9 mm diameter, and one for the Inca wheel on the 99 turbo of 65mm. One can take an Inca (turbo) wheel and put it on an EMS that has this washer, but not vice-versa, because the center hole of the EMS wheel is too small to fit over the turbo's centering washer.

Late in 1978, the 'guide flange' hub for the hub-centric wheels was implemented, and the use of centering washers was discontinued. The centering flange has a diameter of 71.4mm to mate with a centering hole of 71.45mm. This flange size was continued through 1987.

### Changeover

In 1988, Saab changed the 900 over to use the brakes and wheels of 9000 design. This changed the bolt pattern to 4x108mm (4x4 1/4), and the centering hole to 62mm. Also, a smaller fifth hole was added to accommodate an alignment pin, very helpful because starting with the 9000, Saab switched from studs and nuts to bolts to retain the wheels. One benefit from this, aside from the superior brakes, is that many of the more attractive or sporty wheels made for the 9000 are available to 1988 to 1993 Saab 900 owners (and 1994 Convertibles, too!).

But here is where the prospective buyer needs to do his or her homework. Since Saab only put the 5 1/2 x 15 inch wheels on the 900, one might run into some rubbing issues, depending on tire size and manufacture when fitting, say, 6 1/2 x 16 inch 9000 wheels to a 1991 900. Late wheels can be accommodated on earlier cars if one were adventurous enough to change the hubs, brakes, and handbrake from the earlier style to the later. But that's a whole article to itself!

In other news, the participants in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Tech Session with John Moss raised \$1,000 at a charity auction of Saab paraphernalia. The money was donated to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's PBA fund for the families of those who perished in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

The tech session, hosted by the New Jersey Saab Owner's Club, and sponsored by Saab Cars USA was again a big success. More than 40 people attended, from the NJSOC, the New England Sonett Club, the New England Saab Association, and other clubs. John Moss and Gary Stottler helped everyone to understand the inner workings of the 'B' motor water pump.

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Tech Session will, of course, be held the first Saturday in November of 2002. John and I are thinking of branching into some more general topics, like how to read Saab wiring diagrams & how to troubleshoot electrics. If you have any ideas, please send them on to me c/o Nines.

### 'B' motor Water Pump reprise:

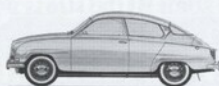
John Moss made some very important comments at the tech session, which I feel need to be added to my column from Nines # 254.

First, the supply of entire "B" motor water pumps (bearing, seals, shaft & impeller) has dried up at Saab. There are no more, and likely will not be, but bearings,

seals, seal kits, and impellers can still be obtained. In most cases, if properly removed, the pump shaft is just fine to use. John also said that anyone scrapping out one of these motors for any reason other than a broken jackshaft or water pump shaft really should remove the jackshaft and pump shaft and *keep the two together* as they have already been run in together. Keeping the distributor gear with it too is a good idea. Kept together as an "original set", this assembly will prove to be quite valuable to those who are restoring "B" motor Saab engines.

A rather lengthy discussion took place about the new 'orange' or 'red' anti freeze that has come to market recently. One of the points that came out of it is that the 'new' anti freeze compounds have a chemical in them that can leech some of the lead out of the brazed or soldered joints on copper or brass heat exchangers in the cooling system. While it is not certain that you will get any leaks in your 99 or Classic 900, you will end up with genuine hazardous waste the next time you drain the system. For now, it's best to stick with the green or blue anti freeze in our classics.

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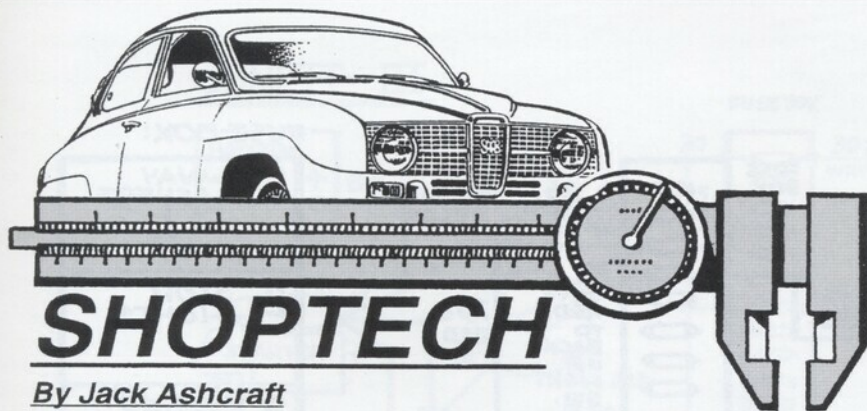
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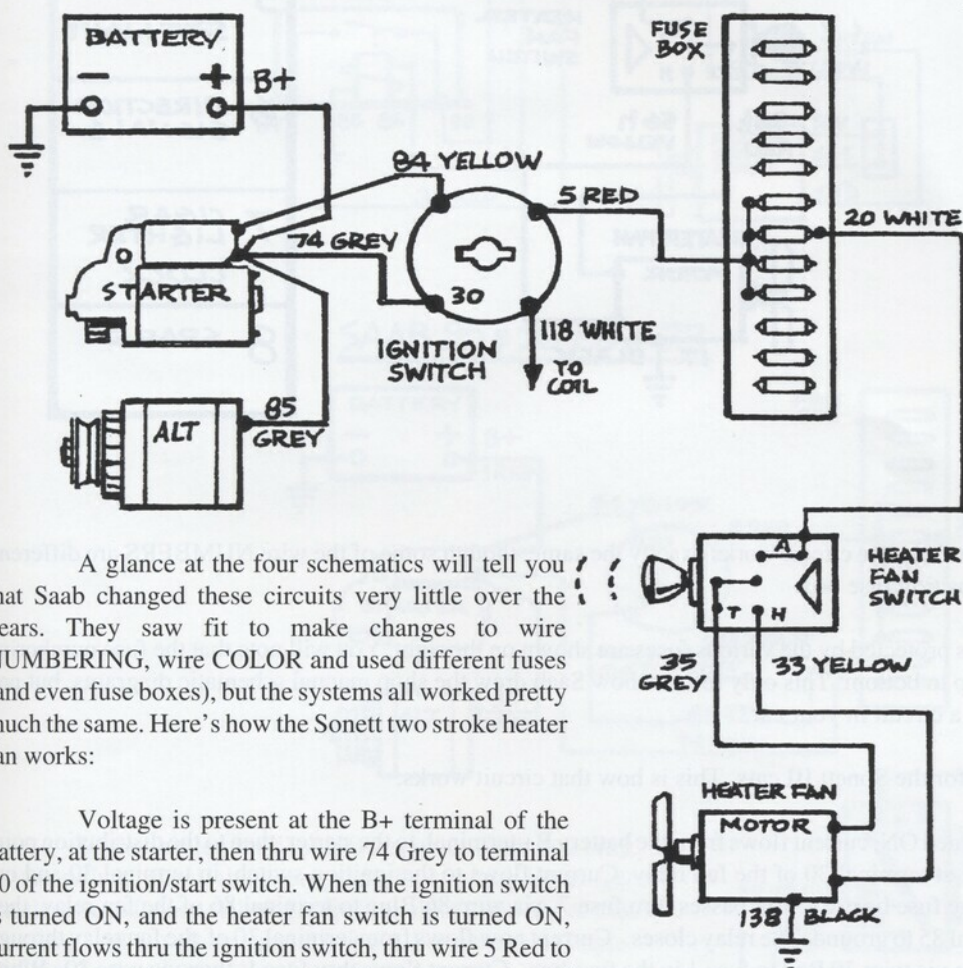




## FANNING THE HEAT

The efficiency of Saab heaters is legendary, and is something we take for granted in our little Trolls. Lets look at how the electrical portion of the 95/96/97 systems work, so when yours does NOT defrost your windshield, you'll know how to fix it.

### SONETT 2-STROKE



FUSE BOX:

1	HI BEAM, R SPOT LIGHT
2	HI BEAM, L
3	LO BEAM, R
4	LO BEAM, L
5	PARK LIGHTS
6	OIL RELAY EL. FUEL PUMPS
7	HEATER FAN
8	WIPERS COOLING FAN
9	BACK-UP LIGHTS CIGAR LIGHTER
10	BRAKE LIGHTS CLOCK
11	FOG LIGHT HORNS
12	DIR. SIGNALS

A glance at the four schematics will tell you that Saab changed these circuits very little over the years. They saw fit to make changes to wire NUMBERING, wire COLOR and used different fuses (and even fuse boxes), but the systems all worked pretty much the same. Here's how the Sonett two stroke heater fan works:

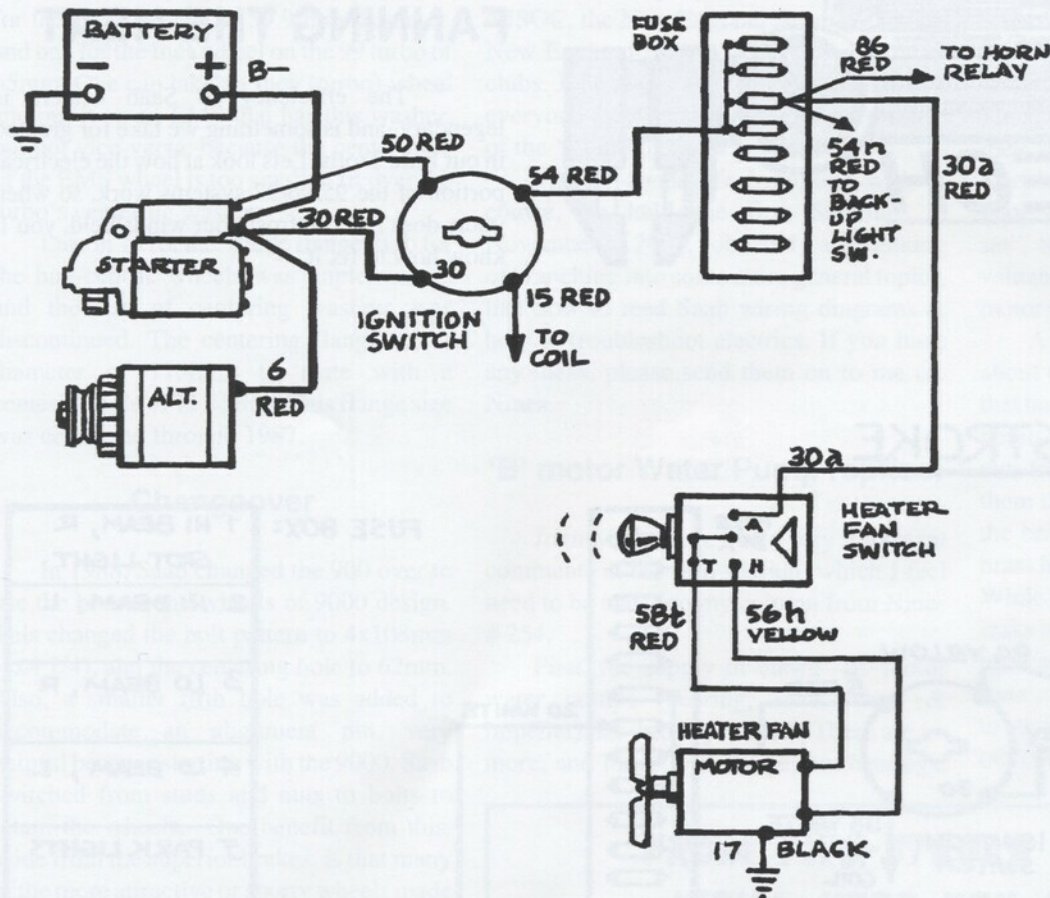
Voltage is present at the B+ terminal of the battery, at the starter, then thru wire 74 Grey to terminal 30 of the ignition/start switch. When the ignition switch is turned ON, and the heater fan switch is turned ON, current flows thru the ignition switch, thru wire 5 Red to the fuse box. Current passes thru fuse 7, thru wire 20 White to the heater fan switch.

If the fan switch is ON in the first position, current will flow thru wire 33 Yellow to the fan motor, thru the motor, then via wire 138 Black to ground, the back to the battery negative (-) terminal, completing the circuit. The fan motor runs at ° speed.

Pulling the fan switch out to the second position allows current to flow from the fan switch via wire 35 Grey to the fan motor, thru the motor, then to ground via wire 138 Black. The fan motor runs at full speed.



## SONETT V4



### FUSE BOX:

1	4-WAY FLASHERS
2	STOP LIGHTS
3	BACK-UP LIGHTS HORN HEATER FAN
4	PARK LIGHTS W/WASHER INSTRUMENTS
5	MAP LIGHT SPOT LIGHT
6	DIRECTION SIGNALS
7	CIGAR LIGHTER CLOCK
8	SPARE

Look at the schematic for the Sonett V4. The circuit works exactly the same, though some of the wire NUMBERS are different. Note that the Sonett V4 shown used an 8 position fuse box.

NOTE: In each instance the circuits protected by the various fuses are shown on the right. You will note that the fuse numbering for the Sonetts and the 95/96 is opposite, top to bottom. This only reflects how Saab drew the shop manual schematic diagrams, but pay attention to that if you are trouble-shooting a circuit in your car.

Saab added a relay in the heater fan circuit for the Sonett III cars. This is how that circuit works:

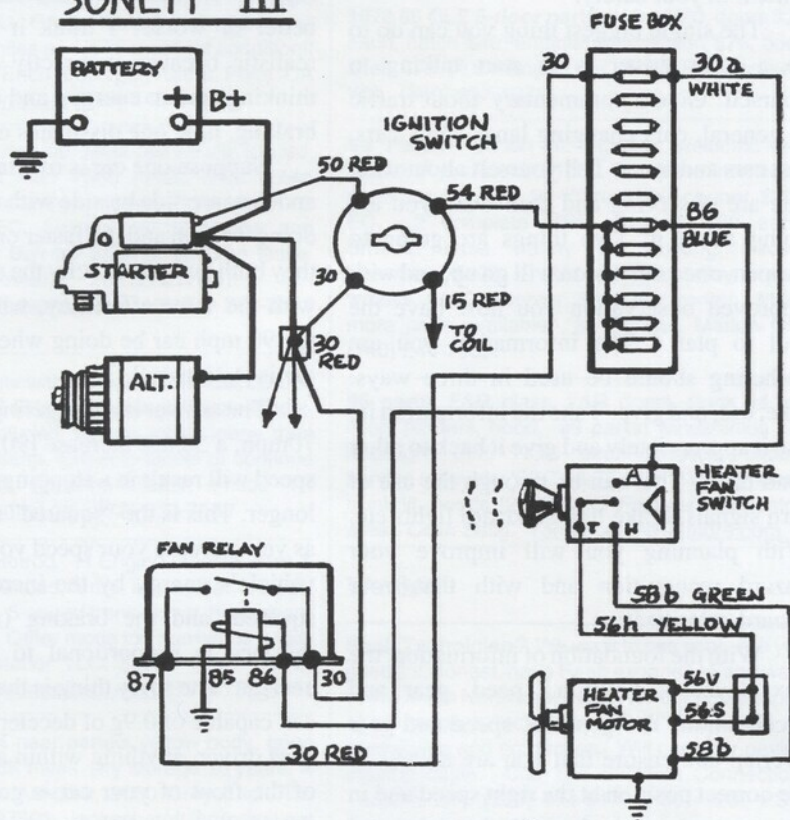
When the ignition/start switch is turned ON, current flows from the battery B+ terminal, to the starter, then to the distribution point 30 in the wiring harness. Voltage is present at terminal 30 of the fan relay. Current flows to the ignition switch, in terminal 30 and out terminal 54, thru wire 54 Red to fuse 7 in the fuse box. Current passes thru fuse 7, via wire 86 Blue to terminal 86 of the fan relay, then thru the windings of the relay and out terminal 85 to ground. The relay closes. Current now flows from terminal 30 of the fan relay through the now closed contacts, out terminal 87 then via wire 30 Red to fuse 1 in the fuse box. Current flows thru fuse 1, then via wire 30a White to the heater fan switch.

When the fan switch is turned ON, current flows to the heater fan motor exactly as described previously, causing the fan motor to run at either half or full speed.

The Saab 95/96 cars' fan motor circuits work exactly the same as did the Sonett II and Sonett V4. The diagram for the rocker switch used on the later 95/96 cars is shown.



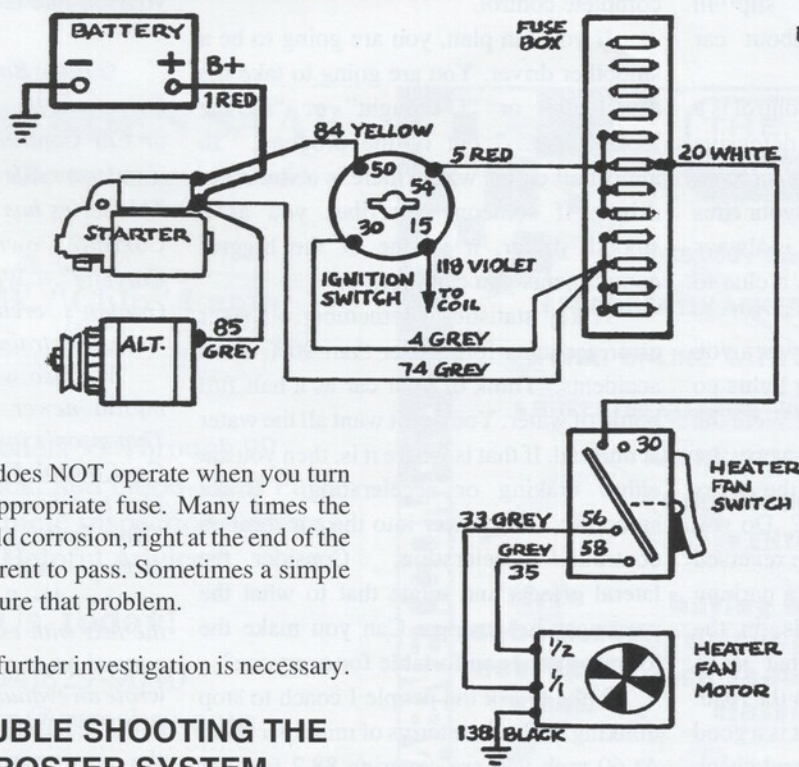
## SONETT III



### FUSE BOX:

1	HEATER FAN
2	CIG. LIGHTER RADIO
3	SPOTLIGHTS
4	DIRECTION SIGNALS
5	STOP LIGHTS
6	INSTRUM'T LIGHTS
7	B/UP LIGHTS FAN RELAY
8	HORNS
9	RELAYS
10	INSTRUM'T FEED
11	W/WIPERS
12	W/ WASHER

## SAAB 95 & 96 1972-73



### FUSE BOX:

12	LOW BEAM, RIGHT
11	LOW BEAM, LEFT
10	PARK & TAIL LIGHTS, RIGHT
9	PARK & TAIL LIGHTS, LEFT
8	B/UP LIGHTS INST. WARNING LIGHTS
7	HEATER FAN
6	W/WIPERS W/WASHERS
5	HORNS SEAT HEATER
4	DIRECTION SIGNALS
3	BRAKE LIGHTS
2	CLOCK, DOME LIGHT, TRUNK LIGHT, CIGAR LIGHTER
1	SPARE

If your heater fan does NOT operate when you turn on the switch, check the appropriate fuse. Many times the standard Saab fuses will build corrosion, right at the end of the fuse, that will not allow current to pass. Sometimes a simple "3000 mile fuse roll" will cure that problem.

If the problem still persists, further investigation is necessary.

## NEXT TIME: TROUBLE SHOOTING THE HEATER/DEFROSTER SYSTEM



## Driving or Car Control?

Most of us if not all, have to drive. We have to since there maybe limited or no public transport to get us to our destination, on time and with the flexibility we want. As you will have noted it seems as if more and more cars are on "our" highways – all competing for that 20 feet or so of space. Not only has traffic density gone up but we have more distractions. The debate still rages over the relative distraction of tuning a radio versus using a cell phone versus talking to your passenger. No matter what your personal feelings on these issues the fact of the matter is that once you start your car, you and your loved ones are in a very dangerous environment. What can we do to get the maximum protection for ourselves?

The first step is your state of mind when you get into your vehicle. You know that you are a good driver – right? So, you need to challenge yourself with the question "How can I be a better safer driver?" Back to the state of mind. You are not "just" driving; you are now responsible for yourself, family and the other road users. Start thinking about the potential impact of that thousandth of a second slip in concentration. Start thinking about car control versus driving.

What's the difference? Car control is a major step in approaching defensive driving. It is an all-embracing process starting with you. Do you check your tires every week? Is there one tire that is always a few pounds off? Might that be a clue to having the tire or valve checked?

Did you do a cockpit check when you got into the car? Did the warning lights go out before you started the engine? Were the instruments reading normally, were the passengers all strapped in with the doors secured before you moved away? Do you look at the ground after you have reversed out of the garage or away from a parking spot? Are there any vital fluids on the ground seemingly always in that same relative spot? So now you are on the road. Do you do a moving brake test? It is a good habit to get into. Go to 20 mph and check the mirror, and "breathe on the brakes." Do

they bite? This is not boring stuff, this is critical to your safety.

The single biggest thing you can do to be a safer driver is to start talking to yourself. Give a commentary about traffic in general, cars changing lanes, slow cars, fast cars and more. Tell yourself about what you are observing and then what you are doing about it. Two things are going to happen, one your vision will go up, and with improved observation you now have the tool to plan. The information you are gathering should be used in three ways: take, use, and give. Take the information in, use it appropriately and give it back to other road users. This can be through the use of turn signals, brake lights, hazard lights etc. With planning you will improve your hazard recognition and with that your hazard prioritization.

With the foundation of information, the next layer is position, speed, gear and acceleration. The position, speed and gear overlap and ensure that you are always in the correct position at the right speed and in the correct gear for all hazards and occasions. You can then move to the acceleration phase with the car under complete control.

If you can plan, you are going to be a smoother driver. You are going to take the "suddenly" or "I thought" or "He/she looked like..." out of the program. In almost all cases, where there is a smoother driver. If someone describes you as a smooth driver, it is one of the biggest compliments you can receive.

A key statistic to remember – Driver error accounts for greater than 90% of all accidents. Think of your car as a half full bottle of water. You don't want all the water at one end. If that is where it is, then you are either braking or accelerating. Brake smoothly; feed power into the car through controlled acceleration. Consider the lateral effects and relate that to what the passenger is sensing. Can you make the journey more comfortable for everyone?

I like to ask the people I coach to stop thinking in absolute terms of miles per hour. At 60 mph you are covering 88.2 feet per second or about 4 car lengths. The

conversion is 1.47 but use 1.5 to multiply mph into ft/second for ease. Does that sound better or worse? I think it sounds more realistic because it directly converts into thinking about energy, and in a case of braking, how one dissipates energy.

Suppose one car is overtaking another, and they are side by side with the slower car doing 70 mph and the faster one, 90 mph. If they both brake at exactly the same time and with the same efficiency, what speed will the 90 mph car be doing when the 70 mph car is stationary?

The answer is a staggering 57 mph! At 70mph, a 28.6% increase [90 mph] in your speed will result in a stopping distance 52% longer. This is the "squared" rule in action, as you increase your speed you increase the vehicle's energy by the increase in speed squared, and the braking (not thinking) distance is proportional to the vehicle's energy. The scary thing is that at 70 mph, a car capable of 0.9g of deceleration, with an alert driver, anything within about 270 feet of the front of your car is going to be hit. Speed does not kill, but the inappropriate use of speed kills.

Safe controlled driving to you all. Talk yourself into talking, and you will be safer.

*Gordon Booth is the Chief Instructor of Drivetrain Inc. of San Jose CA. "Driving or Car Control" is the first of a series of articles on safe driving written by Gordon. This series has previously appeared in the Corvette owners magazine, "Team Corvette". We encourage you to check Gordon's credentials on his web site, [www.drivetrainusa.com](http://www.drivetrainusa.com).*

*We also wish to remind readers (and inform newer subscribers) about David Thompson's instructional text, New Driver Car Control: From Kamikaze to Competent. The text forms the basis of Thompson's "New Driver Car Control Clinic," a teen driving instruction course previously sponsored by Saab Cars USA, Inc. We used the text with excellent results to teach car control to our younger two children and wrote an evaluation of the training program in NINES 234. You can learn more about the program and order texts at [www.carcontrol.com](http://www.carcontrol.com). -Ed.*



## Saabs For Sale

**2001 9<sup>5</sup> 4 Door Sedan** 4 cyl turbo 5 speed manual trans. Lt. Green Metallic with tan cloth interior. 7,000 miles and is in excellent condition!! \$26,900. **TSN** Erich Bollinger, Dana Point CA [ecbollinger@home.net](mailto:ecbollinger@home.net) (949) 443-2494

**2000 9<sup>5</sup> SE** - Lost job, Must sell - Fully loaded, automatic, less than 7500 miles. Dark green exterior with tan leather interior. Power sunroof, heated seats. EC.. Leased last September and barely drove it. Buy for \$32k or assume lease. Rose McGowan, Charlestown MA [rtmcgowan@mindspring.com](mailto:rtmcgowan@mindspring.com) (617) 242-3613 (Rose or Lee)

**2000 9<sup>3</sup> SE**, white with black trim, manual, 32,000 miles. Assume \$431/mo. payment. Sports model, all leather, all included. 18 mos. left on lease, then purchase from Saab, turn in to dealer or continue payments. **TSN** Christina Reiter, Frisco TX [careiter@concentric.net](mailto:careiter@concentric.net) (972) 333-7133

**1974 99 EMS** Hotrod. H Engine, special cam & suspension, balanced, turbo, intercooler, nitrous, epsilon wheels. 5-speed trans blown, have spare trans for buyer. Other mods too numerous to list. Needs some interior TLC. \$2500 OBO. H. E. Penner, NV. [hepener@aol.com](mailto:hepener@aol.com), (775) 783-8387

**1969 Sonett V4** near perfect yellow body, good mechanicals. 58K miles. Dry storage 10 years. A creampuff. Jack Ashcraft, 2030 Grey Eagle Dr, Medford, OR 97501. [jackashcraft@prodigy.net](mailto:jackashcraft@prodigy.net) (541) 779-0731.

"TSN" indicates a photo is available at The Saab Network Classifieds:  
<http://www.saabnet.com/tsn/class/>

## Parts & Miscellaneous For Sale

**1978 99 GLE 5-door parts.** Hood \$20, doors \$25 each, hatch \$40, engine/transmission \$75, body shell, \$75, plus many others. Andy, Port Angeles, WA. (360) 457-4971

**V4 Parts.** Sonett III: radiator w/electric fan, recore 2 years old, \$100. Complete interior w/ seats, door panels, for '73 pull-style opener, \$200 EC. 2 complete MSS exhaust, \$80 each. Smooth case tranny w/ working 6-roller freewheel, \$400. 2 sets soccerball alloy wheels w/bolts, \$150 w/center, \$100 w/o center. Many more parts available. M. Songer, Marion OH, (740) 244-7969.

**96 parts:** F&R glass, L&R doors, trunk lid, pr. Front fenders, hood. **99 parts:** windshields (2), headlight trim, NOS bearings/seals, factory service manuals: '69-74 & 75-880, F&R bumpers, trunk lid, hoods (2). Offers. Parts are in Boston area. Colin Selig. [Tompooche@lafmore.com](mailto:Tompooche@lafmore.com)

## Wanted

**Saab Technician?** We want to see you. Are you cheerful, honest, have Saab experience and want to live in the Northwest? Busy independent repair shop needs a technician. Top Pay based on experience and production. Will consider paying moving costs. Call The Swedish Connection, Tacoma WA. (253) 474-0177 8:30 - 5:00 PST. [Tconnection@gwest.net](mailto:Tconnection@gwest.net)

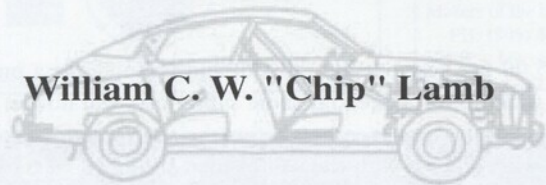
Our mailbox is becoming sparse these days with regards to subscriber contributions. I'd like to remind everyone to write up their stories. Regular topics include "what I've carried in my Saab," "my Saab saved me," "wild and crazy things I've done and lived to write about," and "my Saab." We've also not been receiving maintenance and repair questions; does this mean everyone's Saab is trouble free?

Gordon Booth of Drive Train is contributing a series of articles he wrote on better driving. After our tour of the Southeast in the 2002 Aero Wagon, I think people really need it. Is everyone trying to emulate a NASCAR driver? I don't object to the speeds people drive; in fact, a friend once said of me, "Steve never saw a speed limit he didn't break." What frightens me is the parade of up to two dozen cars, less than a car length apart, locked together in the left lane. While they whiz along at perhaps 75 mph, a smaller parade of cars overtakes them in the right lane and forces themselves into the column as they approach the next semi-trailer. These are just plain bad driving habits. If the right lane is empty, drive in it. If you're in the left lane, leave space for those who are driving in the right lane to enter when they overtake slower traffic.

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As featured in Consumer Reports' 2001 Used Car Buying Guide

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It made me wonder, after singing the praises of having some Saabs in rental fleets, helping both promote the brand and helping buyers by establishing a supply of "nearly new" Saabs, that the practice placing cars in the rental fleets has been suspended. It turns out that the rental fleet program is a casualty of the terrorist war. Following the September 11 attack, Enterprise (Saab's rental fleet partner) put an immediate hold on new car purchases. Business is returning, but by now a fleet order would filled too late to allow those cars to be resold during the current model year. The subsequent reduction in resale value makes rentals a losing proposition. Saab is making up some of that shortage by selling into the corporate "fleet" sales market, by qualifying for the "approved list" for company cars.

I have received the letter seen below from Phil Lacefield Jr., regarding the formation of a new Saab Club of North America, which will be distinct from NINES. This "dual structure" of having a club organization separate from the publishing company has served many of the other national car clubs well, including BMW (Roundel), Mercedes (Star), and the Saab Club in the UK. I hope everyone appreciates the benefit of supporting a National Club. The nationally honored discount program alone makes a SCNA membership an investment with a likely return of hundreds of percent. Phil and I both are committed to the success of SCNA, and the continued excellence of NINES magazine. And NINES will still be available at the current subscription rates for those who don't have the need or desire for Club membership.

Dear Saab Club Members:

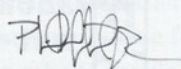
During my trip to the International Saab Convention this past June, it became clear to me that the lack of a central national Saab Club in the United States puts us out of step with other Saab clubs of the world. The UK, a country the size of Florida, has over 9000 active members in their national club, many more than the number of NINES subscribers, and many regional clubs. Here in the US, with no central club organization, various regional Saab clubs have flourished and survived. They have hosted regional and national events, with varying degrees of support from Saab Cars USA, helping to feed the fire of Saab enthusiasm all across the map. I believe the time has come to bring it all together.

Effective September 1, 2001, Saab Club of North America, Incorporated was founded as a non-profit 501C(7) organization operating out of Middletown, Ohio. By the time you read this, IRS paperwork will have been processed and the SCNA will be in place and ready to do business. Stephen Goldberger and NINES Publishing will continue to bring you the same great content that you've come to know and love in NINES every other month, and you can add quite a bit more to the value of your subscription – an actual club membership.

This will encompass several new additions and a few changes. First, everyone who joins the club will continue to receive NINES bimonthly. In addition, Club "dues" will go towards more than just a magazine subscription. Members will receive a unique membership number and membership cards, which will entitle them to 10% off parts and service at all participating Saab dealers and most independent Saab repair shops around the country (and so far every dealer and independent we have contacted has offered to participate.) Second, the club website at [www.saabclub.com](http://www.saabclub.com) will be updated to include an online signup section and a "members only" section, full of news, product updates, recall information, advance event signups, special SCNA merchandise and more. Third, we will invite and encourage all the current local and regional Saab clubs to become chapters of the SCNA, thereby allowing all Saab owners and club members around the country to belong to the same club – the SCNA. Fourth, the SCNA will provide event insurance for all sanctioned meets, fun drives, autocrosses, rallies, gatherings and the like. Fifth, starting with the SOC02 in Cincinnati next August, we will elect a board of directors and an executive board to handle the affairs of the SCNA in the way a true non-profit auto club should be handled.

The dues for membership in the SCNA will be \$40.00 per year, \$45.00 per year outside the US, and will include a one year's subscription to NINES. NINES will still be available separately at the current subscription price, but those subscribers will not be issued a membership card and will not be eligible for member benefits. Current subscribers who become members before their subscription expires will have a year added to their subscription, and their Club membership expiration will coincide with the end of their subscription term. New memberships and renewals may be handled at the web site, [www.saabclub.com](http://www.saabclub.com), or by mail. The Saab Owners Convention will become an official function of the SCNA, hosted by a regional chapter. The next few months will likely see some growing pains as we work with SCUSA to bring more new car buyers into the fold, but as always we will count on you, the loyal Saab faithful, to spread word of the SCNA to owners of all vintages.

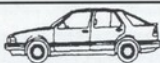
Thank you all for your input and patience. Let's all do our part to make the newest car owners club the best one in the land!



Phil Lacefield Jr.  
Executive Director, SCNA inc.

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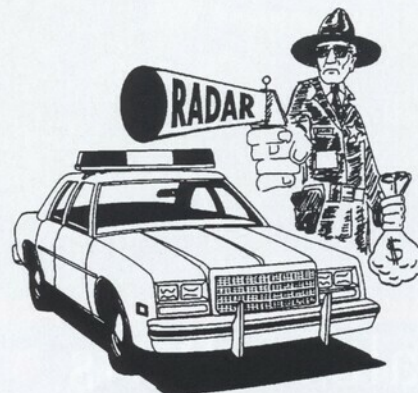
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