

Column Shift**When Is Midnight for Your Car's Oil?****By John Goreham***Question from Carol D.:*

Q. For these newfangled cars, which include my Mini, the car tells you when you need your oil changed. It worked out that I was able to get about 13,000 miles before the first oil change. They keep telling me at the Mini dealership that because the oil is synthetic, the car can go longer between oil changes. I really doubted this, but they insisted it was O.K.. So, I guess my question is, how long can you go between oil changes when your car uses synthetic oil? I also wonder how your car "tells" you when you need an oil change. What type of monitoring is it doing?

A. Trust the maintenance minder. Much has changed in engine design since the days of 3,000-mile oil changes. Cylinder liners, how the oil is circulated inside the engine, and filter design have evolved. Also, if the car carries more oil, it makes sense that it might last longer.

Your little Mini (redundant?) engine has a capacity of nearly 5 quarts. I've owned older, much larger engines that held less.

The fact that the oil is synthetic is a big part of why the car can go so long. Synthetic oil is designed and proven to work past 10,000 miles. Synthetic oil is simply a more highly engineered liquid. The molecule size is more closely controlled than mineral oils and contains fewer contaminants. Synthetic oil is tested at high and low temperatures to ensure it exceeds the parameters that oils are expected to meet. The price tag proves it!

Synthetic oils became popular with high-performance cars. I looked at the web site for the most popular of the brands, and the cars that come standard with synthetic oils tend to be performance-oriented such as the Dodge Viper.

However, synthetic oil is making its way into more mainstream vehicles as turbocharging becomes more popular. Turbochargers have bearings that rotate at up to 20,000 revolutions per minute (RPMs). They can require some special lubrication techniques to live as long as the rest of the engine will.

Kindergarten Information Meeting at Day School**Contributed to
The Norfolk Boomerang**

There will be an informational meeting for parents concerning the kindergarten program and the kindergarten screening process. It will also address special education services that are available to preschool children and children entering kindergarten.

The program will be held on Thursday, March 18 in the Library of the H. Olive Day School at 7 p.m. (Door #3).

All parents and guardians of children entering kindergarten are encouraged to attend. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions concerning the kindergarten program, screening, and special education services available to kindergarten and preschool children.

If you have any questions concerning the screening process or the special education services available, please call Carol Gahan at 508-541-5478. For any questions regarding the kindergarten program, please call Linda Balfour at 508-541-5475. If school is closed that day, this program will be postponed to a later date. This meeting is for parents/guardians only.

If your child will be 5 years old by August 31, 2010 and is not yet registered for kindergarten in September, please call the H. Olive Day School at 508-541-5475, Ext. 0 for further information.

**(Above): On the dash of the Mini.****(Above): The maintenance minder on the Highlander.**

One reason not to change oil more than needed is botched jobs. I've had improperly replaced oil filters leak on my cars. Folks I know have had the mechanic strip the threads that are in the oil pan, which requires an ugly fix. Mini does recommend you change the oil at least every two years even if you have very few miles driven.

As to how the car knows when you need the oil changed, that depends on the specific car. Some use an algorithm. The car's computer tallies things like revs, cold starts, and how much time you spend in the high-RPM range and then calculates how long you can go before maintenance. Because of this, you might notice

that number in "Miles Left Before Maintenance" counts down differently from the actual driven miles as you go along. The car is making a projection based on how you have driven already. If you drive on the highway a lot, you will go more miles between maintenance reminders than if you frequently race around town on short trips. Other cars, like my Toyota Highlander, simply count the miles and start to remind you when it gets to the set point — 5,000 miles in the case of my Highlander.

Let me restate that the point is not to try to find some universal oil change mileage for all cars. Rather, the manufacturers should be a trusted guide for all of the maintenance intervals for the cars they make. Some cars might still require a 3,000-mile oil change. Many still recommend 5,000. You need to check the manufacturer's manual.

Think of it this way. How often should you feed your pet? It sort of depends on the pet, wouldn't you agree? Cars are this way. You can't come up with a single rule of thumb to cover them all. They are just too different from model to model.

It is wise to check the oil and other fluids in any car at least monthly. Sometimes oil is consumed and needs to be topped off. Be sure to read the manual. Commonly checked fluids include coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid, and, in some all-wheel-drive vehicles, differential fluid. The list is vehicle-dependent. You need to read the manual.

Some fluids are meant to be checked cold and some when the car is hot. I've not found this to be completely consistent from car to car and fluid to fluid.

Please send me a question at john@columnshift.com.

Guest Column**The Compass****By William R. Crane**

I have just finished reading a book for the fourth time. It is a disturbing work, to say the least. It is *The Commandant of Auschwitz* by Rudolf Höss. If you recall, Auschwitz has been in the news of late, when it was reported that the sign over the main gate had been stolen. The sign read "Arbeit Macht Frei," which translated from German means "Work Makes You Free." This, of course, was an extremely cynical slogan, as Auschwitz was a death camp and by its very nature was an institution that no inmate would ever survive, let alone leave as a free person.

Much has been written since World War II about how a nation such as Germany could have fallen under the spell of someone like Adolf Hitler and then follow him into the horrors of the Second World War and then follow his orders and attempt to eliminate the Jewish race in Europe by rounding them up and murdering them. The Germans are a well-educated people, innovative, industrious, and hard working, and yet they fell under Hitler's spell and moved to the dark side.

The reasons that enabled Hitler to come to power are easily explained. Following Germany's defeat in World War I, the allied powers assigned Germany reparations for what the allies determined was Germany's fault for starting the war. The allies dictated a new form of government, the Weimar Republic, which was distrusted and despised by most Germans. Germany experienced runaway inflation and high unemployment, then the Great Depression. The country also experienced constant unrest caused by the Communists and other, smaller groups. Germany was a mess and was ready for a strong leader, and Hitler was that man.

But that doesn't explain away all the excesses that were to come. So perhaps we need to examine the career of Rudolf Höss. He was born to a typical German family. His father wanted him to study for the priesthood. Höss, however, joined the military and served in World War I at the young age of fifteen. After the war he was active in paramilitary groups, joining the Freikorps. These were volunteer outfits which defended the shaky borders of Germany and were also used by the government to quell internal disturbances.

Höss was captured by the police and charged with murder, found guilty, and sentenced to ten years. He served six years and was released in a general amnesty. He married, had three children, and, five years later, he accepted Heinrich Himmler's call to join the SS (secret police) as a guard at the infamous Dachau concentration camp near Munich. He performed his duties well, and was promoted and assigned to the Sachsenhausen camp.

With the invasion of Poland in 1939, the functions of the concentration camps changed. Theretofore, they had functioned as prisons where criminals and political prisoners alike were kept. Now, since the SS was charged with protecting Germany from its enemies, the job of executing the "enemies" fell to the concentration camps, and it was to be carried out immediately upon receipt of the prisoner. Höss contends he was taken aback by this change in mission but rationalized it by reasoning that if the Führer (Hitler) decided this was the correct thing to do and gave the orders it must be the right thing to do, and he obeyed with blind loyalty.

With the conquest of Poland, and subsequently large amounts of Russia, Hitler had a new problem, and he put into motion "The Final Solution" for dealing with the large amount of Jews living in these conquered areas. The Germans would build death camps and eliminate (murder) them all. Because of Höss's good record and accomplishments, Himmler chose Höss to build the death camp of Auschwitz in the small Polish town of Oswiecim. He became the death camp's first commandant.

Höss speaks in emotionless terms of how he and his deputy, Karl Fritzch, first used the gas Cyclon B, an insecticide, on one of the first shipments of Jews to be executed. It was a complete success and became standard procedure at not only Auschwitz but at the other camps as well.

Höss then goes on to tell of building the crematoriums to incinerate the bodies and coldly describes technical problems and how he found ways around them to increase production. It was as though he was describing a shopping trip to Roche Brothers. By 1944 Höss reckoned he had eliminated more than two million Jews. This he described in a matter-of-fact manner as though he was talking about Monopoly money.

For his good work he was promoted and left Auschwitz. At war's end he blended in with the other nine million men in uniform and by using a false ID he was assigned to work on a farm. He was finally identified by the British, taken into custody, and subsequently turned over to the Polish authorities, where he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to hang. He was given a reprieve of several months to write his autobiography for future generations to study. He was hanged in 1947.

To the end Höss maintained that while the extermination of the Jews was "fundamentally wrong" he never for a moment thought of refusing to take part in murdering more than two million souls.

So how do I sum this up? By writing this article I want to make two points. First: the Holocaust happened and we cannot forget it. The second point let me try to explain thusly. The compass is an interesting device that has saved countless lives. When pointed in the proper direction it indicates north and by doing so tells us where east, west, and south are, also. When we are lost it shows us the proper direction, which enables us to find our way.

I believe we all have the equivalent of a moral compass, and when we ignore the reading, we end up in trouble. Of course, God is the moral compass I refer to, and when we lose His direction is when the trouble begins; and there is no better example of that than Adolf Hitler's godless Nazi Germany. Look at the other two monsters of the 20th century also, Josef Stalin and Pol Pot — Godless also.