

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2010 Toyota Prius III

BY KATHLEEN CARR

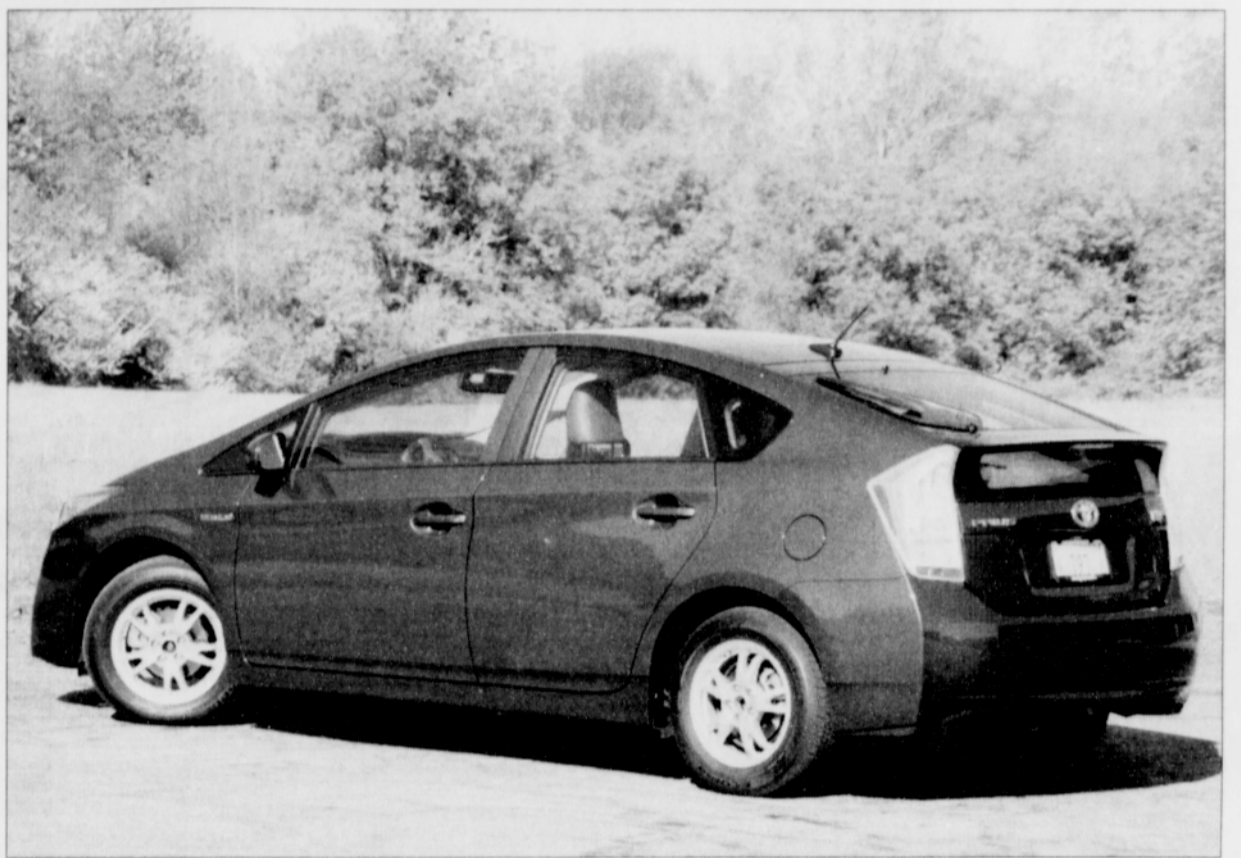
The Toyota Prius was completely redesigned for 2010. It remains a four-door hatchback that seats five people. The car's hybrid powertrain consists of a 1.8-liter gasoline engine that produces 98 horsepower and 105 pound-feet of torque that's used in conjunction with two electric motors and a special planetary gear set that functions as a continuously variable transmission in total the system power is 134 hp net.

The current powertrain is a little more robust on the highway than the previous-generation car, although not really any quicker away from a traffic light. It is more fuel-efficient estimated fuel economy of 51 mpg in the city. A hefty lead foot will drop mpg into the high 30-mpg range, however if keep your mind on the "Eco" driving mode indicators, and use of the new EV mode, which allows a mile of pure-electric driving with a well-charged battery pack it will help any driver extract more than 50 mpg in city driving. At full acceleration, both power sources work together to provide the maximum get up and go. Although under a lighter load conditions such

as stop-and-go traffic, the Prius alternates between the two, often running on battery power alone. This maximizes the car's fuel economy potential. The brakes are now discs at all four corners, and the regeneration that captures kinetic energy, turning it into electricity, has been improved.

Inside the cabin you find that the stiffer body shell helps reduce noise and vibration from the engine and continuously variable transmission. The new body style creates more room for it passengers. However there is less front knee room, side to side, thanks to the new center console, but the driver's seat is now height-adjustable. It may be a little to quiet because it took a few moments for us to notice that it was on, although it great when driving because you do not feel the change between power.

The Prius has a Touch Tracer system that mimics your finger-swipes over steering-wheel controls over the gauges, so you don't have to look down to adjust radio stations or climate-control settings. Power windows, cruise control, and an AM/FM/XM/CD player are standard. Major new options include a moonroof with



Vehicle Specifications: 1.8L DOHC VVT-I 4 cylinder engine; 51 city mpg, 48 highway mpg; MSRP \$27,909.

solar panels, powering a fan that draws hot air out of the car without using the Prius' other batteries. A remote air conditioner is also available, along with a navigation system, LED

headlamps, Bluetooth, and a backup camera.

Toyota's reputation for reliability and durability is holding true for the Prius. Although the Toyota Prius is

quite complex, future repairs and part replacements could be quite expensive. It's an excellent commuter vehicle that meets the needs saving money and the environment.

Health Net Volunteers Pitch in to Fix Home

About a dozen employees of Health Net Health Plan, a local insurance company, teamed with the non-profit Rebuilding Together group, to help an elderly north Portland resident, fix up his home.

The goal of the recent day-long community service effort was to help make Howard Minor's home more inhabitable.

The volunteers scraped the old paint off the exterior of the house before priming and painting it. They tore up old and soiled carpeting, in addition to an old retaining wall. They cleaned out a dilapidated shed and hauled away.

At the end of the day, Minor and his daughter, Shirley Minor, and grandson, Rodney Graves, warmly thanked the volunteers, as did a string of neighbors who remarked on how well the house looked.

"Our crew worked very hard, despite the hot sun and the difficulty



of the work," said Bill Dwyer, a Health Net business analyst who served as a leader on the project.

This is the fourth year Health Net has been involved with a Day of Service campaign to improving the inhabitable of someone's home.

Rebuilding Together, a foundation of north Portland's Rebuilding Center, is dedicated to helping repair the homes of people experiencing financial hardship or disability.

◀ Rodney Graves (left) and his grandfather Howard Minor (second from right) welcome Health Net Health Plan fix it volunteers Bill Dwyer and Maggie Huffman to Minor's northeast Portland home.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

State of Hate

continued from Front

tion Against Hate Crimes, said that Volksfront once had such clout that smaller hate groups and individuals essentially shied away from doing anything without getting its approval. Blazak added that Krager has left the state, hastening the group's decline.

Harsher enforcement

Oregon has also taken a harsher tact toward hate groups. Shortly after Mulugeta Seraw, and Ethiopian student, was brutally murdered by Portland skinheads the police set up a hate crimes unit, while the Legislature passed hate-crimes laws and voters approved get-tough-on-crime ballot measures.

"When we turned the heat up on these guys and put a lot of them in prison they said, 'this sucks,'" said Burkeen.

Blazak said that with Volksfront in decline, there are a few smaller and less-organized hate groups lurking on Portland's east side, in addition to the Hammerskin Nation across the Columbia River in Vancouver, which is perhaps the best known.

"When there are smaller groups there isn't as much communication; there aren't as much finances; there's

fewer things to be able to grab onto," explained Daniel Nielsen, assistant special agent in charge for the Portland Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, who confirmed Blazak's assessment.

The advent of the Internet has made it even more difficult to know how big a threat an "organization" is, according to Blazak. Sometimes a foreboding website that appears to have many committed members is just one person in their mother's basement, which Blazak said was the case in one instance.

"That is always a problem because those groups aren't going to give up their membership list," said Heidi Beirich, research director for the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups nationally.

Without large public events, said Beirich, it's hard to gauge how big a group is.

Blazak said that one person can download and print out hateful fliers or stickers from the Internet and litter their neighborhood with them. Recently this happened in the Sellwood neighborhood in southeast Portland when someone got stickers from the racist National Alliance. Last year, someone released balloons marked by swastikas in various parts of the

city. "How much of it is real and how much of it is imagined? Let's face it, a lot of these guys go out and thump their chest, but are they really doing a whole lot? No, because they're not anxious to go to jail," said Nielsen.

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— Daniel Nielsen, assistant special agent in charge for the Portland Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigations

Incidents continue

But ugly incidents continue to proliferate across the state, according to reports from anti-hate groups. Earlier this year two Troutdale teenagers painted racial slurs and swastikas on tombstones in a Jewish section of a cemetery. This summer a Pendleton man yelled an anti-Jewish epithet before head butting a judge for the city's annual wiener dog race, among other occurrences tracked by the coalition. Three Native American men were beaten by men yelling racial slurs in

Portland earlier this year. Two Medford men pleaded guilty to burning the letters "KKK" into the lawn of a racially-mixed couple's house, among other incidents.

Hilary Bernstein, community director for the Anti-Defamation League's Pacific Northwest Region, said that

her organization received 12 complaints about hate groups in Oregon as of June, which she said is unusually high. Many involved National Socialists the southern and central Oregon.

The SPLC claims there are only seven hate groups in Oregon, but only four espouse a white supremacist ideology.

"It's out there on the fringe, but it's just not the same" said Mary Wheat, spokesperson for Portland Police who previously worked as a bias crimes detective.

However, Wheat said that the police still butt heads with European Kindred, an infamous hate group founded in 1998 in Oregon's Snake River Prison, but the group has changed.

EK is now better known for organized crime than organized hate, according to people close to the issue. "They go about business differently than your Crips and Bloods," said Burkeen, who explained that EK engages in low-level crimes that aren't likely to be on the nightly news.

Hate group monitors and old news reports make virtually no mention of EK committing overt racist act. Instead they detail white males selling meth, committing ID theft, burglarizing resident of Portland's east side, and intimidating witnesses. The SPLC doesn't even list it is a hate group.

Driven into Hate

Blazak said that whites who are typically driven into hate groups fear an erosion of their positions of privilege in America's dominant culture. The election of the first black president at the loss of industrial jobs pay into those stereotypes and ensure that hate groups will continue to proliferate, he said. It's just a question of what shape they'll take. A Department of Homeland Security report released last spring warned that the election of a black president, rumors of looming gun restrictions, and a glut of veterans unable to readjust to civilian life could create conditions ripe for right wing extremism.

The report was blasted by conservative pundits as politically charged before a rifle-wielding white supremacist opened fire in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in June killing a black security guard.

The man was later revealed to have a long history with hate groups, and had been tracked by the SPLC.

No one saw it coming. Could it happen in Portland?

"I'm not going to say there's not going to be that nut job out there," said Nielsen.

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**Happy Birthday
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