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Cover: A BMW Isetta displayed at the Cars & Coffee, DIY and New Member Event at BMW of Sterling. Read the article on page 10. Photo: Steve Tenney

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**BMW Car Club
of America**
National Capital Chapter



President's Message

Welcome to 2017!!! Another trip around the sun brings a lot more fun stuff to do this year. As always, we'll continue to have our HPDE and autocross seasons, plenty of tours, DIYs, and social events. But our first big event of the year will be our Annual Membership Meeting at the Embassy Suites in Springfield, VA. Our 2017 Board of Directors will be anointed, so make sure that you vote online prior to joining us for a great night. We welcome back Mike Renner from the BMW Performance Driving School as our guest speaker. Someone will walk away with a free ///M school as our Grand Prize winner. We'll also have plenty of other giveaways from our club sponsors and we look forward to kicking off another great year of NCC fun!

I want to thank all the volunteers for an awesome 2016; they are the ones that make this club so special. In my five years of leading this chapter, I've gotten a true appreciation for the dedication, blood, sweat, tears, but most of all, the time spent planning and running events. As a volunteer-run organization, know that your efforts truly make this club second to none. Your devotion is very much appreciated and thanks again for all that you do.

Finally, to the rest of our members, all I ask is that you take full advantage of your membership. The discounts are great, but our official mission statement is 'to enhance the BMW experience through camaraderie, education, and social responsibility.' We encourage you to come out to events, meet fellow members, and get involved. Even if it means trying something different, we can help you get acquainted. You'll also find that while we all love our cars, we have some dynamic people in our chapter. And it's those friendships that will keep you coming back for more.



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FromThe Editors

What a couple of months. The only problem as I see it, is that averages are averages because they are averages. Maybe this is the new normal, but the weather has exceeded expectations for driving. Cool and clear. Nary a snowflake in sight and only the occasional rain drop. It cannot last. Oh well.

We have had some really fun outings.

The most recent Pie Run, from Catoctin Orchard to Wilson's Farm to the Bavarian Chef was outstanding. And this one had the most participants to date. Read the article on "The Enduro Run." There are many more events which are both educational and entertaining. These are really low-stress events which increase enjoyment of our

performance vehicles and extend our social circles.

The Volkswagen debacle still haunts us. And it appears to be infecting BMW as well. Sales are down. I hope the issue fades out. I think VW has learned the lesson. One would hope other manufactures as well. Probably not.

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the National Capital Chapter of the BMW CCA



Guest speaker will be Mike Renner
from the BMW Performance Center

Saturday, February 11, 2017 at the Embassy Suites,
8100 Loisdale Road, Springfield, VA 22150

Cocktail hour at 6:30 pm, dinner at 7:30 pm,
and the meeting starts at 8:30 pm

Register at



For room reservation options, please see the NCC website.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November

- 3 NoVa Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse in Tysons, VA
- 5 DIY @ BMW of Sterling
- 5-6 TRSS BMW-NVCC-CCA Volunteer Sign Up
- 5-6 Street Survival in Columbia, MD
- 5 BMW CCA Cars & Coffee @ BMW of Sterling
- 9 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 10 Columbia Social @ The Second Chance Saloon in Columbia, MD
- 17 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
- 19 Great Pie Run XIX

December

- 1 Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse in Tysons, VA
- 8 Columbia Social @ The Second Chance Saloon in Columbia, MD
- 14 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 15 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 19 Christmas Lights Tour

January

- 5 NoVa Social @ Jaleo, Crystal City
- 11 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 12 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 19 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
- 28 3rd Annual NCC Cars & Chili Competition

February

- 2 NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City
- 8 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 11 2017 NCC Annual Membership Meeting & Holiday Celebration
- 16 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD

March

- 2 NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City
- 8 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 16 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
- 25 Just a Tour to Brush off Dust

April

- 12 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD

2017 NCC Chapter Officer Elections

Each year, our volunteer-run organization elects the leaders of this great chapter. Every elected position is up for grabs annually: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

For more information about the officer positions, please see our chapter bylaws.

Voting will take place online from Jan 1 thru Feb 10, as well as by ballot during our 2017 Annual Membership Meeting on Feb 11. For more information on the meeting see Coming Events.

COMING EVENTS

There are three Thursday events each month. They are socials for each distinctive geographic area covered by the NCC: Northern Virginia, Montgomery County and Columbia (the Baltimore area).

NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City
Thursday, January 5, 2017

2017 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
Thursday, January 12, 2017

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
Thursday, January 19, 2017

The 3rd Annual NCC Cars & Chili Competition, Location TBA
Saturday, January 28, 2017

Our 3rd Annual NCC Cars & Chili Competition will be another friendly cookoff among club members for the ultimate bragging rights of who can make the best chili. Categories are Traditional Red, Homestyle and Vegetarian.

NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City, VA
Thursday, February 2, 2017

Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
Wednesday, February 8, 2017

Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
Thursday, February 9, 2017

2017 NCC Annual Membership Meeting & Holiday Celebration

Saturday, February 11, 2017
Embassy Suites by Hilton Springfield, 8100 Loisdale Rd., Springfield, VA 22150

Join us for an evening of merriment and BMWs as we return to Virginia for our Annual Meeting and holiday celebration. The guest speaker is Mike Renner.

All attendees will be entered to win great door prizes at night's end.

Cocktail hour at 6:30 pm, Dinner to follow at 7:30 pm and the annual meeting at 8:30 pm.

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
Thursday, February 16, 2017

NCC BMW CCA Chapter Utility Vehicle

By James Laws | Photos by Michael Gessner



As everyone will recall from past articles in the *dB* it takes a lot of equipment to support the numerous events that the chapter sponsors throughout the year. This includes the chapter tents, tables, chairs, banners, and more. The storage and movement of these items has become more and more complicated as the amount of equipment grows with the number and scope of our events.

To address this situation the chapter board made a decision to secure a vehicle to move and store our equipment and supplies. After a long search, and seemingly endless discussions, the National Capital Chapter has taken the plunge and purchased the Chapter Utility Vehicle (CUV).

Chapter member Frank Acquino saw the *dB* notice and reached out to the CUV search committee to offer his 2001 525iT to the chapter.

After a test drive and inspection, the opportunity was discussed at the October board meeting and a decision was taken to make an offer to Frank for the vehicle, which he subsequently accepted.

The vehicle is in very good condition, with only a few repairs required in order for it to pass Virginia safety inspection. The required repairs as well as most subsequent maintenance will be performed at chapter DIY sessions by

chapter members. In addition, the car will be used as the subject of tech sessions sponsored by the DIY committee.

The following services and repairs have been performed by chapter members Marlon Spencer, John Francis, and Duane Summons at the BMW of Sterling DIY.

- Oil change
- Coolant flush
- Replacement of front windshield gasket
- Replacement of front headlight assemblies
- Inspection of brake system, front and rear suspension, and tires

In addition, the right-rear passenger door window regulator has been replaced.

Still to be done prior to state inspection is the replacement of rear brake pads and rotors, and the ABS controller.

As time progresses check this space for continuing updates on the progress of the CUV.

Sincere thanks are extended to Frank Acquino for bringing this opportunity to the chapter.

(Above) The National Capital Chapter's recently purchased Chapter Utility Vehicle. (Below) With the help of chapter volunteers the vehicle is being made roadworthy and ready to pass Virginia's state inspection.





October DIY Event at RRT

By Marc Caden

October's DIY event took place at one of our longtime sponsors – RRT automotive service and performance center located in Sterling, VA. We are fortunate to

have such an experienced and generous sponsor like RRT for both our autocross and DIY programs, and we sincerely appreciate their continued support.

RRT has been specializing in BMWs since their inception and their employees have over 150 years of combined experience. The bulk of their work is done servicing and

maintaining BMWs and they back all of their service work with a competitive warranty. They also offer club members a ten percent discount off OEM parts.

(Top) RRT's parking lot looked like a Cars & Coffee event with many "M" models and unique builds. (Below) DIY Coordinator Phillip Cummings welcomed everyone to RRT and gave some brief safety instructions.





RRT's focus is on "car management" which means they handle virtually all of your car's needs on site. In fact, RRT can do nearly any project your car requires on the

premises other than exterior paint work. For example, RRT has fabricators, custom coders/tuners, engine builders, designated service technicians, and designated race

technicians. By keeping so many of your car's projects in house, RRT is able to maintain a very high standard and quality control of their work product.

In addition to routine maintenance, RRT is well known for their performance modifications. For example, RRT is the largest independent DINAN dealer in the world.

(Below Left) Chris Wootten applied some black vinyl decals along the window trim of his beautiful 318ti. (Right) After changing the oil and filter on his 1997 318is, John Hewes makes sure the oil level is just right.





Utilizing their partnership with DINAN engineering, they can offer your newer BMW more performance without compromising your factory warranty. While “performance” may mean something different to each driver, RRT can do everything from making your car a more enjoyable street performer to making it the fastest on a track or autocross course.

A lot of useful repairs and maintenance were completed at our October DIY event hosted by RRT. Ty Joseph replaced the power steering reservoir and hoses on his

1999 Z3 M Roadster. John Hewes replaced the engine oil and differential/transmission fluids on his 1997 318is. Nick Nikas replaced the differential and transmission fluids on his S52-engine-swapped 1987 325e. Rob Goodman replaced some oxygen sensors on his 2001 325i. John Key replaced the differential fluid on his 2010 535i M-Sport. Tim Kenny replaced the transmission bushings and transmission fluid on his 2005 BMW M3.

Chris Wootten showed off his newest purchase – a diagnostic device and software that interfaces with a phone app called “My Carly.” For about 15 minutes, we all thought Chris was telling us about his marvelous new online girlfriend “Carly” until he actually hooked up the device to Phillip Cummings’ E36 M3 and we realized that Carly could actually read and reset air bag codes, read and reset diagnostic codes, and even custom code your car. All of us watched in amazement as Chris demonstrated how previously unknown custom codes could be unlocked in a matter of minutes. For example, on a new 3 Series, you can modify code settings that control easy entry functions, daytime running lights, iDrive menus, interior lights,

and much more. Several of us left the event with a new gift idea for the upcoming holidays and when I arrived home I said “hey honey, please get me My Carly for Christmas!” Wife’s response: yeah right, that’s Chris Wootten’s girlfriend! For more information see: <http://www.mycarly.com>.

Prior technical experience isn’t a pre-requisite to attend a DIY event. The bulk of the projects involve simply draining and replacing fluids (such as engine oil, driveline, brake, power steering, etc.) and there are volunteer

helpers on hand to assist you. All you need to bring is a decent set of metric sockets and wrenches, your replacement parts or fluids, and a set of directions specific to your task (which can usually be found online).

As always, our DIY event coordinators Phillip Cummings and Chris Wootten ran a well-planned event. There were doughnuts in the morning and a nice afternoon pizza lunch provided for all participants. Special thanks also goes out to RRT and Shop Foreman Michael Olenyn for sponsoring another great event!



(Above) Nick Nikas drains the transmission fluid on his 1987 325e.

(Below Left) John Key pumps fresh fluid into the rear differential of his 2010 535i M-sport. (Right) Ty Joseph installs a new power steering reservoir and hoses on his 1999 Z3 M Roadster.



The Club Store is Back!

We have a new online store with quality items for our members.

The BMW store is the perfect place to get Chapter gear from \$14 to \$30 for ladies and gentlemen. Since the store is online you can order, purchase and have the merchandise delivered to your home. There is also a new item, a chapter umbrella. The variety of merchandise will increase and we will be able to provide both logos as you, the members take advantage of the current inventory. All items will come with the NCC BMW Car Club logo on the front left chest. On dark apparel, please be aware that the logo will come as a mandatory heat

pressed patch with a white background per BMW national standards. On all light apparel, you may opt to have the logo embroidered. When choosing this option, the logo will not come with a white background.

Look for the new store on our website
<http://forum.nccbmwcca.org/store.php>



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Cars & Coffee, DIY and New Member Event at BMW of Sterling

By Steve Tenney

The National Capital Chapter (NCC) makes a concerted effort to create an event for new members to introduce them to the NCC and familiarize them with programs that the club offers. The hope is to ensure that new members have an opportunity to find activities that they find interesting. As you might expect, the NCC is entirely based on volunteer involvement so interested people are always welcomed. From the club's premier High Performance Driving Event program and the Autocross program to the Social programs that the club regularly supports and the special events like the America's Cup cruise off Annapolis, there are events for anyone with an interest in BMW and motoring in general.

A very popular program is the

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) program. A yearly schedule is arranged with various repair shops in the region to allow NCC members to come in on a Saturday morning and conduct repairs of their own vehicles. The advantages of having the use of a lift as well as assistance from a qualified technician are significant. Many people make it a regular activity to bring one of their cars to conduct maintenance that can be done in the time available and is not too complex for their skills. We are to do the repairs ourselves, but can get assistance from a technician who has agreed to be present for the activities.

To combine a Cars & Coffee with a DIY starts the morning with a social activity and combines the benefits of completing repairs at the DIY. One of the best facilities available for the DIY is that of BMW of Sterling. A new, clean shop in absolutely top condition with technicians and even the shop foreman to assist is an ideal situation. Of course being at a BMW dealer is nice because parts are available on site at discount to club members. What more could you ask?

BMW of Sterling also makes their conference room available to us, which is a

great place to hold the New Member Briefings. Combine that with a lunch down in the shop for everyone and we can ensure that new members get maximum contact with the DIY program and some of our most avid club members. We would like to send out a special thank you to Ryan Hoover (Parts Manager at BMW of Sterling). His enthusiasm and support keeps a great relationship active between the NCC and BMW of Sterling. Thanks, Ryan.

The Cars & Coffee has become a great way to start a Saturday or Sunday weekend morning while bringing out our prized cars, and to see and



(Above) On display at BMW of Sterling was a BMW Isetta.





(Above) The Chapter Sign-up Table at the Cars & Coffee. (Below) A Z8 a Z3 with M4s and an X5.

talk cars with those who have a similar interest. BMW of Sterling agreed to clear the parking in front of the dealership and even provided the coffee for all who come out. The day started with the club leadership present to talk about the club. We signed up six new members during the C&C in the morning. Our cars were lined up on display representing the brand and club and showing the full range manufactured by BMW from iconic examples to the latest models. It's a great show for any car enthusiast, let alone a BMW fanatic.

From the C&C we moved to the New Member Briefings for the most recent members. Most of the club programs were explained and reviewed as well as activities that we all enjoyed in the recent past. The ride on the America's Cup replica ship and the club corral during the IMSA race in August at the Virginia International Raceway (VIR) were described. This year is a special 100th anniversary year for BMW and the annual Oktoberfest was a special event held at Laguna Seca in

California this past August. We hope that many members will come out and join us during the upcoming Holiday Party in February.

After the New Member meeting, we moved to join the DIY in the shop to have lunch and allow the new members to mix with those who were in the process of repairing and improving their cars. It was a chance for those new to the club to see for themselves first hand and hear directly from those involved about a great way to take advantage



(Right) Paul Seto & Jim Laws speak to the new member group.

of a benefit of membership. In fact, for many, the DIY is sort of a social program in that they come out to help and be part of these activities and repairs. All are welcome to participate, assist or provide moral support.

This was a very successful event for the NCC. We met our newest members and even signed up some new members as part of the day's activities. We want to thank BMW of Sterling for their continued support of the club programs and particularly the enthusiastic support provided to club members conducting maintenance at their fine facility. If you missed this event, please watch the calendar and make sure to come out to some of the activities offered by the NCC.



(Top) Chris Wooten at work on his 318ti. (Middle) Lots of help for Doug Verner and his E92 M3 and Chris Wooten's 318ti (L to R). (Below left) Doug Verner is assisted by Jason Brown the BMW of Sterling Shop Foreman. (Below right) Marlon Spencer enjoying the DIY.





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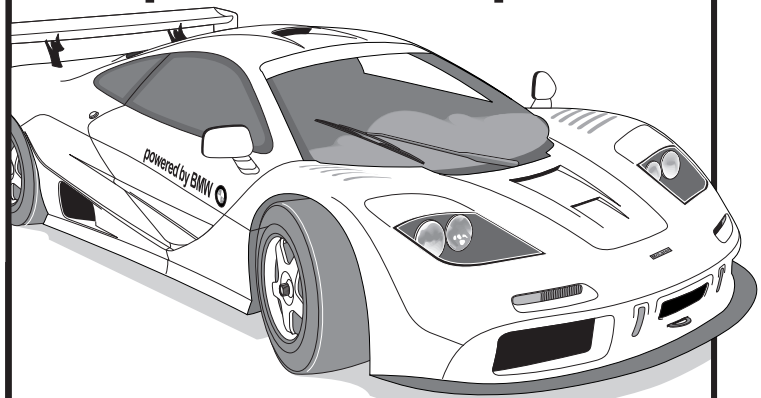
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Enduro Pie Run XIX: How to Drive through Two States in No Time at All

By Anna Maripuu

Saturday, November 19 was the last gloriously sunny and relatively warm day we would have before winter set in. What a joy then for the 60 or so people who had decided to spend their day driving in the beautiful Maryland and Virginia countryside. The cohort included not only BMWs, but some Porsches and other vehicles. We've always said as a club that having a BMW is not a prerequisite. Anybody can join in the fun.

We started out at 9 am at the Catoctin Mountain Orchard for a pie buying frenzy. The flavor variety of pies there is dizzying – from blackberry apple to pecan to pumpkin to peach. There are plenty of other yummy things to buy such as varieties of apples, snacks salty and sweet, vegetables, preserves, and home baked goods. I'm pretty sure no one left the store empty handed.

The first long drive covered some 115 miles taking the caravan from Thurmont, Maryland, through beautiful countryside passing Antietam Battlefield, across the Potomac River,



(Top) BMWs lined up neatly at the Catoctin Mountain Orchard parking lot in Thurmont, Maryland. (Above Left) Club president Paul Seto and Mark Rosenberg enjoy lunch at the Bavarian Chef in Fredericksburg, Virginia. (Center) Tourmeister and Tourmistress Algie and Angela Livingston with future Tourmeister Greyson. (Right) There was no shortage of good German beer during lunch. Prost!



(Above) Having a BMW is not a prerequisite for coming on one of our tours. This beautiful air-cooled Carrera 911 made an appearance.

and south into Virginia to Wilson Farms Meat Company in Catlett, Virginia, south of Manassas. All along the small, undulating roads were picturesque and colored with the vibrant fall leaves which are still, for the most part, stubbornly hanging on to their trees. The weather couldn't have been better – clear, sunny and in the 70's.

By the time we reached Wilson Farms, the day was in full swing with the sun shining brightly from on high. Wilson Farms is a very popular stop along the way, and coolers already filled with pumpkin pies, were now brimming with various fresh meat products.

The long BMW train proceeded onto the second leg of the journey which took the group further south to Fredericksburg, Virginia. The next stop was the quaint Bavarian Chef, where copious amounts of German comfort food were

(Below Left) A giant pretzel at the Bavarian Chef is only one of the great things to share with those sitting at your table.



served in what used to be an old railroad station. Every once in a while a real train would roar by on the nearby tracks.

After a very enjoyable and social lunch there was an optional last stop at Potomac Point Winery and Vineyard in Stafford, Virginia. Many people opted to drive home at this point, but a few diehards enjoyed the wine tasting and socializing.

I was lucky enough to be in the navigator position co-piloting with John Francis in his E90 M3. Sometimes I really enjoy "going along for the ride" especially in such good company. On our way back to the DMV it started raining as



(Above) The line to buy pies inside the Market was long but efficient, and everyone emerged happy with their purchases. (Below Center) Tourmeister Algje made a few announcements during lunch at the Bavarian Chef to a packed room.



(Above) Picking up pies at the Catoctin Mountain Orchard Roadside Market is a tradition that should not be missed.

we fought thick traffic on 195 North. When we stopped to refuel at a Shell station, a big beautiful rainbow appeared. It was a fitting end to what had been a long, but incredibly fun day.

I encourage anyone who has not participated in one of our tours to come out and join in the fun. This was probably the largest Pie Run ever to date, so we'll have to break records again with the next one! The hugest of warm thanks goes out to Tourmeister Algje Livingston for all the hard work that goes into organizing a tour. One of the participants remarked that he had been on tours before but had never seen such accurate and detailed turn-by-turn instructions as those provided by Algje. We'll all be looking forward to the next great tour.

(Below Right) The Bavarian Chef is a renovated train station. In addition to being quaint, it serves great German food.



The 2017 Los Angeles Auto Show e i e i...oh

By James Chew

For every action, there is a reaction.

There's a reason why this is considered a law. During last year's major auto show season, our friends at BMW NA had rather low-key media days. As you may recall, I asked Dr. Willisch why the lack of a press event. He stated that they felt that they didn't have anything truly news worthy to announce. From my review of the year-to-date sales figures, BMW NA has paid a steep price for not having any major product launch press events during last year's

major auto show season. Unlike past generation 3 Series mid cycle freshening (that always include outstanding new powertrains) that historically result in significant sales increases, the 3 and 4 Series year-to-year sales are down by almost 30%. And while

year-to-year sales are up almost 50%, the all new 7 Series still lags behind the Mercedes S-class sales by almost 35%. Unlike the Mercedes GLM and Lexus RX sales, the BMW X5 sales have decreased. And because of a rather subtle launch

during last year's New York Auto Show, the e- and i- Performance model sales are almost non-existent.

No matter how one looks at it, the end result for BMW is grim. Despite the runaway success of the new X1 as well as significant sales increases from the 2 and the 7 Series, year-to-year BMW sales are down by 9%. The headline story in

the November Automotive News best summed up the result of BMW current product strategy: "Star Power: How Mercedes took the luxury lead, 4 years ahead of schedule"

Reviewing the sales statistics, the only good news for BMW NA is that despite a significant sales decrease, BMW dealers still have some of the lowest inventories in the market. Because BMW will NOT need to have a fire sale to clear old inventory, the low dealer inventory helps maintain a higher BMW product resale value.

This is why I found the BMW Los Angeles Auto Show media day activity press release puzzling. Rather than focusing on the new 5 Series, the one-time benchmark executive sport sedan that simply HAS to prove to the market that it is again THE benchmark, the focus was to have various senior executives available to discuss the various e (plug-in hybrid) and i-Performance (models that use the BMW eDrive electric drive technology) products.

It's clear that the executives at BMW AG and BMW NA are way too obsessed with the Toyota Prius and Tesla sales. Year to date, Toyota has sold almost as many Prius' as 3, 4, 5 Series combined. And Tesla sales are significantly higher than BMW 6 and 7 Series combined. Ignoring the fact that neither the Prius nor the Tesla products sell at a profit, the BMW focus on the e- and i-Performance models can be viewed by some as a distraction as BMW tries to develop "Ultimate Driving Machines" for the 21st century. While developed with the same benchmark engineering and design attention-to-detail obsessed BMW product development processes, the North American e- or i-model sales have been much less than impressive.

Oddly enough, BMW NA thinks that they have ACES up their sleeves in order to develop 21st Century "Ultimate Driving Machines". ACES stands for



Autonomous, Connected, Electric, and Shared. By the way, Mercedes has similar 21st Century product development goals – though theirs are known as CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, Electric).

"Data is the new oil". The Intel CEO made this declaration during the first of the L.A. Auto Show (now called "Automobility") media days. After being highly criticized by the Wall Street analysts for missing the mobile electronics market, Intel has decided to bet big on the ultimate performance mobile device – the automobile. Intel's contention is

that for BMW and Mercedes to achieve their 21st Century product development goals, high speed in-vehicle data product processing coupled with Cloud computing connectivity is key.

Before becoming upset that cars are becoming computers on wheels, the fact is that they already are. Computers are now used to help control every major aspect of vehicle operation to the point that your new BMW performs at peak efficiency in every road and climate conditions.

We are already close to

achieving the "Connectivity" goal. Have you noticed that WiFi is now an option on the 2017 BMWs? This, combined with BMW Assist, the BMW Apps, and the GPS tracking has us as connected as we would be in the Home or Office. Think about the last time your passengers looked out the windows during a long drive.

Achieving the "Autonomous" goal adds the layer of complexity to achieving the "Connected" goal. To allow for fully autonomous vehicles, the vehicle must have the appropriate connection "size", speed, security, and scalability. Intel's experience with laptops and wireless office devices should help. To show their commitment to this area, they recently purchased a company that specializes in the development and production of field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs).



(Opposite page and Left) We're making sausage – ever wonder how the products are perfectly placed and the "product specialists" so knowledgeable?

This, coupled with the CEO's comment that they are investing \$250M over the next five years in this area, showcases Intel seriousness in this market.

While Intel was discussing how they were meeting the desired data connectivity, the Ford CEO, Mercedes VP R&D, Porsche Director, Connectivity; and McLaren Director, Advanced Technology, discussed how they were planning to use this new capability to improve their product operation and ownership experience. The McLaren remarks were most interesting – they discussed how the technology would be used in both the racing and street products.

The “Electric” goal discussion was the most interesting. Raised only by the German manufacturers, this struck me as an overreaction to the VW diesel engine emissions scandal. The German manufacturers reactions were clear – Audi Racing dropped their stunningly successful endurance racing program to focus on Formula E. VW will no longer sell diesel-powered vehicles in the U.S. Mercedes has announced that they are studying dropping their diesel products in the U.S. And if you've visited the BMW web site lately, you'll notice that the X3d is no longer available. Prior to the VW scandal, the German manufacturers were dis-



(Above) To our friends at BMW AG - Mercedes believes that “The Best or Nothing” means focusing on driving performance!



cussing how to convince the liberal European government agencies on how the latest round of imposed emission standards would be impossible to meet. Thanks to VW (more precisely Ferdinand Piech) the entire German auto industry may now be permanently damaged.

The “Sharing” goal is the most puzzling. Over the past eight years, the anti-car forces have been promoting the perception that millennials are shunning car ownership. These anti-car forces have been using every trick from the

book, “How to Lie With Statistics”, to use their questionable data to prove their point. It was quite interesting to listen to a number of presenters during the first media day discuss how recent surveys have shown that as they get older and start families, millennials are moving to the suburbs and very interested in car ownership.

For us older folks, this was one of the biggest “duhs” from this event.

By the way, the other “duh” was that SUV/CUV/SAVs are all the

(Above and Below) Has Audi surpassed BMW in terms of aggressively tasteful performance oriented exterior design?



craze. When Jaguar, Bentley, and now Alfa Romeo introduce a SUV, a Mercedes full-size pick up truck doesn't sound all that crazy!

The developed "sharing" technology will find a home for fleets and rental vehicles. And its usefulness for privately owned vehicle may be questionable, unless we consider it's potential for the "family car".

I was able to only attend the first media day of the L.A. Auto Show ("Automobility"), which was the manufacturer's display set up day. Promising to be on my best behavior, I was allowed access to the halls to quickly see the BMW display being set up. I was quite pleased to see that the displayed BMW products were targeted to the Southern California market. While "e, i-Performance" models were present, there were almost a number M-models as well as a Motorrad product. It was great to again see my BMW product specialist friends, dressed in casual clothes while reviewing the product specification while inspecting the displayed products in preparation for the show. Ironically, even though the media days were focusing on BMW's "green" products, it was clear that the public days focus is on their "Ultimate Driving Machines".

As an industry observer it's clear that there is an on-going battle in the BMW AG executive suite

concerning the future heart and soul of this company. The VW diesel engine emission scandal have steered the current liberal European governments to set regulations to eventually eliminate the use of the internal combustion engines. In fact, for the past eight years, our own government has been trying to do the same. The BMW management response to these outside forces smacks of an overreaction that is already having detrimental effects to operational and financial well being of the company.

But both our recent Presidential election and Brexit election results have given rational thinking/true believers within the auto industry a reason to smile. Within Europe, rational thinking politicians are gaining favor within



(Above) "FINALLY – the Alfa competitor to the 3 Series. Does anyone care?"

their respective countries. As with we Americans, the Europeans now seem tired of governments that smugly dictate how things should

be because they "know better". They want a government that works for the people, not create poorly thought out and executed social engineering programs.

Casting political correctness aside, the auto industry true believers know that technology, not government regulation, can save the day. By refocusing on free market forces rather than the current social engineering, clairvoyant car companies will succeed and offer even more amazing vehicles that focus on the joy of and freedom with owning and driving personal transportation to the market.

Let us BMW faithful hope that is it these rational, true believers that win the current battle within the BMW AG executive suites.



(Above) Even Continental is focusing on connectivity rather than driving performance. Notice their use of a Cadillac to showcase their connectivity technologies.

(Below) Even with their "iPerformance" focus, BMW NA realizes that it's their regular line-up that draws the show crowds.



BMW CCA Foundation Open House

By John Hartge.

Wow! Your BMW CCA Foundation museum is collecting a huge amount of BMW history. In October, I visited the open house the Foundation hosted during Eurofest, an annual celebration of classic European cars, in Greenville, S.C.

First, a little background. The Foundation is a charitable organization established by BMW CCA to promote safety (Street Survival teen driver training) and the preservation of BMW history (a museum). The Foundation has acquired property that includes a vacant warehouse, which can serve as the first step toward the museum. It is located adjacent to the BMW Performance Center, across highway 101 from the Spartanburg factory.

So far, the Foundation has accumulated over 50,000 items including magazines, brochures, technical books, posters, BMW engines and parts, race car pieces, model cars, actual cars... well you have to see it to appreciate it.

For this Open House, a couple dozen cars were on display. A few belong to the Foundation but most were on loan from CCA members and BMW NA. I suspect this is the long-term plan – revolving displays involving some interesting cars on temporary loan. As fund raising continues, the museum now is housed in the recently purchased former warehouse, a bare bones

facility – no fancy walls or floors, just a big building with room to show off BMW history. There is a small area of finished office space and a reception area, a sort of reading room with shelves full of all *Roundels* and other magazines, brochures, models and so on.

I saw the legendary E46 M3 GTR road car (on loan from BMW), the one that allowed BMW and PTG to qualify a V8 M3 race car for competition in the American Le Mans series. Supposedly, there are only six of these cars and they are rarely seen in public. It was among a five car M3 display, one from each generation. Sitting on bricks of the “Buy a Brick” campaign, was a wildly tricked out 2002 race car, with a Schnitzer motor. There was an interesting group of roadsters –

328s of all sizes, a Z1, an Alpina 3.4 Z4, a Z3 and a Z3 body shell, a former factory display piece.

And the walls! There must be hundreds of posters, banners and photos. And behind curtains was the massive collection of contributed items still being documented.

Foundation curator Michael Mitchell told me one goal is to have a library area where club members could go, by appointment, to research the collection's documents on BMW topics. That would be a valuable resource for



(Above) BMW History in posters and banners. (Below) Here's a collection of BMW roadsters you don't see everyday.



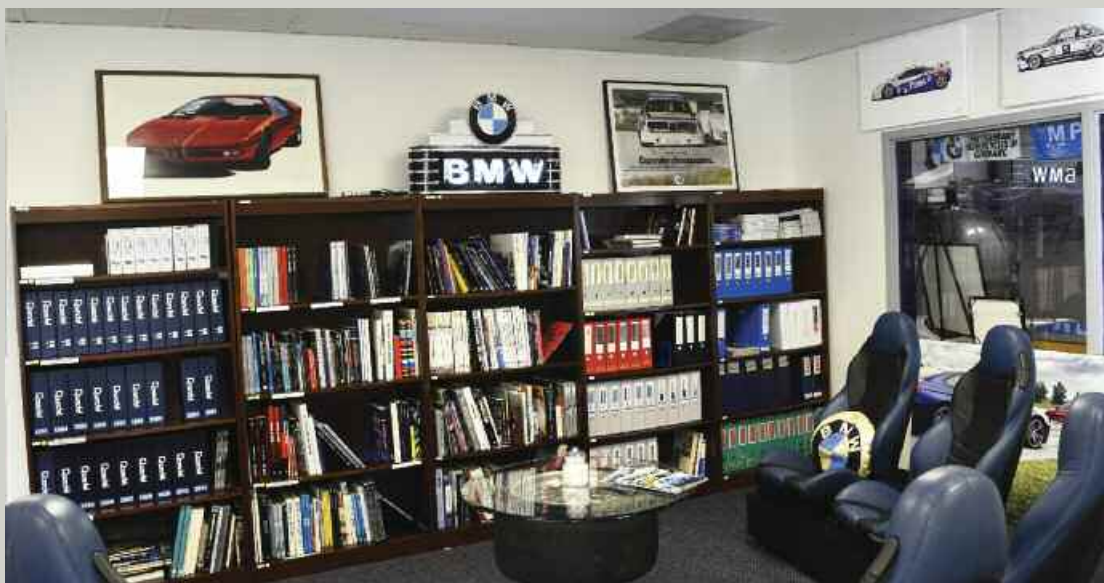
accurate restorations, for example.

The CCA national office, now housed in nearby Greenville, plans to build a new office facility at the Foundation's location. The target is to have that open in time for the 2019 Oktoberfest, the club's 50th, which is planned

for Greenville, S.C.

The museum relies on a bare bones staff and volunteers, so it's not open regularly to the public. Open House is held the second Wednesday of each month, 10:30a to 2:30p. You can inquire about other possible times. Visit www.bmwccafoundation.org for

more information about the organization and the "Buy a Brick Campaign Chapter Challenge" to pave the way for the Foundation's future.



(Above) The Foundation's reading room stocked with BMW history in magazines.



(Top left) 5 M3s along the wall, 1 from each generation (Above) The BMW formula race car, formerly displayed at the Zentrum, and the Korman/Payson Enterprises Gary Buch art car replica. This isn't the racer, but a 325e dressed in M3 body work for promotional displays only.



(Center) Now we know where broken BMW race car pieces go. (Top right) 1-owner 2002 that evolved over time into a full fledged race car with a Schnitzer engine. (Above) Classic BMWs, old and new, welcomed visitors to the Open House.

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show 2016



The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show has blossomed into one of the region's largest automotive events. Every year on a nice Fall October day, over 500 classic cars gather on the lawn of Rockville's Glenview Mansion. Over 32 car clubs, including ours, are represented at this grand event. Beginning last year our chapter became an official participant and James Laws serves as our chapter's designee on the event's planning committee.

As an official participant, our club receives a special parking area designated solely for BMWs. This year we achieved our most attendees yet - with 21 classic Bimmers in attendance. This impressive group of cars included an Isetta 300, 2000CS, Bavaria, and E9s, E30s, E24s, E28s, E30s, and 2002s.

Each year the show has a small display area

By Marc Caden



(Top) James Laws' E24 M6. (Above) Although it was the smallest car there, the pint-sized Isetta 250 Cabriolet was a huge hit at the Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show.

of hand selected cars that represent a theme. This year's theme was "Iconic Cars" and BMW was the only marque to have two cars selected to participate — my own 1973 2002 and Wayne Watkins' 1966 2000CS. My 2002 was selected due to the cult car status it has developed, while the 2000CS is considered by many to be the first generation of the big coupes or father of the 6-cylinder E9 Series. Some of the cars in the iconic themed display were mass produced, while others were very limited production models.

Examples from the "Iconic Cars" display included a 1949 MG TC that represented the early introduction of European sports cars to the US market. Many US servicemen brought these cars back home after the war and they represent our nation's early foray into the European car market. I found out that the MG's owner is legally blind and



uses a driver for his pleasure rides. However, the owner still works on the car himself from memory by feeling his way around the engine bay.

There was general consensus that the most impressive car on display this year was a 1935 Auburn 851 Boat Tail Speedster. In the days when big engine Bugattis and Bentleys ripped

through European roads, the Auburn was its US counterpart. With a supercharged straight 8 cylinder, this was a very advanced car for its time and each Speedster bears a dash plaque that stating "This certifies that this AUBURN AUTOMOBILE has been driven 100.8 miles per hour before shipment." This particular car had a very impressive pedigree having

recently won its class at the Amelia Island Concours and voted Best of Show at the annual Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg Festival. While the Auburn's owner was not officially listed in the program, I later learned that it was owned by collector Lamot J. du Pont.

Another special car on display was a 1910 Stanley Steamer Model 70. Upon hearing it enter the field,

its power plant sounded much more like a steam locomotive than any car. It represented the early war waged among manufacturers over which type of fuel would power future vehicles. A Stanley Steamer set the world's fastest mile in 1906. However, the power delivery of gasoline engines improved over time and the usage of an electric starter, rather than a crank, led to the rise of the gasoline powered car. The Stanley Steamer factory perma-



(Bottom left) Tom Kapikian's 1988 535is is a previous winner of the Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance and is among the best examples out there. (Bottom Right) Barak Wray recently purchased a 1987 Alpine White 325is that was previously owned by his Dad. Last winter he completed a full Euro bumper conversion on it that was admired by many.





(Above) The 1935 Auburn 851 Boat Tail Speedster was one of the stars of the show. At the Bonneville salt flats, company driver Ab Jenkins set over 70 speed records in it for American stock cars. Each car was delivered with a plaque certifying that the car had been driven by Jenkins more than 100 miles per hour. The model 1935 Speedster was designed by Gordon Buehrig, who was also the designer of the immortal Duesenberg Model J.

nently closed in 1924 and very few remnants remain.

While the show itself is not judged, each year the Rockville Mayor and City Council bestow a special award to one car in attendance. This year Steve Schuh's 1963 Jaguar E-Type received the coveted Best of Show award.

The E-Type is the car that Enzo Ferrari is famously quoted for saying it "was the most beautiful car ever made." The bright red roadster had been restored to perfection and was a well deserving recipient.

There is really something for everyone at this car show. During a quick stroll of the field I saw a VW

23-window Samba bus, Porsche 930 Turbo, Pierce Arrow, Cadillac with V16 engine, Mercedes 300sl Roadster, Cord, and Packards galore. So in addition to our own lovely display of classic BMWs, you can enjoy a stunning group of very diverse and collectible vehicles. Kudos also goes out to

club member Steve White for helping select the participants in this year's Iconic Cars display. The event is free for the public to attend and there is an early registration fee of only \$10 for participants. We hope you will mark this event in your calendar for October 2017.



(Above) A good 23-window VW Samba Bus can fetch more than \$100,000 at auction!

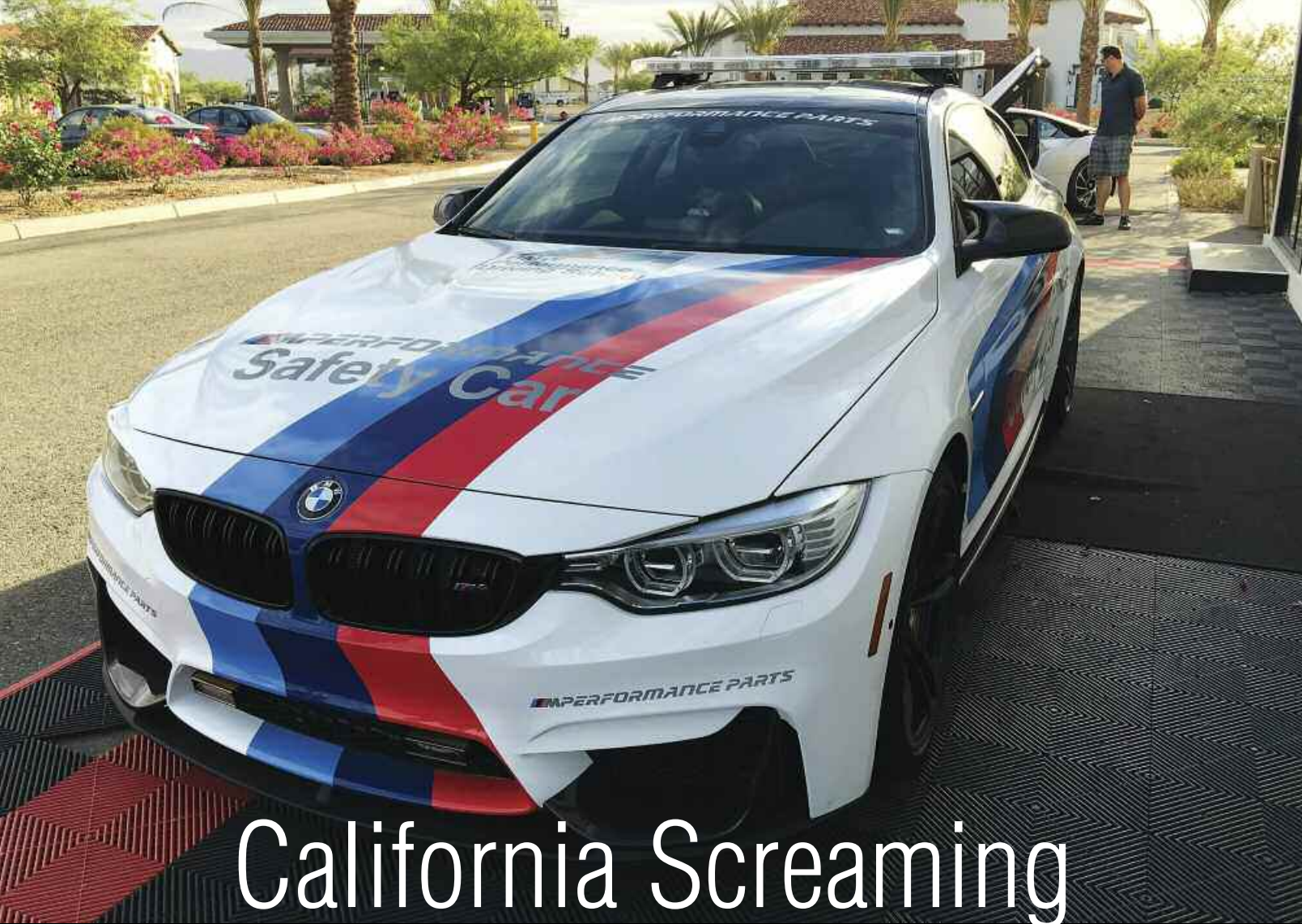


(Above) When the Stanley Steamer pulled onto the field it sounded more like a steam locomotive than a car.

(Above) At the time of its introduction, the Porsche 930 Turbo was the fastest production car available in Germany.



(Above) Steve Schuh's 1963 Jaguar E-type won the Best in Show Award.



California Screaming

By James Chew

All that time on Interstate 10 and California 60 and that's the best I can do.

Must have been the negative vibe coming from my Hyundai Elantra rental car.

Oddly enough, my trek to Thermal took me past my undergraduate alma mater, Cal Poly Pomona. The motto for that school is "Learn by doing." And that was exactly what I was going to do at the M-Track Days — learn (actually re-learn) some performance driving skills by "doing".

To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, "Most people drive their vehicles in quiet desperation". I have observed that this fits the two types of drivers. The first are those who drive the standard front-wheel-drive "CamCord-class" sedans and the Crossover class SUVs that view their vehicles as nothing more than a

All the leaves are brown, and the sky is gray

It's way too cold outside; have to be in all day

But that is all behind me, as I land in LA

Time for California Screaming, at the BMW M Track Day



(Top) The M4 Safety cars shows the "track readiness" of all M-product.
(Above) Students gathering at this modest reception center have no idea the fun that's in store for them.

driving appliance. Their closest experience to understating and appreciating the beauty and spirit of driving is when they either go to the local Jiffy Lube for an oil change or their local Costco for new tires and wonder why they seem to be drawn to the smell of new tires and how good their vehicle feels after the fluids have been changes and the tires properly inflated. The second type are those who have purchased performance cars, frustrated that their daily driving enjoyment is limited by the multitude of CamCord sedan and crossover SUVs that are sharing the road. In Southern California, driving on the multitude of wonderful side roads and mountain passes alleviates this frustration. In Northern Virginia, well, at least our local BMW CCA Chapter has the occasional autocross track day or outings on twisty little roads.

The BMW M-Track Day is a special treat for a number of reasons. First, it's an invitation only event – so you're sharing the day with fellow driving enthusiasts. Second, the event takes place in a controlled environment. Third, you're taught by professional driving instructors who all have significant racing experience. Fourth (and most important) you're driving SOMEONE ELSE'S BMW.

It was my heart that started racing as I drove through Coachella to get to the Thermal Race Club. This would be my first time at the new BMW Performance Center West facility. Imagine my excitement when I entered the Thermal facility and saw the M2s, M3s, M4s, M5s, M6s, and the X6Ms lined up at the various tracks. Walking past the M4 GTS and the i8 Track Safety Car that were parked outside the registration trailer put a smile on my face.

For those of you that have attended a half-day driving school session, it will be a familiar fare. There's an hour of classroom instruction and four driving events – two "lead follow", a timed autocross, and a drag strip.



(Above) The M4 interior makes you want to climb in for a drive. (Below Right) Maybe these helmets should be an option when ordering your new BMW? (Below) Adan Seaman instructs a room full of eager students.

The drag strip experience is worth noting. It's not an acceleration measurement. It's an acceleration/deceleration measurement. If you've never done a 0-60-0 "drag", it's quite eye opening. And it will help your daily driving skills, especially if you commute on parkways or freeways.

For those new to performance

driving, it's enlightening. For those who have attended these types of schools, it's a sobering reminder of the bad habits we've gained from daily driving.

Our classroom instructor immediately showed his professional racecar driver credentials by first acknowledging all the event sponsors. During his sponsor

acknowledgement, I learned that some of the M-vehicles were intentionally equipped with BMW Performance parts. These accessories, when installed by BMW Centers, carry the same warranty as the vehicle. Having worked the accessories business for an OEM, I must say that this is a huge (or "yuge" to quote our President-elect).

The classroom instruction is divided in to two parts – seating position and the physics of car control.

In my high school driver's education/training class, my driving instructor told me that the





correct driving position was NOT one that allowed for one to easily operate the radio. For today's new driver, the position is NOT one that allows for the driver to steer with their knees while reading their smartphone!

Many of us may have forgotten that when driving a BMW in the correct driving position, one not only keeps alert but also one does not get fatigued. Having the hands placed correctly on the steering wheel allows the driver to have maximum control in most every driving situation.

Once the students are made aware of the fact that it's just four patches of rubber, each the size of your hand, that are in contact with the road, they begin to pay attention. Understanding that our car tends to follow our eyes is a major epiphany for many of us. The relationship of braking, steering, and accelerating through a curve helps on the track as well as with daily driving. Frankly, it's just physics and

engineering mechanics.

In addition to discussing how to find the smoothest line on a road course, the instructor reviews how the various driving settings in today's BMWs affect the performance and the daily driving experience. I suspect that we'll immediately know during the various BMW CCA autocross and track event which BMW CCA members have attended the M-Track Days. They'll be the one adjusting these settings to more easily find "the line."

Now we were ready for the "Learn By Doing" portion.

While one should follow the instructor's directions, I found it more interesting to experiment with late braking, early braking, early entry, and late entry. It honed my skills on finding "the line" without the help of pylons. I can't say my passenger appreciated my experiments!

The lessons learned from "lead follow" and classroom

sessions come together quite nicely for the autocross. Suddenly all those driving clichés, such as "driving slower helps you drive faster" make sense.

The acceleration/deceleration event showed the attributes of the M-Steptronic transmission and the wonderful M-brakes. Even those most ardent manual transmission fans will grudgingly admit that the M-Steptronic operates perfectly.

It's nice to interact with the wide variety of people who attend this event. It's quite interesting to see the cocky get humbled and the newly initiated gain courage. For one of the "follow lead" sessions, I was teamed with a long time Volvo driver who had never participated in such an event! Watching his growing confidence and emerging desire to own a BMW was fascinating.

At the end of the session, it seemed that all for the participants gained a new respect for BMWs and for driving. Experienced horse

riders understand the need to immediately show a BMW that the driver is the one in control. Being gentle lets the vehicle be the master, while abusing it will just irritate it. Respectfully and firmly driving the vehicle to realize its performance potential is a thing of beauty. I suspect they will all be surprised with how these new skills will surface when faced with hazardous driving situations.

The reason for BMW to open a West Coast Performance Center was simple. Opened in 2009, the Spartanburg facility is operating at capacity (around 15,000 students a year). When they opened the West Coast facility in 2013, an additional 10,000 students a year could now be educated on the performance potential of their BMWs.

(Above and Below) Check your pulse – if your heart ISN'T racing at the sight of these track-ready M-vehicles, you need medical attention!



I suspect that if demand continues to grow, BMW may move their West Coast Performance Center to a BMW owned and operated location. The Thermal Club facility is nice. It is the “ultimate” playground for the driving enthusiast “one percenters.” Lot prices start at \$1.3M and a house MUST be built within a certain time-frame after purchase. So either increased enrollment or community encroachment may result in BMW moving to a larger dedicated facility. Don’t be surprised if they move to Oxnard, California, which is where BMW’s west coast distribution and R&D centers are located.

For those of you who have driven on the 405 freeway by the city of Carson, California and have noticed the building of the Porsche Driving Experience, I understand that this facility will not offer activities such as our M-Track Days, but it’s location is a wonderful marketing tool for Porsche!

The M-Track Days gives one a taste of how to realize the performance driving potential from a BMW. This year, the M-Track Days was offered at Lime Rock and Homestead in addition to Thermal and Spartanburg. Participating in one of these events at the different tracks not only makes for a great vacation, but also allows one to drive some of the best road racing courses in the country.

If you desire dedicated one-on-one instruction to work on your driving skills, the BMW driving school does offer one and two days courses at both the Spartanburg and Thermal facilities. When the BMW CCA offers a special rate for these schools, I highly recommend that you take advantage of it.

Always seeking a bargain, I asked what happens to these M-vehicles after their schooling days are over. I was informed that they are reconditioned to factory standards and then sold through the wholesale auction process, with the documentation stating that they were used for performance school



(Above) I bought 30 BMW CCA raffle tickets and DIDN'T win the M4 GTS! Let's hope the winner attends at least one of these classes!

purposes. Maybe someday BMW NA will develop a program such that the Performance School/Track Day participants could purchase one of these vehicles through their preferred BMW Center. I'm keeping my eye on the M6 Gran Coupes!

This driving enjoyment is not limited to the M-models – if you've participated in the invitation only “Ultimate Driving Experience”, you've had a smile on your face as you've driven the non M-models through the timed autocross track.

For the past year, I've been disappointed with the BMW presence at the major auto shows.

While the displays have been good, the lack of major product unveiling events left me confused about the BMW NA marketing strategy. However, if the BMW NA marketing strategy is to divert those funds towards the M Track Days, then BMW NA may be executing the “ultimate” guerrilla marketing campaign. Simply speaking, the M-Track Days is annually turning over 20,000 BMW enthusiasts into BMW evangelists. And there's no better advertising for a brand than an evangelistic enthusiast.

By the way, BMW has found that within one year, 1 in 8 of the

M-Track Day participants purchase or lease a new BMW. Within 3 years, 30% of the participants will purchase or lease a new one. There is no advertising campaign nor auto show display that comes even close to such a success rate.

So frequently check your “junk mail” folders for an invitation from BMW for M-Track Days. After attending that event, imagine how you can answer the “Why do you like BMWs?” question from your non-BMW friends.



The BMW X5 xDrive40e

The Incredible Hulk

By James Chew

After a decade of BMW SAV ownership, I finally saw the paradox of American SUV/SAV ownership. These types of vehicles, which are best suited for long distance hauling, are most often used as "Suburban Shuttles." Dominating the school drop off lanes, athletic field parking lots, and warehouse store parking lots, these dreadnaught class vehicles proudly fly their owner's flag. Because these vehicles all tend to be well built and well maintained, a decades' worth of ownership in not uncommon. Also not uncommon is that these vehicles tend to be low mileage. Powered by V-6s, V-8s, and in-line sixes (in the case of BMWs) achieving an average fuel economy of over 15 miles per gallon is rare.

With "delivery vehicle" driving habits, one would think that diesel engine options would be quite popular. While BMW, Mercedes, Audi, and VW offer the diesel engine option, sales have been less than impressive. Hence, BMW decided to try a different direction with the new X5 xDrive40e.

The vehicle's complicated name clumsily describes this product. Yes, it's an SAV. Yes, it has the proven all-wheel-drive system. Yes, it's a "mild hybrid" (mybrid?) as it combines an electric motor as well as a turbocharged 4-cylinder engine to produce a combined 309 horsepower. I can't explain the "40".

Visibly, the X5 xDrive40e looks the same as a conventional X5.

One needs to look hard to notice the door for the electric charging, located on the front driver's side fender. While the badging clearly states its name, I think most of us have become numb to BMW's ridiculously long product names to notice. For a "\$1.98 industry", one would think the BMW "bean counters" could successfully counter this adsorb marketing move by arguing that shorter product names would result in smaller product badges, which in turn would result in lower badging costs and higher profits.

The interior differences are just as subtle. Only the



(Top) Yes, that's a power cord plugged into that X5. (Above) Only the eDrive" badging on the engine cover tells you that something's different under this hood.

driver will notice the gauge that shows the battery's state of charge, as well as the additional iDrive functions to select the desired "eDrive" mode.

Even the differences in driving dynamics are subtle. While the X5 is the "BMW of SUVs", it's still an SUV. With a curb weight of 5260 pounds (the X5 3.0i curb weight is 4790 pounds) we were surprised that we didn't notice the increased weight during typical suburban driving duties. With the eDrive and turbocharged four-cylinder gasoline engine working together, we found that the X5 xDrive40e had great acceleration for entering the freeway as well as for passing. Even with the increased weight, we didn't notice any difference in braking or handling. It should be no surprise, seeing as how the curb weight for the X5M is 5260 pounds!

What we did notice was the "eDrive" function. The purpose of this function was to allow the driver to achieve the most efficient use of the "mybrid" powertrain. The "Auto eDrive" setting allows the vehicle's computer to optimize the use of the "mybrid" powertrain for the driving



(Above) Here's a fun game – find the differences between the X5 eDrive interior and other X5s (hint there's only two).

condition. The Max eDrive setting is for "EV" only. The "Save Battery" setting maintains the highest level of battery charge, switching on the eDrive only for acceleration.

The "eDrive" function can be combined with the now-standard BMW chassis settings for a fully optimized operation. When "Eco Pro" is selected, the powertrain is decoupled from the driveline when

the driver is not operating the accelerator.

This does sound quite complicated. As an engineer, I fully appreciate this wonderful engineering achievement. As a "car guy", I fully appreciate the seamless operation.

The key to realizing the fuel economy savings from any hybrid vehicle is to keep the battery

pack fully charged. Because of the second law of thermodynamics, you can never fully recharge the battery solely from regenerative braking. As we've found from evaluating other HEVs and EVs, charging

(Left and Below) Here's one difference – note the subtle, yet visible rear cargo deck height. The rear storage area contains the power cord.





(Above) Here's the other difference - the very subtle "eDrive" badge on the front cupholder cover.



stations are not easy to find. There are web sites identify the local charging stations. However, even with the new "fast charging" systems, it will take a few hours to fully recharge the relatively small battery in the X5 xDrive40e.

While it is relatively small, the X5 xDrive40e lithium-ion battery pack eliminates the rear under floor storage area. In fact, we noticed that the rear storage floor is visibly higher in the X5 xDrive40e than in the conventional X5. However, the rear seats still fold, therefore the typical X5 family won't notice the decreased cargo space during the weekly big-box warehouse trips.

After a weekly-long evaluation, we found the X5 xDrive40e to be the ideal SAV for the BMW suburban family. The X5 provides the room, higher seating position, and cargo space desired by the American suburban family. With the proven xDrive system, you'll never have to worry if your vehicle can be driven in less than ideal (rain and snow) driving conditions (have you all noticed that Prius and EV drivers never drive in such conditions?). For typical suburban family duty, you'll find that you're always on battery power. When we returned the vehicle, it took less than three gallons to top off the tank! We were quite surprised that we achieve better than the EPA rated 56 miles per gallon.

While BMW has created the ideal "family sized mybrid" SAV, it remains to be seen how the market will react to this Incredible Hulk. Even with the significantly lowered price, the diesel powered X5 does not sell well in the US. And previous SUV "mybrids" - the previous generation GMC Yukon - created a very loyal owner base but did not sell well.

Noticing the lease specials for the X5 xDrive40e, I suspect that the \$5,100 price difference, not including the charging station, is hurting sales. Keep in mind the X5d is only \$700 more than the X5 3.0, and sales are lagging. While the X5 xDrive40e is a wonderful SAV, it's clear that the American SAV buyers want their gasoline engines. Because of the overly complicated Federal Government Corporate Average Fuel Economy rules, BMW will most likely continue to offer the X5 xDrive40e to counter the poor fuel economy from the M vehicles. For that reason every BMW suburban family should consider this vehicle for a short term lease - you all may be surprised will how often you DON'T go to the gas station!

Wonder how much I can get in trade for our low mileage 2007 X5 3.0i.....



(Above) The X5 eDrive has all the luxury comfort features one can expect from a premium SAV.



(Above) The exterior differences? A few badges and the power plug (Below).



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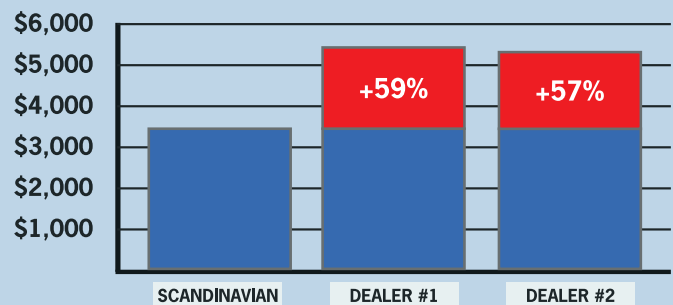
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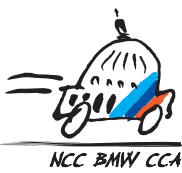
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