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Cover: A BMW 2002 during a parade lap on PVGP's race course. Read articles on BMW CCA Oktoberfest and PVGP starting on page 15. Photo: Steve Tenney

Magazine of the National Capital Chapter BMW Car Club of America

der Bayerische

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National Capital Chapter BMW Car Club of America

Chapter Officers (Please call 7:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.)

President

Paul Seto president@nccbmwcca.org 301.908.1928

Vice President

James Laws vice-president@nccbmwcca.org 240.424.5380

Treasurer

Richard Kempf treasurer@nccbmwcca.org 703.455.8210

Secretary

Gina Hector secretary@nccbmwcca.org 202.570.4462

Membership Chair

James Laws membership@nccbmwcca.org 240.424.5380

Social Chair

Paul Seto social-chair@nccbmwcca.org 301.908.1928

Driving School Coordinator

Matt Oleksiak ds-coordinator@nccbmwcca.org

Concours Chair

John McWilliams concours-chair@nccbmwcca.org

DIY Chair

Phillip Cummings diy-chair@nccbmwcca.org

Webmaster

Steven Schlossman webmaster@nccbmwcca.org

Autocross Committee

Phil Yates info@nccautocross.com

Baltimore Activities

Billy Dixon billy.dixon@nccbmwcca.org 410.802.0188

PR & Community Engagement

Kelsy Hill kelsy@nccbmwcca.org

der Bayerische Staff

Co-Editors

Walter Jones db-editor@nccbmwcca.org

Anna Maripuu db-editor@nccbmwcca.org

Production/Layout

Raine Mantysalo db-production@nccbmwcca.org

Chief Marketing Officer

Orlando Taylor Brooklyn.Taylor@nccbmwcca.org 917.653.8783

Director of Marketing

Abby Gonzalez agonzalez@nccbmwcca.org 703.789.4113

Contributing Writers

Marc Caden, David Costanza, Fraser Dachille, Jaclyn Heck,

Robert Hopkins, Pearl Aliga Jones

Club Address

NCC BMW CCA, P.O. Box 685, Arlington, VA 22216

National Membership Toll-Free Number

800.878.9292

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BMW Car Club of America

National Capital Chapter



President's Message

Just got back from an absolutely incredible week of BMW nirvana at Oktoberfest and Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. With a thousand plus in attendance from all over the country, it was great to see longtime friends and see that O'Fest first timers have a good time. Our National CCA office and the local Allegheny chapter, did an awesome job of planning some really memorable events throughout the week for our annual get-together. We also learned that next year's O'Fest will be located in Greenville, SC, to celebrate our club's 50th anniversary! Hope to see another great NCC turnout since it's only a few hours' drive away.

As for upcoming NCC events, we're still in the middle of a super busy schedule. Our last HPDE of the year, on the Shenandoah circuit, will be sponsored by Matt Curry's Craftsman Auto Care. As a longtime club supporter, Craftsman will be providing a Saturday night BBQ, a perfect ending after a long day on the track. Also, our annual Crab Feast returns to Nick's Fish House on the downtown Baltimore waterfront. This has been a really popular event over the years, as we welcome Northwest BMW back as our main sponsor. Lastly, our Saturday Solomons Social starts with a caravan down to beautiful Southern Maryland where we take over the Solomons pier, and a great lunch at the waterfront Lighthouse restaurant. Registration for all these events is open, but sign up soon to guarantee your spot.

Finally, it's not too late to get active amongst your fellow club members. If you haven't been to an event lately or have never been, I encourage you to come out! Our BMWs always bring us together as a common bond, but you'll find that we're also great fun! The people are what makes this club so awesome, and I hope that you will be there to share the good times.

Paul

J&F Motors Ltd.

Service Phone 703-671-7757

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It can be checked and updated at the www.bmwcca.org website.

Our Chapter President, Paul Seto, keeps reminding us that we have a plethora of events. That is true and the variety is exemplified by what we did the past two months. There is more than one person can do, so choose events that are appealing.

It has been an eventful couple of months. Food, golf, tours, and personal development:

- A tour through the hinterlands of West Virginia and Maryland, Racing on both coasts: VIR, Laguna Seca. (Actually, Laguna Seca won't happen for another month, but the NCC will be well represented;

- Short of racing, Autocross is a good way to learn new skills and find the limits of one's car. Jaclyn Heck and Fraser Dachille have a useful introduction on the upcoming Autocross season;

- A recent tour to the du Pont estate, Nemours, in Delaware;

- We had the usual smattering of outings, the O'Fest and Pittsburgh Grand Prix together this year, and the NCC Golf Outing at Raspberry Falls;

- Finally, an example of how drivers and racing fans evolve as they spend more time

driving, in an article on "Zumba to Zoom-Zoom."

So much to do, and so little time to do it. As the song says, "We like to move it, move it, move it."

Going forward, we will do a food outing in Baltimore at Nick's Fish House hosting our annual Crab Feast in September.

Walter



Terry Mark Luxford

February 5, 1939 - March 16, 2018

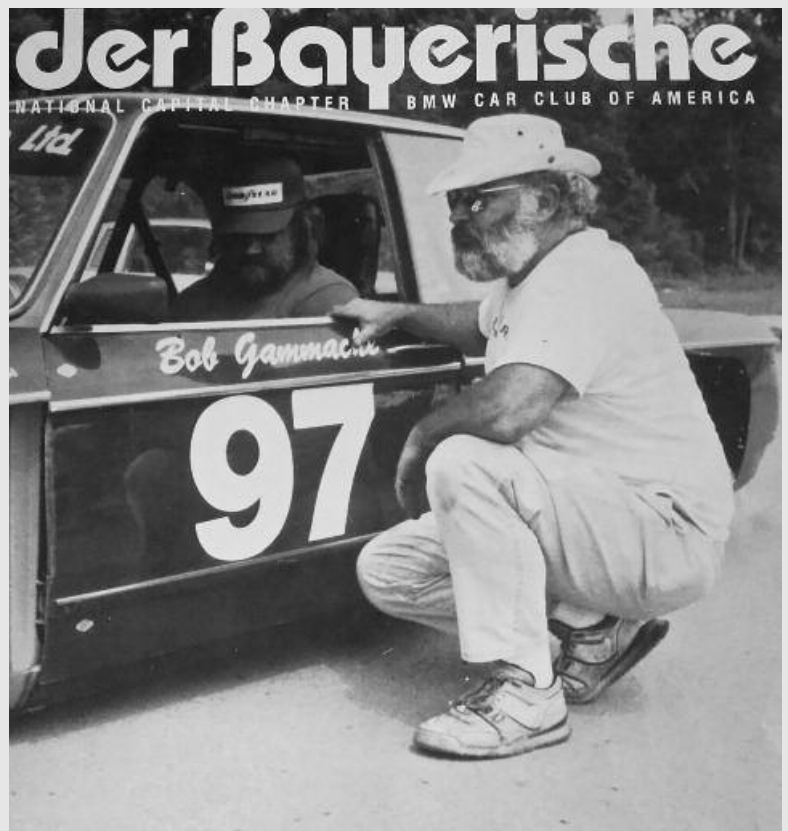
In the early days of the National Capital Chapter, one of the clubs biggest supporters and event sponsors was Terry and Neil's Quality Car Services, in Rockville, MD. Terry and Neil sponsored numerous tech sessions, built many high-performance BMW engines for our club members, provided track support for those running DE and/or SCCA, and always had a good stock of needed parts... and beer. If there was a problem with your car, if there was a performance mod you were looking to make, or if you stopped by and just needed a beer, Terry, Neil, Sandy or Buddy were always willing to help or devise a plan! Webers, headwork, Schrick cam, Stahl headers, 5spd conversion, Bilsteins and Suspension Techniques springs were part of their usual recipe and recommendations.. oh, and how about a beer?

Terry and Neil, both retired and sold the business a number of years ago and others involved went their separate ways.

Sadly, I was recently informed that Terry Luxford passed away in March of this year. I thought the club, its members, and the "old guard," might want to know considering the integral part that he/they, like many of the other local shops and dealers played in supporting the growth of the NCC in the early days.

RIP Terry!

Paul Vessels



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

- 5 NoVa Social- BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 9-15 49th Annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest (Pittsburgh)
- 12 Columbia Social- BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 18 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 19 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 21 DIY @ Benchmark Motors

August

- 2 NoVa Social- Lost Rhino Retreat, Ashburn, VA
- 4 AACA Museum Tour
- 5 NCC Autocross Points Event #4
- 8 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 11 DIY @ Craftsman Auto Care
- 16 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 17-19 IMSA Weekend at VIR
- 25 Euro Marque Golf Tournament, Raspberry Falls Golf Club, Leesburg, VA

September

- 6 Sept NoVa Social- BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 7-9 NCC HPDE Summit Point, Shenandoah Circuit
- 8 Eastern Shore Tour
- 9 Odds and Ends Detailing Workshop, Sterling, VA
- 9 NCC Autocross Points Event #5
- 12 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 13 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 15 DIY @ AKTIV Automotive
- 20 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 22 5th Annual NCC Crab Feast
- 29 Solomons Saturday Social - Solomons Island, MD

October

- 4 NoVa Social- Lost Rhino Retreat, Ashburn, VA
- 6 OKTOBERFEST presented by Passport BMW
- 6 Fall Tour
- 10 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 11 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 13 2018 NCC Autocross Points Event #6
- 18 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 20-21 //M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center (SC)
- 20 DIY @ BMW of Annapolis
- 20 Rockville Antique and Classic Auto Show
- 20-21 //M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center (SC)
- 21 TRSS Coach & Volunteer SignUp

November

- 3 BMWCCA Cars & Coffee, BMW of Sterling
- 3 DIY @ BMW of Sterling
- 10 Great Pie Run XXII
- 14 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD

December

- 12 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD



The new Car Club Store is here with a new look, new merchandise and improved ordering process.



Accessories

Ladies'

- Jackets
- Polos/Knits
- Woven

Men's

- Jackets
- Polos/Knits
- Woven



BMW Car Club
of America
National Capital Chapter



Welcome to the new BMW Car Club of America National Capital Chapter fulfillment clothing store. Here you can show your support for the BMW Car Club of America National Chapter. You can special order Ladies' and Men's clothing with our logo applied to the garment. Thank you for visiting our store! Happy shopping!



2018 Maryland-Delaware Tour: A Real-Life Great Gatsby Story

By Robert Hopkins, Tourmeister

Saturday, June 2, marked the second Maryland-to-Delaware tour of our National Capital Chapter. I had “put two and two together” and planned what I envisioned would be a great outing for all. I was buoyed by fond memories of Delaware, having grown up and gone to school there. Some of my family still call it home.

With the temperature at a very pleasant 74 degrees but with precipitation in the forecast, sixteen cars showed up bright and early (7 am) at the Fresh Market in Towson, MD to brave the risk of touring in the rain. Instead, we were rewarded with perfect weather, some great roads, delicious food, and fascinating sight-seeing!

Folks enjoyed half of an hour to rest, fuel up on coffee, gas, and mingle, while sharing stories of past adventures before we set off at 7:30 am.

We pretty quickly found ourselves in the thick of engaging twisty roads broken up by sections of sweeping gentle roads. The route took us north from Towson along The Big Gun Powder River and Scenic Route 165 to our first stop, a chance to rest, regroup, and refuel in Jarrettsville, MD.



(Top) Regrouping before crossing the Conowingo Dam. (Above) Views of the French Gardens.

We then pushed east to the Susquehanna River and down to the Conowingo Dam. After crossing, we enjoyed some more scenic, wooded driving, passing the Cecil County Drag Strip, viewing a historic covered bridge, and later crossing a narrow truss bridge.

Following an easterly course with the occasional stop to allow us to regroup, we reached our second stop, Milburn Orchards. Though it was too early in the season for fresh fruit from the orchards' trees, there were pears, watermelons, various honeys, jams, ciders, donuts, pies, and other sweet treats available to purchase.

Snacks in tow, we traveled north from Milburn, passing under several field-to-field overpass bridges which is a local feature so farm equipment and local horse riders can traverse the various fields without interrupting

traffic on the roads below. Into the Red Clay Valley, we went, enjoying Rt-82, one of the most technical driving roads in northern Delaware. At 10:45 am, we reached our main destination, the magnificent Nemours Estate in Wilmington.

Nemours was built in 1907 by Alfred duPont, at the time president of

DuPont, the chemical company, to cultivate the affection of his second wife Alicia, a gesture reminiscent of the fictitious Jay Gatsby of the novel "The Great Gatsby."

Nemours got its name from the French town affiliated with Alfred's great-great-grandfather, Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours.

The house was constructed in a French Louis XVI style and features the largest formal *jardin a la francaise* (French garden) in North America. After his second unhappy marriage ended in tragedy with Alicia's death, Alfred discovered and married the love of his life, Jessie. He continued to live in the house until his death in 1935. The house is set in the furnishings picked out by Alfred and Jessie.

Completed in only eighteen months and with seventy-seven rooms, the house was outfitted with electricity, running water, many bathrooms, and the equivalent of a man cave complete with bowling alley, a workout room, and a movie theatre. For the ladies, the master suite boasted his-and-her separate wings with the disproportionately larger half allocated to Mrs. duPont. It featured a large bathroom with a tub, a 360-degree spray shower, and a large walk-in closet – a lot of which is common today, but remember this was 110 years ago! Mr. duPont,



being an engineer at heart, had his bathroom equipped with an instrument panel for the house so even before he read the morning paper, he knew all was well with the house's various subsystems.

The house also showcased the first purpose-built car garage in Delaware, meaning that it was not converted from an old carriage house. It had five bays, a mechanic's pit, a detailing vestibule for cleaning up the cars after drives, and common at the time, a chauffeur's apartment. Currently contained within are three Rolls Royces of various vintages and Mr. and Ms. duPont's personal Cadillac limousines, mid-1920s

models, but re-bodied with 1930s Cadillac running gear.

At 1:30 pm, after a few hours of walking around on self-guided tours, we had built up an appetite so we left Nemours behind and made the quick drive over to the Charcoal Pit, a local diner in operation since the 1950s. We enjoyed great food (tasty burgers are a favorite there), shakes and sundaes, though no one dared try the gargantuan twenty-scoop "Everything But!" Charcoal Pit evokes sweet memories of my childhood. It is where my grandfather took the family out to dinner together.

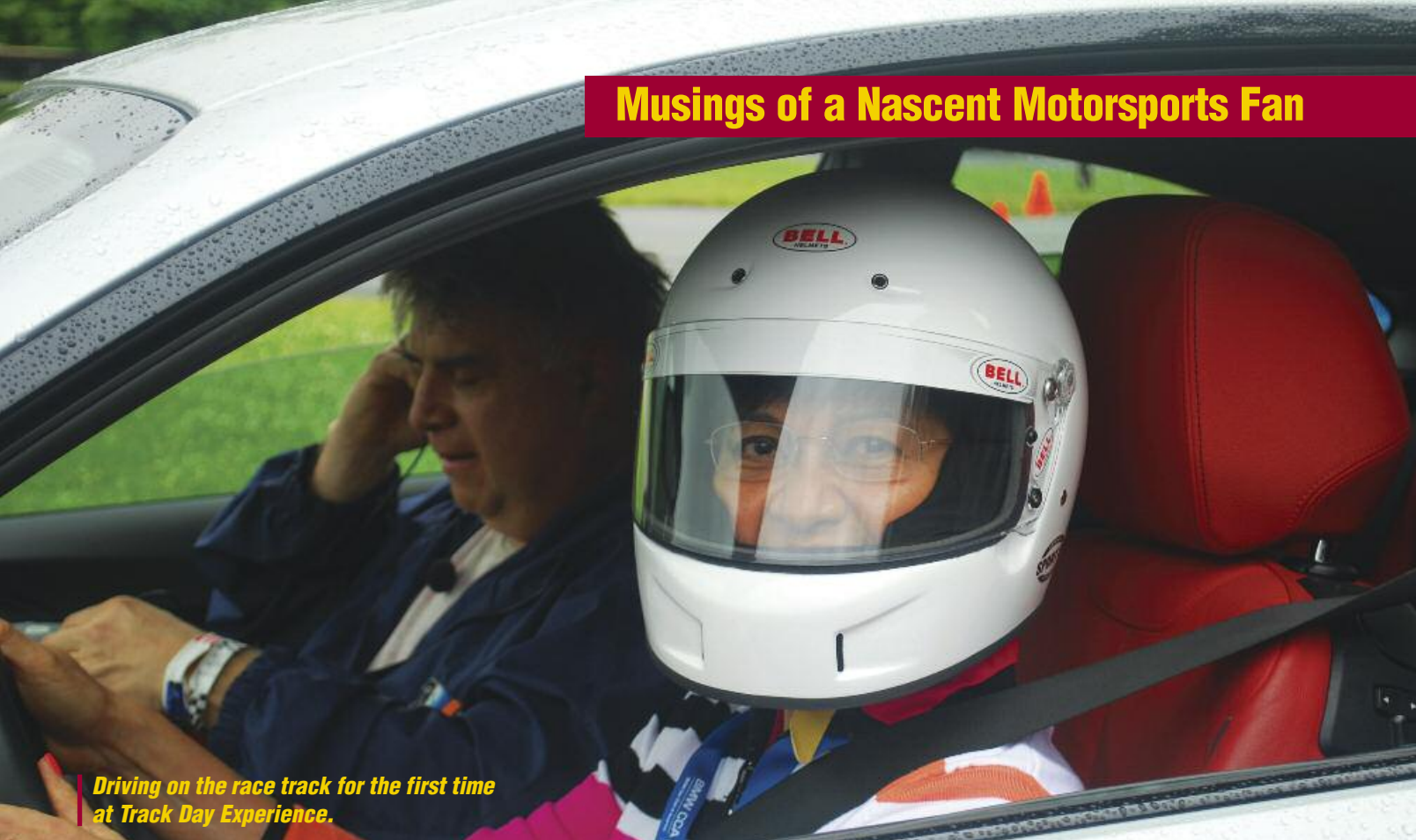
Then we all turned for home, making the short jump over to I-95

and headed south, putting an end to a fun day of touring.

Planning and executing this tour was not Gatsbyesque on my part, by any means. It is just that putting club tours together is always fun. For this particular outing, I had the added inspiration of having emotional connections with Delaware. Nemours is one of the sights I saw growing up, but had never set foot on it. This was my golden opportunity to do so and experience some "wow!" moments. Taking twenty-four club friends with me made it even more fun!



(Top and Left) A welcome stop at Milburn Orchards for fresh treats!
(Above) A sundae at the Charcoal Pit. Yum!



Driving on the race track for the first time at Track Day Experience.

Burn It, Mrs. Jones!

Broadening Horizons from Zumba to Zoom-Zoom

By Pearl Aliga Jones | Photos from various sources

History is replete with stories of people who have been inspired by a person or an event that kindles an irrepressible spark, inspiring them to embark on a fresh experience, a new hobby, or even a lifelong endeavor. Oftentimes, such a spark plucks them out of their comfort zone and relocates them elsewhere to try something quite improbable. They end up loving the new zone and staying there for good. Some get so inspired that they excel and reach glittering heights in their new undertakings — they are the ones who make it into history books.

Such a spark ignited in me early this year. What a difference an event makes!

Before our National Capital Chapter Holiday Party and Annual Meeting in February, I did not know

the first word in motorsports. But I was aware of outstanding race cars — our Ultimate Driving Machines — figuring prominently (read winning!) in championship races all over the world.

When asked to write about the event for our chapter magazine, *der Bayerische*, I was faced with a dilemma. Surely, I could provide a narrative of the social aspect of it; I have done the “social beat” several times, including writing about a glorious wedding I attended in enchanting Toscana (Tuscany). It had nothing to do with our BMWs, but with two of our erstwhile and beloved NCC tourmeisters’ tying the knot in picturesque Firenze (Florence), the birthplace of the Renaissance. It was “the wedding of the decade” for *Signor e Signora* Algje Livingston

(nee Angela Dzuro-Quick).^{*} Readers were surprised that a car-club magazine was unveiling an unlikely Arts-and-Style section.

But write about one of the evening’s highlighted guests, racer Bill Auberlen, considered a member of the rarefied American motorsports royalty, and do justice to his engaging story-telling at the party? The idea alone was daunting. I took copious notes of the racing stories he shared through a casual dialogue with Mike Renner (professional racer and head instructor of the BMW Performance Driving School). My notes were the springboard for my own story-telling, but I needed to connect numerous dots in a cogent, informative manner!

I did face the task with trepidation. Before that, I had only written editorials, speeches, tributes, office

manuals, *palanca* letters, and articles of general human interest, including our club DIYs. I had edited a doctoral thesis, a documentary filmmaker’s treatises, and college-application essays. For a relative, I had even ghost-written a letter asking his sweetheart’s parents for her hand in marriage. The punch line was, “I cannot promise your daughter a life beyond fantasy, but with the grace of God, we will always have unfaltering love for each other, food on the table, clothes on our back, a roof over our head, and...health insurance.” They said yes, with wholehearted blessings! I think “health insurance” was the deal-clincher. (My son wrote his own letter as he writes better than I do.) Oh, and I have dabbled in limericks. As you can see, I had not written about esoteric topics at all.



(Above) Bill Auberlen's racing shoes with non-skid soles.

My cardinal rule as a writer is to harness factual merit and integrity in my narrative, so that it withstands challenges or complaints. That usually starts with a familiarity with the subject. While I could wax lyrical about crispy, tasty, golden-brown calamari (or “cal-amore,” a winning entry in a CA naming contest) served with tzatziki sauce, and colorful *hors d'oeuvres* on a vibrant-green bed of fresh, ruffly, fluffy broad-leaf kale, how in the world could I possibly (and plausibly) tackle a subject as arcane as sportscar racing? For a readership as extensive and mostly motorsports-fluent as 5,300 chapter members? And now with offshore readers in the mix? I worried about my credibility and reputation as a writer.

So I did my due diligence, perusing editions of *der Bayerische* for starters. Issue after issue, our magazine contains a chock-full of informative and interesting articles, thanks to my colleagues – a wealth of fine, knowledgeable, and prolific writers. I also read *Roundel*, the mouthpiece of the BMW Car Club of America.

Additionally, I immersed myself in reading material about the aforementioned legendary race-car driver and watched racing videos on YouTube. Whereas my interest, as

a Zumba Fitness instructor, has focused on new dance routines in my Zumba Instructors Network (ZIN) to keep abreast with new songs and choreography, I now found myself watching Bill Auberlen's high-spirited interviews and awe-inspiring videos, such as his impressive heel-toe footwork while driving the McLaren F1 GTR at McLaren Philadelphia Track Day.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Tc75nSjp4o

I did notice his snazzy racing shoes. I love shoes, what can I say? Besides, footwear is a favorite topic of mine as a dance-fitness instructor. I am all about saving knees and advise my students on the proper type of shoes for dancing. They (the shoes) must be ergonomically designed with proper support AND a pivot point or a spin spot to make pivots and lateral moves fluid and effortless; in other words, devoid of menacing torque that can easily mangle knees, or impede graceful dancing, at the very least. (However, I also love dancing in high, stiletto heels at parties. Okay, so do what I say and not what I sometimes do?) Walking and jogging shoes are taboo on the dance floor as they have thick treads and are meant for forward motions. Try pivoting on thick-soled sneakers, and your knees will persistently complain at you, and in many cases, prematurely extinguish your interest in Zumba and dancing. Conversely, I figured racing shoes must be expressly designed with non-skid soles to prevent the feet from slipping off the pedals.

I also listened to podcasts. One was particularly noteworthy. I was initially taken aback but amused by podcast host Marshall Pruett's candid description, an unexpected but endearing “epithet,” delivered directly to Bill Auberlen twice in an interview: “You are a freaking American hero!”

At that initial stage, my interest was piqued. And during this entire

process, it heightened. What a captivating subject! Where has motorsports been all my life? I was completely hooked and wanted to know more.

What better way of learning about car racing than by watching the next big IMSA (International Motor Sports Association) race on TV: 12 Hours of Sebring on March 17. After all, a great philosopher once said, “You can observe a lot, just by watching.” (That philosopher was Lawrence Peter “Yogi” Berra.) I was so engrossed in viewing the race cars strut their stuff that I did my own... “8 Hours of Sebring” – of TV-watching, that is. I hung on to every word uttered by the race analysts and color commentators and took notes. I became a dedicated racing fan right there and then! My daughter was quite fascinated when she asked what I was watching, and I launched into a long, breathless exposition on the different classes of racing cars: Prototypes, GTLMs (Grand Touring *Le Mans*), and GTDs (Grand Touring Daytona), how to tell them apart, and what cars are considered in which category. Good daughter that she is, she had this huge “really?” smile plastered on her face as she listened intently and let me talk about my newfound field of interest.

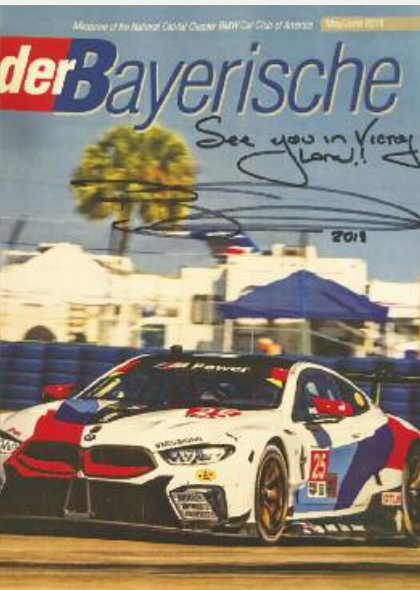
Without knowing the rules and nuances of racing, several questions...raced through my mind. For instance, I noticed some cars zigzagging right before turns. Is that a strategy to deter cars in hot pursuit behind you? Or is it to test the track before a turn, but why?

So what did I do? Went to the Internet? Yes, but it did not give me enough illumination to arrive at a clear, unequivocal answer. So I turned to the most affable expert I knew, *da man* himself, Bill Auberlen. But first, I congratulated him and Team RLL (Rahal Letterman Lanigan) on their outstanding second-place finish at Sebring, the first podium in just the second race for the new BMW M8 GTE No. 25. This was his 25th start at Sebring, second all-time

to Hurley Haywood with 28 starts. He was kind and eloquent in answering my query. “What you might be seeing with the swerving down the straight is when we come out of the pits on cold tires, they make very little grip until you get heat into them. So what some people do is go back and forth down the straights on the first lap of new tires to help accelerate the heat into the tires to make grip firmer.” Well, duh. I should have figured that out, but did I not plead complete ignorance of the subject?

Then I heard about “hot laps” and how they would be a huge attraction at our then-much-heralded Chapterfest on May 12. The announcement was rousing: “A special feature will have Mike Renner providing hot laps that day.” Special feature. Hot lap. Sounded...erotic. Hmm, am I wading into uncharted (and unwelcome) territory here? Do I really want to? What is a hot lap?? I read up on it. “A hot lap is a motorsport in which a vehicle is driven around a race track by a professional race driver without actually competing for a position or any other recording of performance; a hot lap means a fast lap, and it allows the passenger to feel the rush of race-like conditions.” Oh,...I...see. I felt a sheepish grin appear on my face. That rescued my mind out of the gutter *pronto*. Pie in my face! Whew, now I can move on.

Whereas before, I never considered going on a hot lap, this time a new courage and confidence – bravado almost – engulfed me; no, straight-jacketed me, and there was no wriggling out of it. The energized feeling made me conveniently forget that the last time I was in a car going full bore, I got sick. Talk about an undeniable spark flaring under my feet. Previously, the only “spark” came from hearing dance music...and acceding to the inspiring singer Gloria Estefan's exhortation, “Don't you worry if you can't dance; let the music move your feet!” from her song, *Conga*. And dance with gusto I do.



(Above) der Bayerische auto-graphed by Bill Auberlen. The issue includes the NCC Holiday Party article written by mentee.

But I had this lingering apprehension, so once again, I turned to my motorsports resource person, who had now become my mentor. "What do you suggest to a newbie like me to prepare for a hot lap for the very first time? I went to ///M School a while back, but I got very nauseous." The reply was fast. "As a driver or passenger? Passenger is difficult; I get sick." Wait a sec! The intrepid, steely-strong Bill Auberlen gets sick as a passenger? He was not trying to dissuade me; he was just being truthful. "Odd, I know," he added. Perhaps, it is because when one is at the helm and in control, s/he has better things on which to concentrate than a queasy stomach.

I joked that I should just take a famous person's advice to "relax and take a drink," a comment he made as he test-drove a lap at Sebring in 2012. As he was approaching Turn 10, he said, "This is a nice part of the track; you can relax, take a drink..."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u09YvjTwnPE>

He replied, "Exactly. Nice and

easy. Keep your eyes up." That resonated with me as I am a compulsively upbeat, sunny-side-up type of person, and always looking up. (After all, one of my life's maxims is "Raise your gaze.") Any final advice? "Enjoy," then added, "I'm sure the ride will inspire some more amazing writing." Did he just say, "more...writing"? Saying "more writing" to me is akin to offering *macarons au chocolat* to a chocolate. Bill is responsible for sowing the seed that grew into a robust tree that sprouted tons of leaves – in this case, turning on the light bulb that triggered an exodus of words from my brain and arranged themselves into this epic narrative.

I felt my interest in car racing becoming more salient in late February and March while riding along with my son. He drives a BMW 335i, and whenever he is behind the wheel, he wants to channel his inner...Bill Auberlen! Never mind that he is driving on the notoriously clogged Beltway in the Washington, DC Metro area. Given a little breathing room, he floors it as though he were on a race track. His passengers, including myself, get nauseated during the rides. Then, after the holiday party, I rode with him twice from Montgomery County, Md to Loudoun County, Va, and back. He was driving in the same old manner. But somehow, I welcomed it. For the very first time in many moons since he got his driving learner's permit, this mother did not remind her son to slow down. He was zooming in and around traffic, gathering speed for that sweet driving spot, and somehow, I took delight in it! And my stomach remained calm. He wondered whatever happened to his ever-cautious and always-cautioning mother. Was it her fresh appreciation for unleashing the track-inspired Ultimate Driving Machine to do what it is engineered to do? You bet. Or was it her blooming discovery of her newfound mettle? That, too. It was then that I realized an organic and accelerating process (pun

unintended) was occurring inside me, that of a horizon-expansion from Zumba to Zoom-Zoom, and it was...zeamless."

The next IMSA race was the Mid-Ohio Sportscar Showdown on May 6. The previous day, I watched Turner Motorsport's live introduction of the yellow-and-blue No. 96 M6 GT3 that Bill, teamed with Dillon Machavern, would be driving for the race. Among other attributes, the car has twin-power turbo...with air conditioning, but it remains hot inside, as the AC lowers the temperature by only about 20 degrees. How does Bill Auberlen come out looking cool, debonair, and alive...when a piece of chicken does not? Must be his cucumber-cool personality and unshakeable inner tranquility. I gained a deeper appreciation for what race-car drivers do and how well they do it considering this peril of the job. But this matter bothered me. Now really, how do racers survive the punitively hot temperatures inside their cars especially while wearing helmets and thick, flame-retardant race suits? They have proven how brutally scorching it is by placing chicken pieces in foil and taking them for a ride. When the race was over, the chicken was baked to perfection and ready to serve and savor!

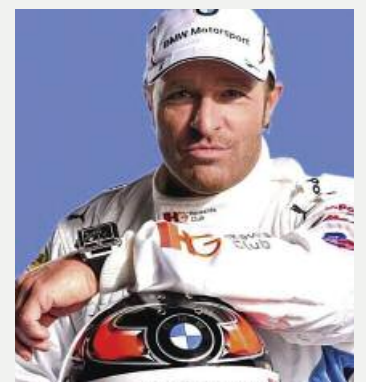
I had noticed a tube attached to a racer's helmet. Perhaps, it has to do with ventilation? So I went to Internet once again and searched "components of a car racer's helmet." There was the answer I was hoping for: hose for ventilation at the top of the helmet. Next, I typed in "ventilation inside a race car" and learned that there is a bag that pushes cool air up from the seat, and air from the hoses hits the driver's feet from under the steering wheel. Additionally, there are foot heat shields and a back blower. My worries for racers abated some.

With rapt and undivided attention, I watched the Mid-Ohio race. This was the time of the year when NBA playoffs are in every serious

fan's mind. But I was much more interested in finding the TV channel that would air Mid-Ohio than figuring out when LeBron or Steph would be playing. A long-time NBA fan switching allegiance to IMSA? The improbable does happen to us sometimes. And with incredible ease.

I was rooting for the Turner Motorsport No. 96, lap after lap, jotting some significant markers in a notebook. Suddenly, whoa! Wheels off! Someone was doing some exuberant, free-lance lawn-mowing off the track there. Wait! That's my dog in the fight!

Then I saw smoke enveloping the yellow and blue! I was so alarmed. No, it was steam, thank heavens! The commentator said it was a problem with the front radiator and the temperature on the brakes. Whew! Later that day, I read Bill's Facebook post, an excerpt of which was, "Some days you have a car that is difficult and might not have a chance to win so you do the best you can. Today was not that day. The Turner boys and girl gave me a winner. What I should have done is driven it to victory lane, but instead I tried a bit too hard and mowed just a bit of Ohio's finest grass and had to pit to take it off. Normally you might get a yellow flag and be able to fight your way back, but it was not meant to be...and the race was green the entire way. Sorry, guys." I thought it was a classy post by a classy guy.



(Above) Racer Bill Auberlen, BMW brand-ambassador, mentor, and friend.

So to the Internet I went: Yellow flag. How would it have applied to the yellow and blue? Yellow flag. How would it have worked on Bill's behalf in this race? I read up on it, but no, it did not answer my nagging question. Who would? Why, my mentor, of course.

"When I went into the pit to clear debris off my grille, I dropped back 50 seconds behind the leaders from the stop. If a car would crash or stop on course, it would cause a yellow-flag condition and a pace car would be sent out at 60 mph for the leader to follow until the situation was cleared. At that point, I could have caught the pack and been able to race them all to the finish. Almost all races have crashes, etc. that will cause a yellow."

So I deduced: His individual dilemma did not merit a yellow flag, and it just so happened there were no other adverse occurrences during the race that deserved one? The response? "Correct."

Time for the mentee to express support for the mentor. "In my last magazine article, I wrote about road-blocks you have hurdled. This was

an example, and it will make you even more determined. Darn that radiator and brakes mess. I empathize." He answered, "Ugh. Can't always be a perfect day, but the car was good so we will get 'em at the next one."

I continued, "That's the special spirit you possess that propels you to achieve more. And you'll get that record in no time. Put it this way: it took the now-retired Scott Pruett 58 years to get 60 wins. You're not even 50 and you have 58 wins. Surpassing his record is very doable. I believe in you. If I may paraphrase the lyrics of an upbeat song called "Keep On" by Jamison Ross, the soulful American jazz drummer and sweet-tenor vocalist, 'Keep on walking. Keep on believing. Keep on singing. Keep on...racing. Keep on keeping on.' "

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sGBFB5fS1s>

The Mid-Ohio race was 2.75 hours long. I kept track of the racer rankings on the leader board and could tell who was currently driving



(Above) Mike Renner with would-be passenger Pearl Jones before the hot lap at the Chapterfest.

which car. Dillon Machavern started, but the change of drivers was neither aired nor mentioned. An hour into the race, I noticed Bill's name. A GTD racer drives a minimum of 45 minutes in any given race. Later, I told Bill, the endurance driver, that he must have then driven the last segment of two hours? He replied, "You have learned a ton in a very short time. A+ student." No, I have an A+ mentor!

The next big test for this nascent racing fan came on May 12 at the premier club event of the year – the Chapterfest, resurrected after an eight-year hiatus. Besides a club tour from Maryland to West Virginia with lunch at the Bavarian Inn, an HPDE (high-performance driver education), a *concours* car show, and an autocross, there was my much-awaited event – the above-mentioned hot laps by Mike Renner. Since February, it had been in my consciousness as something I wanted to experience; after all, I was buoyed by expert advice and abiding encouragement. Nausea? Neh. Lose my delicious lunch? Nope. Trepidation? Ain't gonna happen. Whiplash? I don't think so.

It was quite hot on the race course that day. In the nineties at 5:15pm. Some breeze, and pollen bombs were everywhere. I put on a race helmet. Medium size. Fit snugly. Felt heavy. I got hotter. Felt like I was about to faint. Whatever happened to the emboldening shot of bravado? I took a deep breath and told myself there was no chickening out now. Not with Bill Auberlen seeing a souvenir photo of his friend Mike Renner and me earlier that afternoon and commenting from afar,

(Left) In the F90 M5 for a hot lap at the Chapterfest.



"Time for a ride!" Not with hubby enthusiastically taking my photos as I prepared for my maiden hot lap. Not with Mike dropping off a passenger and signaling me to get in the new, glistening, white F90 M5 with the spirited, race-me-anytime red and blue stripes. And not with Steven Schlossman, a National Official of the BMW CCA, ready to help buckle me in.

Now inside the car, I looked up and kept a steady gaze on the horizon, as Bill suggested. The intensity of the moment was palpable. "This is a cool-down," Mike informed the starting-line flagman. I exhaled a big but triumphant "Whoa!" the moment Mike hit the throttle pedal. Off we went lickety-split. This was a cool-down? So why was it fast and furious? I was looking up, but also wanted to see what the "keyhole" was all about. That is the hairpin-like turn on the course. (Summit Point Circuit has 10 turns, and one of them is a keyhole.) I looked down to witness the apex of the fast turn. Amazingly, it did not bother me one bit. Two miles. I was having the time of my life! We decelerated and came back to the starting point. As I started to unbuckle my seat belt, Mike told me, "No, you're staying; you're in for a hot lap!" This was it, I assured and braced myself. Off we went. Hair on fire! Definitely more exhilarating than the cool-down. It was the real thing! In real time! 130 mph! In the most powerful M5 ever built – spec 600 HP! I hung on to dear life and felt my neck stiffen up. Surprisingly, my stomach did not stir. I enjoyed every millisecond of the ride!

The hot lap done, I emerged from the car all-smiles and feeling oh so victorious after overcoming a fear, just like that! I was floating on air the rest of the evening, as I joined fellow chapter members for the barbecue dinner and applauded the good folks who made this fun day a memorable one, among them – Mike Renner, Doug Verner (Chair of our Chapter's BMW Performance //M school events, who facilitated the registra-

tion for the hot laps), and Paul Seto (our NCC President).

I told Mike I hoped to see him at Motul *Petit Le Mans* in October when I go cheer on my friend and mentor, the defending champion. It was at this race last year that Bill garnered his widely acclaimed milestone win, his 151st in 400 starts with BMW, that cemented his magnificent 38% wins-in-starts record. Mike said he would give me another hot lap...at Road Atlanta! One of the premier, storied race courses in the world. How cool is that?!

It was 6:03, the morning after the hot lap, and I was still...racing – my mind, that is. It was brimming with ebullient words, spilling out even, and I could not wait for morning to unfold, so I could get up and "put pen to parchment." To let the uncontainable words finally ooze out. To tell the world all about my momentous experience.

Stark darkness transformed into serene light as morning broke. It ushered in an extra-special, gorgeous day, Mother's Day. I felt great and very much alive. No stiff neck whatsoever. I said my morning prayers with extra expressions of gratitude. I informed my loved ones that I did not want breakfast in bed. How about "pen and parchment" in bed instead? The first thing I did was write a limerick in the classic past-tense format about a certain racer *extraordinaire*, who motivated me to go on that hot lap and inspired me to write about it:

*There once was a fine racer named Bill
Who was genial and kind,
the real deal
Sing his praises people did
Of his warmth, skills, and speed
Great brand-ambassador
with a gold seal!*

And what else would I like on Mother's Day, I was asked. "My very own racing helmet," I exclaimed.

Not only has the February event broadened my horizons, but it has also enhanced my current hobbies



(Top Left) Zumba shoes with a spin spot on each. (Above left) Nascent motorsports fan feeling victorious after her first hot lap. (Above Right) Choreographer Pearl Jones dancing the Auberlen-McLaren Shuffle.

and interests. Watching Bill's celebrated heel-toe footwork in the McLaren video inspired me to choreograph an interpretative Zumba dance. The man may not realize it, but he has some smooth "dance" moves while racing, such as step touches, toe taps, and heel lifts. And he's got rhythm!

Utilizing moves from jazz, hip-hop, and belly dance (snake arms; shoulder shimmies, lifts, and drops; hip thrusts; and head slides), the dance interprets several moments of racing...the fired-up-and-ready-to-go giddiness over an imminent race, the fluid heel-toe footwork, ease on the straights, and caution on the esses, as well as shifting gears, getting out of a race car, stretching one's arms, and shaking off any wooziness after an endurance race. It also features hula-hand movements that convey shining and aligned stars, as well as shooting stars.

And the music? Shining Star

by Earth Wind & Fire, because our protagonist is a supernova in the world of motorsports; someone fully sanctioned by a higher authority to channel his championship form each time he races ("The Surgeon General said nothing about smoking...the competition!"); someone poised to break the record, with three more wins, for the...stellar title of the winningest racer in American history; someone whose stars have aligned innumerable times for multiple victories. The eight-count step sequence for the song's chorus depicts his mesmerizing heel-toe footwork in the video. And what did I name this dance? The Auberlen-McLaren Shuffle.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZGYU_3HKts

Talk about inspiration. Add to it the encouragement from the ultimate expert...and a latent motivation from a couple of decades ago – something



I (Above) Baptism by rain.

simmering under the surface that boiled over, like a dormant volcano suddenly erupting. My desire to get into high-performance driving will warm the hearts of three guys who, as little boys – five, six, and seven years old, were in my carpool. (One of them is my aforementioned son Wally.) Every afternoon, we drove on an old, narrow, rickety, wooden bridge over a broad creek. It rattled, and the clacking sounds reminded them of the exciting anticipation on a rollercoaster inching towards the apex before it plunges down on the other side. Right before we reached the bridge, the boys would always scream, **“Burn it, Mrs. Jones!!!”** I would oblige and press the pedal to the metal! And they would shriek in glee! Who would have thought that a few decades later, Mrs. Jones would really be enamored of racing, and intends to... burn it at every opportunity she can! But first Autocross and HPDE courses are in order.

Yes, first things first. I want a chic, elegant helmet to have and to hold, preferably in Bimmer-Alpine white! The ever-supportive Bill Auberlen gave me excellent recommendations.

I mentioned a certain helmet model, one with EV (extended vision, the largest/tallest eye port). It is out-

fitted with various vent kits including side or air forced-air venting, a feature that speaks to me, granted my concern with interior-car ventilation.

Bill replied, “Not familiar with it. You should try some on and see what fits you well. Then after the fit, see if you like the looks. For me, when you get a big eye port, you can see better but doesn’t look nearly as cool.”

The dashing man of motorsports has spoken. And when he speaks, I listen. (Think E.F. Hutton ad here.) Helmet must fit well. Helmet must look cool. I get it. Now I know why he looks so suave emerging from that sweltering car after an endurance race, even when it is “hot and super humid,” as he described the conditions at Mid-Ohio, or 132 degrees at the track at Watkins Glen, NY on the Fourth of July weekend.

But seriously, it is heartening to learn that in the gritty and grueling world of car racing, a put-together, elegant appearance must not be compromised. I like that.

At a chapter social on June 13, I again thanked Doug Verner for his assistance in facilitating the hot laps at the Chapterfest, expressing how much I enjoyed the ride-along and that I was getting my own racing helmet very soon. He said, “Hot laps are really addicting!”

My sentiments exactly.

The next day found me in a lovely setting surrounded by attractive displays of fashionable shoes, stylish jumpsuits, chic gloves, and elegant headwear – my kind of department store. Nordstrom at the tony Mazza Gallerie in Washington, DC? No. OG Racing in Sterling, Va! Except the shoes were racing shoes; the jumpsuits, racing suits; the gloves, driving gloves; and the headwear, racing helmets.

A certain display further delighted me: a stack of the current issue of *der Bayerische* for customers to take home and hopefully read. The magazine also served as my ID as a BMW CCA member (it spells discount!) when I turned to page six revealing my holiday-party article.

Trying on helmets at OG Racing (one of our chapter’s longtime sponsors and supporters) marked another significant milestone in my ever-heightening interest in car racing. I found one that fit well and “looked cool.” It is the brand that Bill wears. Its slogan, “Champions Wear Bell,” apparently is not a misrepresentation. Another brand was recommended, but I never considered it. You see “Arai” means “Ouch!!!” in two of the four languages I speak.

That evening, I told Bill, “I got my helmet!” He replied, “Let’s see it. Congrats. Do you like it?” Wow, I received congratulations on getting a helmet. A helmet. Must be a significant *rite de passage* in motorsports fandom? Must mean a stamped seal for a now-*bona fide*, irrepressible fan? I assured him I loved my helmet and could not wait to dress for the occasion and model it.

June 22 was bleak, dreary, and cold, with active rain clouds unleashing buckets starting the night before. It was the kind of day that would normally discourage any outdoor activities. But I was not to be denied; my mentor had already wished me good luck, and well wishes are not meant to be wasted. It was the day I was to inaugurate my brand spanking-new helmet at the Track Day Experience at the Summit Point Motorsports Park in WVa. TDE is a newly introduced program for first-time students by the NCC BMW HPDE. It includes two 20-minute sessions on track with an instructor, classroom, and skid pad.

The day started with orientation laps on the 1.7-mile, 14-turn Jefferson Circuit with elevation changes. First thing I did was turn off my car’s navigation system; I suppose one does not need nav for the track. One daunting reality that became very apparent is that one learns so much more in the rain; if s/he is not driving smoothly, s/he would be punished immediately. Then we had a classroom session where safety was emphasized. Since it was raining, we were to look for dull surfaces to drive on and try to maximize grip. But we were also reminded to be aware of how robust our cars are and that we should fare well in driving. At the same time that he was promoting safety, our classroom instructor exhorted us to “Go off and be a boss!” for the next segment, which was track-driving.

If there was an ideal day for learning and developing skills for the mechanics of driving, this was it, courtesy of the generous rain gods.

With my heart aflutter, I proudly placed my neon-green R1 (Rookie #1) stickers on my M235's back windows.

This was my...watershed moment, the time I had long waited for. I had practiced slipping my helmet on and fastening the chin strap and was so fired up and raring to go upon getting on the driver's seat. I felt inspired and empowered, er, ///M-powered! My instructor and I wore in-car communicators (ear and mouth pieces). "Roll down your front windows," we were told; never mind that it was raining. Hand signals are a vital part of safe track-driving, hence open windows are a must. An indomitable courage came over me as I pressed the throttle pedal for the first time. I went off...like a boss! Where did this explosive energy come from? I maneuvered turns while shifting lanes in a manner contrary to how I drive in real life. There were lots of puddles in the apexes, but somehow, they did not deter me. The advice was to look where you want to go and not where you don't want to go. Driving fast was hair-raising, but at the same time I felt some calmness and a harmonious communion with the track.

Cornering became my favorite part of the laps. That is the technique of driving through a corner to allow the greatest radius or straightest path to produce the fastest possible speed at the exit of a corner. "Remember the line" and "Maximize the radius of the turn" were inculcated in our minds at our classroom session.

It was uplifting to hear "Good, good, good!" a few times from my kind instructor. I gave four pass points and took one. Me? The conservative driver? Passing a fast car on a fast track? It did happen, folks. You had to be there.

After several laps, I saw a lively checkered flag waving, and my instructor said, "You're a winner, Pearl! Now time for a cool-down." A cool-down! I first heard that from Mike Renner a month earlier at the Chapterfest. It brought back happy



|(Above) Practicing cornering in an M235 on the Jefferson Circuit.

memories of my very first hot lap as a passenger. I have come a long way! And yes, I felt like a...winner.

Between the two race-track sessions, I also drove on the skid pad. At first, I was intimidated by the thought and tried to beg off, but the skid pad instructor said, "You must drive; you'll like it!" He did not twist my arm that hard. I did it and survived the skids!

The first taste of track-driving bolstered my confidence, and I was even more enthused for the second session. The rain gods were still in the giving mode. Alas, as I was trying to adjust my braking point at a sharp turn (and overthinking it), I got carried away and had a scary wheels-off moment that included...mowing just a bit of West Virginia's finest grass! It was eerily familiar. It was like *déjà vu* all over again (as the above-named great philosopher also said). Recall that this inadvertently happened to my friend at Mid-Ohio in May. I imagined a stern voice chastising me, "Umm, R1, something is definitely wrong with you and your driving! Pit out right now!" I was certain a black flag would unfurl expeditiously, wave furiously, and suspend my driving session prematurely. But I saw no black flag (?!). Still I felt...mowed-down. But

my always-encouraging instructor thought otherwise; he said he was glad I kept going and that I recovered my confidence shortly thereafter.

Leaving Summit Point, I felt on top of the world as I overcame two fears that day – that of speed and skid.

I excitedly relayed my elated feelings to my mentor that evening: "I did it, Bill! Today was one of the most exciting days of my life! Adding to it was that it was a baptism in the truest sense – baptism by water, I mean, by rain! (Raindrops were relentless last night and all day today.) Can't even begin to describe the overpowering feeling of exhilaration and fearlessness driving on a race course for the first time. I even surprised myself. Honestly don't know where the courage came from. My instructor was so kind in deeds and...in words. Total driving time: 50 mins. in 3 segments. I was initially petrified by the thought of driving on the skid pad, but I did that, too. Thanks for the encouragement. Couldn't have done it, let alone thought of doing it, without your supportive words." I included two photos – one of me wearing my "cool" helmet (since he previously asked to see it) while revving up the car for the first drive; and the

other, of my car with the R1 neon-green stickers.

He replied, "Looking good. Congrats!!!! Sounds like you did great and in the wet. How scary."

Bill Auberlen gave me five exclamation points! Count five! To me, that was enough validation for my humble achievements that day. Did I say he was an inspiring mentor? Even his exclamation points convey support. I could parse it and say they represent five...stars. No harm in thinking so, yes? Four stars for the helmet and one for the driving, or was it 2.5 for the helmet and 2.5 for the driving? It really should not matter; I earned an aggregate five stars!

I also told him, "You know what I liked most about the TDE track sessions? Cornering. Fascinating stuff. Can't wait to go back!" His advice? "It is fun for sure. Just make sure you do it in baby steps. Racing is a game of speed and the more confident you are, the faster you will go. The worst thing you can do is hurt that by sliding off or spinning or even worse. So just build up steadily and slowly."

I thanked Bill for his illuminating insight and sage advice. Key words: baby steps, steadily, slowly. Be still, my heart. Contain yourself. Tamp down the blasting energy.



|(Above) A cellar sign at the Andretti Winery.

Lose some of the irrational exuberance. No rush. Words to live by, I mean to race by...for now.

This August will afford another opportunity for me to learn more about cars and racing when my husband Walter and I fly cross-country for the Monterey Weekend. It features two big events: Legends of the Autobahn *Concours d'Elegance* at Nicklaus Club and Festorics at Laguna Seca. I look forward to the world premiere of the long-awaited production BMW Z4 Roadster there. (BMW is known for its most-welcome habit of unveiling new cars at the Pebble Beach *Concours d'Elegance*.) Meantime, I watch IMSA. TV's live coverage of qualifying laps in between championship races to learn more about the ins and outs of car racing.

I have also become aware of "racing opportunities," but will not take them despite the urge. This happened to me in the Napa area recently. I documented it in a Facebook post:

"Early morning today. SF Bay Area. Glorious weather. Generous sunshine. Cool breezes. Out on a mundane drive. Car windows rolled down. So were everybody else's. Stopped at red light on Rte. 29. Headed north toward Napa. Had on my BMW Performance Driving School cap with red trim, matching my Kyoto-red lipstick and chevron-design, seagull-gray, ultra-light jacket. Car stopped alongside mine. Car

emitted sweet, lavender-tuberose-verbena scent. Rock music blaring. Guy looked at me. Lit 'cigarette' between fingers. Guy kept his gaze on me. Lifted his chin. Hands firmly gripping steering wheel. Signaled, 'C'mon, babe; let's race!' Where was my friend – but foe in racquetball – Bill Auberlen when I needed him?"

"This race could have gone all the way to Sonoma Raceway (formerly Sears Point and Infineon). But I ain't racin' no sissies...those powered by lavender-tuberose-verbena-infused 'cigarettes'!"

"I am certain my friend Bill would have said, 'I ain't racin' no sissies, either; you're on your own, girl.' But he would have expressed it more nicely; there is no slang-speak from this guy."

"Life comes at you fast!" is what has happened to me in five short months. I am grabbing the bull by the horns while embracing the new opportunities (but certainly not with sissies!) and honoring the expanded horizons. I am still heeding Gloria Estefan's advice, "Let the music move your feet," and dance as if nobody is watching. But I am now also seriously taking Amelia Earhart's words to heart: "There's more to life than being a passenger." (Do not get me wrong. Mike Renner, if you are reading this, I still want that hot lap with you at Road Atlanta in October!)

But "nice and easy, steadily and slowly" as Bill Auberlen has advised me, is how I will take it initially. For

now, I promise to not drive at break-neck speeds that would emit smells from the exhaust and burning brake pads. I will not yet settle into a Mario Andretti mind-set, which is, "If everything seems under control, you're just not going fast enough!" (While wine-tasting at the Andretti Winery in Napa, I found his famous quote immortalized in cellar signs from repurposed oak-barrel slats.)

And someday soon, with more practice at the helm and the track bug's deep bite still gripping me ever so tightly, I am confident that Zoom-Zoom will become Zoom-Zoom-Zoom! With improved driving skills and greater confidence, my switching gears will then be easier done than said. And I will not lose sight of the fact that HPDE and track experience will make me a better driver in the real world.

But wait, there is something missing. I already have a personalized racing suit in cosmic-cobalt blue with red accents purposely made for the music video for Shining Star. What about those snazzy racing shoes I have dreamed about? They are atop my Christmas wish list. (2016 Alpinestars Tech 1-T, size 9, in white/red to match my vermilion-hued lipstick, *s'il vous plait?*) There is no denying motorsports' promi-

nent spot in my life's trajectory now. By adding non-skid soles to spin spots and stiletto shoes, my horizon-expansion will be officially complete before the year-end! Now I can start dreaming of a good-looking car (to match my cool-looking helmet) expressly for racing, can I not? The soon-to-be-unveiled Z4 Roadster would be nice. But, alas, it will only come fitted with a soft convertible top, and convertibles are not allowed for high-performance driving. I can still dream about it, perhaps for a daily driver? As of this writing, the type of transmissions BMW will make available in it is still under wraps. Please say it will include the Steptronic automatic gearbox? "Yes, it will come with DCT – dual-clutch or twin-clutch transmission, an eight-speed automatic but racy version," said Bill Auberlen, the personable BMW brand-ambassador, kind mentor, and true friend. And when he speaks, I listen!

What a spark...ling difference an event AND a person make!

**Tourmeisters* Take Their Talents to Tuscany, Tend to...Tourists, and Tie the Knot - pages 16 to 18

http://db.nccbmwcca.org/2015/2015_0910.pdf



|(Above) Mentor and mentee.

O'Fest Reignited My Love of BMW

By Rob Hopkins | Photos by Rob Hopkins and Steve Tenney



| Views of the north bank of Pittsburgh and 100ft high fountain at the confluence of the two rivers!

I have been a member of the BMW CCA since 2014, but I had not attended an Oktoberfest before this year and had just picked up my first BMW, a 2009 128i, late last year. When I heard O'Fest was going to be in Pittsburgh and coincide with the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, I knew I had to attend. What better way to combine the two branches of the car hobby I enjoy, vintage cars and BMWs! I started by making plans, thinking about what events I wanted to attend and budgeting how much time I could be away, and came up with an early morning caravan plan on Wednesday with the goal of "Concours or Bust!". But the best laid plans can go awry.

Between the loss of my 128i to an accident and my back up car, a 2008 AP2 Honda S2000, falling ill with a broken subframe bushing on the Saturday before O'Fest was to begin, I started doubting if I'd be able to attend. After taking a few minutes to breathe and having a glass of Sangria, I redoubled my efforts and pushed on with preparations. As my car sat in "dry dock" waiting for parts, I clay barred and waxed it and managed to adjust my caravan plans. Meanwhile pictures from friends already in the thrall of

O'Fest on Monday and Tuesday came pouring in via social media and I was taunted by the random text message alerting me to the chance to win tires or motor oil if you attended this seminar or that!

It wasn't until 3 am on Wednesday morning that I torqued the last bolt on my car and knew for sure it was really going to happen, I was going to O'Fest!!!! I could finally get some well-earned rest before hitting the road. I rolled out of bed a few hours later, made a pot of coffee and hastily packed. I showed up only a few minutes late to the rendezvous with "*der Bayerische*" co-Editor Anna Maripuu who had just picked up her 135is from Aktiv Automotive. After checking our pockets in case we had forgotten anything important, we divvied up the Walkie Talkies and took off on I-270. We made quick work of that twenty-mile stint before settling into traffic for the next one-hundred miles or so of I-70 and chatted about car troubles we both had experienced while getting ready. It turns out we all have bad weeks sometimes!

After stopping for lunch, we decided to take a break from the interstates for some backroads and got tricked by Route 40 for what

must have been the hundredth time, ending up on twisty Route 219. Along the way there were beautiful views and some interesting architecture. A quick twenty miles later we met up again with the Pennsylvania Turnpike for the final eighty-mile drive into Pittsburgh, to check into the Sheraton Square Hotel late in the afternoon. Not knowing where everyone else I knew were, I stuck with Anna and we managed to hunt down another NCC member or two who were also looking for dinner. We decided to head up one of the incline railways to check what tasty delicacies awaited at the top. We settled on the Shiloh Grill thanks in part to its hilariously named dishes such as Polish Church Basement Pierogies and Burghers, and eventually we were joined by yet more CCA members.

Since I had missed the Concours earlier I decided to wander around the parking lot to see some of the many cars that had made the journey to O'Fest. Just as I was making a last pass, I stumbled onto a group of folks tailgating out of their trunks in the parking lot and they offered a drink. I decided to sit down and stay a while to listen to stories of past O'Fests and travels.

At this point I knew it was going to be a good week. How good was something only time would tell.

Thursday was a day at the track! Specifically, at Pittsburgh International Race Complex, otherwise more simply known as PittRace. While charity laps, the Michelin Driving Experience and HPDE events went on, I joined Autocross. Once I had registered and the car passed safety inspection with flying colors, I started my course walk, quickly figuring out a plan of attack for the course, while sharing opinions and getting advice from fellow drivers. When they called for volunteers to work the course I figured why not and ended up working two morning sessions which helped me to gain a different perspective on the course and maybe burn off a few calories from the huge serving of Philly mac and cheese I had devoured at dinner the night before.

During the third Heat it was finally my chance to get out on the course and show off what the S2000 could do. By the end of the morning I was consistently in the mid 36s. The break for a trackside lunch with cars zooming by in the background didn't help me to improve my times, but I did meet Tony from the "Road



(Above) Cars lining up to set up on the Shell TSD Road Rally. (Above Right) The 2018 F90 BMW M5 used to set the world record for the longest drift and an F10 M5 used for mid drift refueling duties. This M5 drifted for 232.5 miles! (Right) In the thick of German Hill, cars still coming into the show field.

Monkeys” of the Lone Star Chapter! As I ate BBQ I heard stories of the Road Monkey’s travels and their impressive 1500 mile trip up here with no freeways, aside from twenty miles or so, but still.

The afternoon Autocross runs passed quickly and after returning to the hotel for a shower it was time for my first BMW CCA O’Fest dinner at the Carnegie Science Center and what an evening! We hopped onto a ferry to cross the river and it dropped us right off on the shore next to the Science Center. While chowing down on hors d’oeuvres and admiring the huge submarine out front, I was joined by CCA members who had driven up from Florida and we talked about cars and life until the upper floors of the Center.

It was worth the wait! We quickly became enthralled by all that we could see and do on these floors. I worked with others against a basketball robot to try to improve the poor human accuracy score of 18.5% versus the robot’s score of 83%. After we were rewarded with an increase to 19%, we found other things to do and enjoy. A 1v1 in Air Hockey against a robot goalie, a computerized xylophone, a large model train layout, and a flaming Ruben’s Tube with a music synthesizer downstairs being used to make s’mores for CCA Members, were just some of the highlights. I had the chance to talk with Lee who was one of the drivers of the BMW charity lap race cars. All good things must come to an end and eventually we were kicked out of the Science Center and all hopped back on the ferry to the hotel.

In case I didn’t mention it earlier, the weather all week was spectacular! As we lined up for a tour to Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural masterpiece, Fallingwater, on Friday morning under partly cloudy skies, I put the S2000’s convertible top down for the next few hours of driving. We

were split into groups of fifteen cars each and since I am an ever-helpful tourmeister in my chapter, I willingly volunteered to be one of the trailing cars, a sweeper. The sweeper tries to make sure folks don’t get separated from the group or for those who get caught at lights, the sweeper radios ahead to make sure the lead cars know that there is a delay.

I ended up rescuing a few folks who missed a turn because of toll booth separation, but most of the time was spent enjoying the scenic route! It had been several years since I had last visited Fallingwater and I wasn’t disappointed this time around. Our knowledgeable guide led us through the stunning house disclosing many interesting facts and giving us a chance to admire the wonderful architecture. With it being near lunchtime on the way back, I grouped up with Tony, from the Road Monkeys, and his Alpine White E39 M5 for the drive back. We picked a random establishment for lunch and then continued on to the Hotel to relax and escape the afternoon heat. I was happy to just hang out and talk with folks in the parking lot for the next few hours. Apparently, the Robber Baron dinner held at the Grand Concourse, an ornate turn-of-the-century railway station located mere steps away from the Sheraton, ended up being quite an event, but I decided to spend a more quiet evening going up the incline again, checking out a place called the Micro Diner, just down the street from the Shiloh Grill.

Saturday dawned a more relaxed morning full of getting cars washed and ready for the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix showfield. Anna and I teamed up again for the drive to the Vintage Grand Prix and on the way passed cars of all types and a police-escorted parade of Subaru. After getting lost and separated we managed to



find our way to the entrance to the event and joined the 720+ cars on the show field on “German Hill.”

It was convenient to have lunch on German Hill, and we had a splendid view of corner 13, a right switchback with multiple camber changes due to the pitching of the road for drainage. When a driver got the corner setup properly, it was a joy for all to see. Late braking and turn in followed by a smooth application of the gas resulted in precise drift which made full use of the road width to carry as much speed as possible at exit just millimeters from the curbing. It was impossible not to cheer if. After watching this corner for most of the morning, I started chatting with Rachel from the Smokey Mountain Chapter, and we wandered off to check out BMWs and other cars in more remote areas of Schenley Park. It was neat hanging out with folks from so many different parts of the country. Around 3 pm the heat of the afternoon hit hard and it was time to return back to the hotel to get ready for the BMW NA dinner, conveniently located at the host hotel!

As we chowed down on a house salad, creamy lobster bisque, and filet mignon, we began to wonder who the main speaker was going to be. It was M-Division head for BMW NA Kevin Phillips! After his remarks there was a

Q & A session with lots of interesting questions about the future of the manual transmission, how robust the M5 AWD system was, and asking about future M models. A contest followed to determine who had been to the most O'Fests and a few people made it into the forty-plus years category which is astounding to me I had no idea BMW CCA had even been around for that long. I don't blame them for sticking with it for so long, because the whole trip had been an amazing experience.

Sunday started off with the business of packing and feeling a bit of *deja vu*, minus getting lost on the way over to German Hill. The day started off strong with BMW CCA parade laps that morning! More than 170 BMWs made it out onto the track and it was quite a spectacle to see so I'm sure it was fun for the paraders who seemed to be cruising along at 20 mph or so as they had been instructed to keep speeds down. After lunch I continued to wander around checking out areas of the show field that I had missed the day before, and from time to time wandering

over to the trackside to watch the races from corners 15 and 18. Time flew and before I knew it, it was nearly 4 pm. I reluctantly packed up and hopped in the car for what seemed like a quick four-hour trip home.

It was a bit sad to see several friends that I had made over the past days heading out and for home but I wasn't saddened. In fact, I felt the total opposite. Hopeful and energized. We are so very lucky to be a part of a great community of people and it's worth being excited about! Thanks to O'Fest, for the first time since my 128i came to its unfortunate end, I felt excited about the prospect of getting back in the game with a BMW of my own some time very soon. I promised many I wouldn't show up without a BMW at Spartansburg in October 2019 and I don't plan to disappoint...

(Right) Cars lined up along the river front for the Concours.





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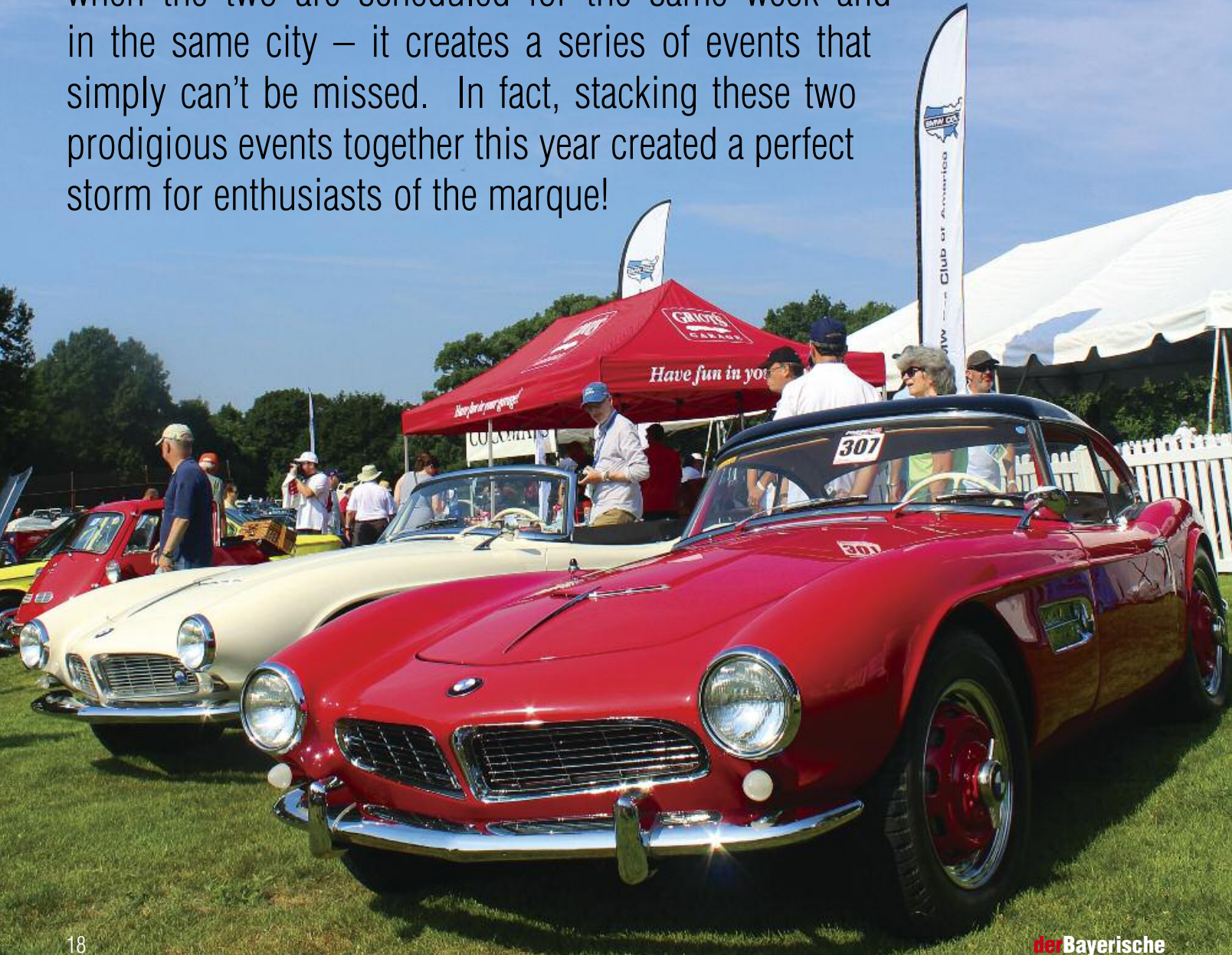
BY Marc Caden

PHOTOS Marc Caden
Fraser Dachtile
Steve Tenney

Oktoberfest and PVGP Races

Combine to Create an Unforgettable Weekend

Independent of one another, both the BMW CCA's annual Oktoberfest celebration and the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP) are events that every car enthusiast should really try to attend. However, when the two are scheduled for the same week and in the same city – it creates a series of events that simply can't be missed. In fact, stacking these two prodigious events together this year created a perfect storm for enthusiasts of the marque!



The PVGP is special because the racing occurs on public streets that have been officially closed by the city for the race weekend. The street circuit means there is very little run off for the drivers and there are hazards not normally found on most tracks, like stone walls, telephone poles, and high curbs. It is a major event on the vintage racing calendar, but it also has a strong charitable mission by supporting the Autism Society of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Valley School.

You may recall that last year I complained about having to visit Pittsburgh after the Penguins ousted the Capitals (once again) on their way to winning the Stanley Cup. This year, the world was turned on its head when the Caps finally beat their arch nemesis Penguins and brought the Stanley Cup home for the first time to Washington, D.C. As I returned to Pittsburgh this year, still basking in the glory of the Caps' recent victory over the Penguins on their way to the Cup, I promised not to gloat about it. I merely put on an Alexander Ovechkin jersey, a "Let's Go Caps" baseball hat, and carried around a replica of the Stanley Cup with a flashing red light on top. Okay, I am exaggerating just a little – there was no flashing red light on

top of the cup. But I cannot deny that Pittsburgh; as lovely a city as it is, was even more appealing this year.

PVGP race weekend is truly special, but it was made even more special this year with BMW being named Marquee of the Year, perhaps not surprisingly with Oktoberfest ongoing. I saw lots of prominent BMW CCA members in attendance, a who's who of the BMW world. I saw *Roundel* editor Satch Carlson drive into the corral in his Z8 that he has nicknamed "Nancy Drew." I heard that on his drive out from California his odometer hit 123,456 miles, so maybe he will post a picture of that in an upcoming issue. Either way, he has one of the highest-mile BMW Z8s in the country and what an epic drive to Oktoberfest it must have been.

I also saw other *Roundel* writer royalty whose names you probably recognize, like Joseph Chamberlin, Mike Self, Tom Plucinsky (from BMW NA), and the Hack Mechanic Rob Siegel.

The BMW CCA Foundation had a nice tent set up with merchandise that was staffed the Foundation's curator Michael Mitchell. Griot's Garage also had a tent set up with some free goodies and products available for purchase.



(Above) Are we there yet? The trip to Pittsburgh only takes about four hours and the posted speed limit for much of the trip is 70 mph. Marc Caden in his 1973 2002 follows closely behind Chuck Pompei in his 1971 2002. Their caravan also included Fraser Dachille and Alicia Gordon in their respective M3s.





The Allegheny Chapter was our host for the weekend and they truly outdid themselves. Chapter President George Snyder said that there were over 700 cars in attendance and 1400 people. That included over 120 2002s, 2 507s, and 2 ultra rare 1930s 328s. George gave special thanks to our chapter's President Paul Seto and for the over 200 chapter members in attendance. He also gave special thanks to Rick Speicher from Rahal Automotive group for providing t-shirts and water. Former racecar driver and team owner Bobby Rahal was in attendance and earlier in the week he drove his M1 on the covered bridge tour.

Since BMW was the PVGP's Marque of the Year, our cars were invited to take part in a special parade lap on Sunday before the actual racing began. Over 150 BMWs took part in the parade lap and we came very close to setting some sort of Guinness World record for the largest single marque parade lap.

I saw longtime BMW race car driver Bill Auberlen multiple times throughout the weekend. Bill was selected as the PVGP's Honorary Race Director, a pretty easy selection given that BMW was the Marque of the Year. He took to the track on both Saturday and Sunday, driving exhibition laps in the retired Z4 GTE that he

(Left) Scott Hughes collided with a concrete barrier coming into Turn 13 in his #64 1970 2002. (Below Left) Road & Track writer Sam Smith piloted the #21 Alpina 2002. (Bottom Left) The #349 entry in the Pre-War class was a 1930's 328 running a Frazer Nash power plant.



used to race for Team RLL.

BMW Performance Center Driving Instructor Mike Renner was also on hand and giving “hot laps” all weekend in his “Ring Taxi,” an M3 tricked out with all sorts of BMW performance parts. For a charitable donation, you could get a ride with Mike and his hot laps are legendary for his drifts and smoking tires. However, I noticed by mid-day Saturday the M3 had disappeared. Apparently, while drifting a turn, the bead of the passenger front right tire rolled off the wheel and unfortunately the car had to be retired. However, BMW NA was kind enough to step in and lend Mike a new M5 that they had in their fleet with the following

instruction -- please leave enough tread on the tires to drive it to the next scheduled event.

BMW NA brought a few very special cars to display, since none of them are readily available yet. Parked at the top of German Hill were a brand new M5 Competition Package, M3 CS, and the M2 Competition Package. All of these special editions were announced not long ago and for nearly everyone it was the first chance to see them up close. The M2 Comp probably got most stares as this special edition has received an engine transplant from the M3/M4 platform, upping its horsepower to 405 and the redline from 7000 to 7500. BMW’s baby M



(Top) BMW NA brought three new offerings for public consumption – the M5 Competition Package, M3 CS, and M2 Competition Package. (Below) Over 120 2002s showed up to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.





(Left) Racecar driver and PVGP honorary race director Bill Auberlen drove exhibition laps in the now retired Z4 GTE #25 Team RLL racecar. (Below Left) Chapter member Doug Dolan and Roundel Editor Satch Carlson had the only Z8s on the field.



has already been a favorite among the enthusiast crowd and I suppose we will start seeing a lot of them show up at local Cars & Coffees, autocross events, and track days.

Parked next to the cars brought by BMW NA were several amazing vintage BMWs brought from National Capital Chapter Member Lothar Schuettler's personal collection. Lothar brought his 1937 328 that won its class at the Pebble Beach Concours. He also brought his 1972 Baur Targa 2002 and 1973 3.0 CS. In addition to Lothar's 328, there was another 1937 328 in attendance, but this one was actually racing in the Pre-War Class.

It was also quite a sight to see two BMW 507s parked next to each other. Only 252 of these hand built roadsters were ever made and seeing them side-by-side was truly impressive. Dirk de Groen brought his white 1957 507 to Oktoberfest from his home in Florida and surprised many folks when he drove it on the covered bridge tour earlier in the week.

The other 507 was a red car owned by Thomas Pesiquey from the Delaware Valley Chapter. Tom

bought the car back in 1974 and while he didn't tell me the price, I get the sense that he probably paid far less than the cost of the cheapest BMW currently offers for sale. He bought the car knowing it needed some work. It had the wrong front grills in place and when he had it shipped to him after the purchase, the front end was damaged in transit. As a result, Thomas undertook a restoration that would end up taking more than four decades to complete. I looked through his custom bound leather book containing hundreds of pictures carefully documenting its restoration. His car wouldn't be finished until 2016 when he showed it for the first time at the Amelia Island Concours.

There has been a lot of buzz amongst 507 owners since former Formula 1 champion John Surtees' car was offered for auction at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed. The pre-auction estimate of \$2.6-2.9 million was easily exceeded and the car sold for a record \$5,026,522. It was the third most expensive car sold at Goodwood and may have been the most expensive BMW ever sold. The Hagerty Insurance Classic Car valuation tool currently lists the value of an average 507 at a whopping \$2 million.

The BMW Car Corral and hospitality tent at the PVGP sit high atop



(Left) Chapter member Lothar Schuettler's concours winning 1937 328 was the oldest BMW in attendance.





(Right) BMW Performance Center Instructor Mike Renner's M3 "Ring Taxi" retired early due to a tire malfunction, but BMW NA stepped in and loaned him a new M5 for hot laps. (Below Right) The Allegheny Chapter set up a nice Beer Garden replete with a band playing traditional German oompah music.

"German Hill" and this is arguably the best vantage point to watch the race. The Allegheny Chapter set up tents with a German oompah band, beer garden, and tasty catered lunches. Not surprisingly, there were more BMW race entrants this year than in previous years. There was a special race featuring only BMW 2002s and another popular race called "Axis vs. Allies Challenge" that pits German, Italian and Japanese cars against American, British and French cars. There were some familiar drivers signed up for the 2002 only race such as *Road & Track* (and former *Roundel*) writer Sam Smith, race shop owner TC Kline, and Dennis Pippy (a fixture in this chapter's HPDE program).

Unfortunately, there were some incidents involving some of our favorite cars. BMW CCA Club Racing Founder Scott Hughes was driving his #64 1970 2002 when he appeared to come in hot at Turn 13 and his brakes locked up. His car jumped the curb, slid quickly through the grass and collided hard with a concrete barrier. Fortunately, Scott was okay, but his car sustained some pretty ugly front end damage. Earlier in the day, another 2002 spun coming out of Turn 13, jumped the curbing, and appeared to break a rear CV joint. It needed to be towed away, but it came away from the off

track excursion with relatively minor damage. Overall, the racing was very gentlemanly amongst the competitors and there were very few on track incidents.

Since the BMW CCA is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the 2002 this year, all 2002s in attendance got special parking adjacent to the track. However, with over 500 BMWs parked in the car corral, there were special cars everywhere you looked. There was something for everyone - engine swaps, Alpina, M-Technic, M-Power, racecars, Euro only, vintage, and new models.

Perhaps the best news out of the weekend was that BMW was on track to set a record for raising charitable donations with a goal of \$150k. Overall, it was an amazing race weekend and both the BMW CCA and Allegheny Chapter should be commended for deftly coordinating such a huge undertaking. The event ran without a hitch and that was largely due to the years of planning that went into it and the huge number of volunteers who donated their time to make things run smoothly.

(Right) #349 1930s 328 parked in the BMW car corral after its race concluded.





O'FEST BY THE NUMBERS:

An O'Fest First Timer's Seventh Trip to the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP)

By Fraser Dachille

For this author, the numbers broke down like this: O'Fests previously attended: zero, Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix's attended: six, cars in the caravan to O'Fest: three, cars in the caravan home: four, registered O'Fest attendees: 1,264, 2002s seen: many.

It was my first time attending an Oktoberfest, and the experience could not have suited me any better. I have been up to the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix seven times (including this latest visit) since my first visit in 2008, and I would not have missed this one. The fact that O'Fest was scheduled to be held in conjunction with what is one of my favorite annual events was great timing. In other words, I was going to attend anyway and O'Fest was a welcome bonus: like getting a free scratch-off with your



(Top) 02's on Parade: A stream of 2002's got the chance to take a parade lap of the PVGP Course during Lunch on Sunday. (Above) 02's at Rest: The 2002's got parking at the entrance of "German Hill" at the PVGP International Car Show this year for the celebration of their 50th anniversary.

purchase and actually winning some money.

If you missed Oktoberfest, I can say the following: 'there is always next year'. Oktoberfest moves to Greenville, SC next year (in October 2019), and the PVGP will be held the same time and place it has been held since 1983 (middle of July, Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, PA). Do yourself a favor and try to attend both.

I drove up with two fellow club members (Alicia Gordon: Chapterfest co-Chair, and Abby Gonzalez: Director of Marketing) on Wednesday evening, having met them at Midway Service station on the PA Turnpike. We got into Pittsburgh after 10 pm Wednesday – rough for an early wakeup call to be at PittRace at 7 am the next morning for Autocross.



(Above from Left) NCC member (an dB editor) Anna Maripuu putting her 135i through its paces at PittRace for the Friday HPDE. NCC Member (and Chapterfest Co-Chair) Alicia Gordon in her '18 M4.

The next morning arrived in a snap, and I found myself in the paddock of PittRace, my car emptied of luggage and contents and ready to run. About half a dozen familiar faces from NCCAutocross were present to represent NCC at the O'Fest Autocross. After the smoke cleared, and all the cones had fallen two NCCAutocross committee members had trophies in hand.

Following Autocross, a few of us decided that we needed more speed for the day and did a session of Karting. If you find yourself at PittRace (or find yourself with an excuse to be there) do yourself a favor: kart. The track was excellent and the karts were fast. One NCC member even has a time slip (probably framed by now) of turning a faster lap than Bill Auberlen in a kart.

Friday, I found myself in the paddock of PittRace again, car emptied (again). This morning began with classroom and instructor introductions: Friday was HPDE day. Having never driven on PittRace before, I will admit that I thought based on videos that it would simply be an okay track. I am secure enough to admit it: I was wrong. The track has more elevation change than videos do it justice, the curbing is in all the right places, and the track rewards patient drivers who can will themselves to wait the extra

beat and turn in late.

An incident involving one of the BMW CCA Foundation's race cars, a Z4 GT LM, delayed the charity laps until after the lunch break. Having an event organizer come to your window and tell you: "We are running behind with the charity rides in the race cars..." should have been followed by "...so we will get you on track as soon as possible."

Instead it was followed by, "...so we will have the race cars on track with you. Just hold your line, be predictable, they will work around you" was not what I expected to hear. I know it wasn't part of the program and it may never happen to again; but being on track, at speed, and getting passed by an ex-BMW factory race car like you are sitting still is an experience that will not soon be forgotten. And if I do forget, there's always the video to prove it.

The drive home was made with three club members (Chuck Pompei, NCCAutocross Co-Chair, Alicia Gordon, Chapterfest Co-Chair, and Marc Caden, often author on these pages). We were sunburned, tired, and exhausted from the activities and more than a little sad to return to the land of work (as opposed to the land of car shows and race cars).

(Below) NCC member Alicia Gordon chasing down a E90 M3 in her F82 M4.





| (Above) NCCAutocross Co-Chair Chuck Pompei navigating a slalom at Thursday's Autocross.

You may be asking yourself: what happened over the weekend at Schenley Park? The events in the park are covered by other authors in this issue. The weekend at the park was fantastic. The Allegheny

Chapter has the PVGP organization and hospitality down pat. Adding O'fest to the mix was truly the icing on the cake of an always excellent event. The number of BMWs on German Hill this year was stagger-

ing, and I know I didn't personally see even a small fraction of them.

Get yourself to both events next year. Go watch the vintage races in Pittsburgh, soak in the car show, and enjoy the shade and

beverages in the BMW tent on German Hill. Find an activity that interests you at O'Fest, dive into it, and who knows what kind of experiences you might end up having.



| (Above) NCCAutocross Committee Member Kamran Bakhtian clipping a cone in the slalom on Thursday.



| (Above) A Z3 M Roadster speeding through Thursday's Autocross at O'Fest held at PittRace.



| (Above) BMW CCA Foundation brought four ex-racers from their collection to be used for charity laps at the HPDE at PittRace.



| (Above) Some Like it Hot: one of the BMW CCA Foundation racers got a little hot under the collar during practice.



2018 NCC Golf Outing – Raspberry Falls Golf Club [v3]

By David Costanza

Because Paul Seto was involved, the weather forecast for the 2018 NCC Spring/Summer golf outing at the Raspberry Falls Golf Club, was dicey. A flurry of mid-week emails about a possible move to Sunday, the forecast for which was not much better, resulted in a somewhat split decision to keep the event on Saturday and hope for the best with the weather. The decision proved prescient as the weather was quite nice all afternoon. There were a few scattered showers in the area, but they seemed to part, like putts on a hogback, just west of the course and go around us to the north and south leaving everyone dry and relatively cooled by the cloud cover. Everyone got in all eighteen holes in this social event that also had a strategic competitive element.

You see, the Fourth Annual Euro Marque competition is also this summer, and Team Captain/Club President/Chief Strategist Paul Seto, along with our Raspberry Falls host, PGA Pro, and fellow strategist in arms, Willy Lutz,

decided to use the NCC outing as a test run for some possible new groupings and formats for the Euro Marque. Tired of losing, and of Team Porsche's* shenanigans and antics, Paul and Willy mixed up the foursomes a bit, rearranging the veterans and adding in some new talent up and down the Team BMW lineup. They are still crunching the data (Driving Distance, Driving Accuracy, Greens in Regulation, and SG: Tee-to-Green, Putting, and Total, all derived from reams of ShotLink data), but expect to see some new groupings and possible format changes for the Euro Marque.

Anyway, turning back to the NCC outing, after Willy's traditionally humorous intro and some important instructions, a total of 20 golfers teed off shotgun style at 1:00. There were the usual individual skill competitions with long drive and closest to the pin competitions. Around the course, there were the occasional oohs and groans that could be heard as players bombed drives (like

Cynthia Heller's big hit on #11 and Ron Majors' absolute bomb on #3) and missed putts (many of the latter by yours truly)."

After the round was complete, the players enjoyed the traditional and delicious Raspberry Falls BBQ buffet with plenty of food and drinks for all. In addition to the skills competition awards, there was also a drawing for terrific door prizes, generously donated by BMW of Silver Spring (I do not know how Paul continues to round up so many great prizes, shirts, and other donations for the club – he is a swag savant). Prizes included golf gear, shirts, miniature car models, lithographs, beach towels, and lots of other goodies. In fact, since a few people decided not to come because of the threatening weather, there were more than enough t-shirts and prizes for everyone in attendance as well as plenty of food for seconds and thirds.

For some, the golf outing was purely social, for others, it was a chance to get in a practice round on the Euro Marque course, and for

others, it was a chance to strategize about how to take down Team Porsche* this year. Keep a weather eye out in the *dB* to learn whether Paul, Willy, and Team BMW will bring home the coveted Euro Marque trophy this year.

* In my *dB* piece last year about the Third Annual Euro Marque Competition, I had placed asterisks next the words "Team Porsche*" every time they appeared in the story. The idea was that their "victory" in the competition was tainted by their abject quitting and therefore their marque's name deserved to be asterisked. Apparently, the typesetter (well, digital editor since I am pretty sure the *dB* is not created using movable type) is not a sports record book fan, so all the asterisks were dropped. With the Fourth Annual EM coming up so, I wanted to clarify that last year's competition should have been officially marked with an asterisk.

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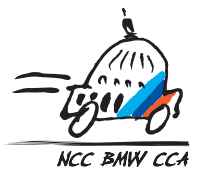


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with them – after all, the more the merrier! To our newest members listed below, you joined the club, now join the fun! Check out our Web site for the latest event details.

Note: If your name is spelled incorrectly, please use the address change form found under the "Join and Renew" menu item at

www.bmwcca.org to correct it. And, for those whose memberships are about to expire, it's easy to renew online at this Web site as well.



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The Many Faces of Autocross: Insert Your Photo Here

By Jaclyn Heck | Photos by Fraser Dachille and Jaclyn Heck

No matter your experience level, no matter the make, model or age of your car, no matter how many or how few modifications you have made or want to make to your car, no matter if you are driving solo or with a co-driver, no matter if you are younger with a brand-spanking new license or have a bit of experience under your belt, don't be intimidated by autocross. Anyone is welcome if you come prepared with a desire to learn and have fun.

To emphasize and showcase this attitude and the welcoming environment, I asked a few of our drivers, with a range of cars and experience, to answer some questions to better understand just how enjoyable and accessible autocross can be for everyone.



Marc & Andrew Caden

1. What car (or cars) do you drive for autocross? Make, model, year, etc. What about prior cars?

Marc: I started out autocrossing a 1987 BMW 325is and for the last two years have been autocrossing a 1999 BMW Z3 M Roadster.

Andrew: Starting around the age of 11 or 12, I was a passenger in my dad's car at autocross events, but now that I have my driver's license, we are father/son co-drivers sharing his car.

2. What modifications have you made, if any?

We try to limit our modifications because our autocross car is still primarily a street car. We make sure to run the best 200-treadwear performance tires on the market, and we added a front sway bar to help combat understeer. Our car was also aligned to allow for a little more front camber.

3. How long have you been autocrossing? For co-drivers, how long have you been co-driving?

Marc: This is my fifth year autocrossing.

Andrew: I just got my driver's license, so this is my first year autocrossing in the novice class. I did the Novice School this spring, which I would recommend for anyone just starting out.

4. How did you get into autocross?

Marc: I got into autocross as way for me to help experience the limits of my car with my son in a safe environment.

Andrew: I got into autocross through my dad.

5. What's your favorite thing about autocross?

Marc: My favorite thing about autocross is that it teaches car control skills (oversteer and understeer) in a safe environment where just about the only thing you can hit is a soft orange cone. As a result, everyone leaves an autocross event a more skilled driver than when they arrived. It's the perfect tool to teach a young person car control skill or to help prepare you for track events.

Andrew: As a new driver, I like that autocross is helping teach me how to have better control of my car and be a safer driver. It's also nice that autocross has become a father-son event for us where can compete against each other for time.

6. Describe your experience thus far with autocross and the club? The people you have met through autocross events?

Over the years our fellow autocrossers have become our good friends. Everyone at an autocross event is very encouraging and wants you to be the fastest driver you can be. People regularly give each other tips on how to attack the course, set tire pressure, and improve car set up. Our autocross club has a stand-up group of people who we look forward to seeing at every event. It's similar to the camaraderie you would expect from a bowling league or regular golf foursome – we just happen to gather in a big stadium parking lot with orange cones and drive as fast we can through them.

7. How do you prepare for a race/event?

We keep a milk crate packed with everything we typically need for each autocross. Things like painter's tape for numbers, a tire pressure gauge, baseball hats, sunscreen, a portable tire pump, and rain ponchos in case of foul weather. We also swap our wheels for autocross a day or two before the event, and make sure to pack our helmets and folding chairs.

8. How often do you race/attend autocross events?

We try to attend at least one autocross event a month.

9. Tips and advice for anyone interested in autocrossing who has yet to take the plunge?

Come out and observe an autocross to see if it's something that might interest you. While you're there, flag down a committee member in a blue NCC Autocross shirt and ask them to arrange a ride-along. The committee has loaner helmets on site for you to borrow.

10. Car or driver? Which do you see as more important and why?

We have seen people autocross in some cars you might not expect, such as a huge 7 Series, a minivan, a Honda Fit, and recently a Tesla Model 3. It's not so much the car that matters, as the driver behind the wheel. A fast driver who understands how to control the weight and balance of the car is more important than the car itself. Improve the driver first and then work on the car.

11. In your opinion, what is more important: more power or less weight?

We regularly have little Mazda Miatas post the FTD (fastest time of the day,) and yet powerful Corvettes also do very well. Sometimes an E36 M3 will be faster than an E46 M3, although on paper that might not make sense. There are so many variables in autocross, such as course design, car set-up, and driver's skill. I think more power versus weight comes down to preference. Autocross courses tend to be very tight and favor nimble handling, so we prefer less weight. But, if you like V8 motors, we see M3s, Camaros, Corvettes, and Mustangs that will do just as well as the smaller Miatas.

12. Are you a cone killer?

Yes and no. We don't hit too many cones, but if you aren't ever hitting cones you may not be pushing the limits of your car enough. The thing about autocross is that killing cones isn't a crime, but it will cost you a two second penalty.



Joey Hutchinson

1. What car (or cars) do you drive for autocross? Make, model, year, etc. What about prior cars?

A 2012 BMW M3. The M3 is my first and only car I have used for autocross.

2. What modifications have you made, if any?

Powertrain: intake, full exhaust, and tune
 Suspension: coil overs, camber plates, sway bar, and bushing
 Wheels: 18" wheels with 275/35-18 R compound tires at all four corners
 Interior: four-point roll cage, fixed back race seats, six-point harness
 Exterior: carbon fiber front lip, rear diffuser, and rear spoiler

3. How long have you been autocrossing? For co-drivers, how long have you been co-driving?

I've been racing for roughly three seasons now. I've never been a co-driver.

4. How did you get into autocross?

Collin Smith, one of NCC autocross's lead members at the time, convinced me to bring my M3 out after I purchased it. I participated in the Novice School in 2016, and have run almost every event since.

5. What's your favorite thing about autocross?

The competitiveness of racing against the clock while trying to shave tenths of a second off my time during each run. It's always fun to compare times with your friends who are racing different cars. When you can best your friends, it's fun to gloat a little.

6. Describe your experience thus far with autocross and the club? The people you have met through autocross events?

I've had a wonderful experience with NCC Autocross. It's been a very open and welcoming atmosphere since the first event I attended. I've made some great new friends through the organization. I've also brought some of my friends into the organization to start racing.

7. How do you prepare for a race/event?

To prep the car, I swap wheels from normal street or daily tires over to race wheels. Depending on the location of the event, I'll either drive the car or trailer it to the event.

I keep all my race gear (helmet, gloves, GoPro, car numbers, etc.) in a big Simpson Racing bag that gets easily tossed in the trunk. The rest of the car is cleaned out and wiped down.

8. How often do you race/attend autocross events?

Once a month, on average.

9. Tips and advice for anyone interested in autocrossing who has yet to take the plunge?

Come to an event and watch even if you're not ready to drive. Any one of the committee members would be happy to give you a ride-along so you can experience what it's like. I highly suggest attending the Novice School. You will learn a lot in just one day.

10. Car or driver? Which do you see as more important and why?

The right driver can make any car fast. Some cars are just a lot more fun to drive. We have different skill levels as drivers and the goal is to improve over time. The right car can help with this. So, to answer car or driver, I am taking the easy way out and saying both are equally important. They go hand-in-hand.

11. In your opinion, which is more important: more power or less weight?

More power!!!

12. Are you a cone killer?

I'm not a cone killer. I typically only hit one or two cones at any event. I could get away with being more aggressive and clipping a few more here and there.



Eric & Leigh Andreassen

1. What car (or cars) do you drive for autocross? Make, model, year, etc. What about prior cars?

Leigh: 1991 BMW 318i, 2014 228i, 2004 Saturn ION!

Eric: BMW - 1991 318is, 1980s Alfa Romeo Spider (when the 318 was broken)

2. What modifications have you made, if any?

Eric: I haven't made any changes to the car in probably ten years - I would basically upgrade or modify parts as the existing equipment wore out. SSK (freebie from another club member), suspension (which I wouldn't recommend - horribly unreliable), chip (okay, that wasn't really a part that wore out - it was just on sale), and stickers (we all know they add horse power.)

3. How long have you been autocrossing? For co-drivers, how long have you been co-driving?

Leigh: I think I started with the autocross Novice School in the ION roughly in 2011. I drove the 228 once in 2014, but decided the 318 was far more fun on the course. We co-drive because Eric is my favorite instructor, but when we bring Lux we have to trade off instead of co-drive.

Eric: Since around 2003.

4. How did you get into autocross?

Leigh: Eric talked a lot about it when we first started dating, as he had taken a break for a season or two to make some repairs to the 318. I was curious so he took me out for an event where I rode along and was hooked. I still giggle like a schoolgirl when the G-force hits me and the tires squeal!

Eric: I went to a few events with Pete Lem and rode along with other club members. Eventually they convinced me to take my car out and I was hooked.

5. What's your favorite thing about autocross?

Leigh: Overall, it's the challenge of doing my best, and making the tires squeal! The friendly competition amongst my fellow drivers doesn't hurt either. As far as a course goes, I LOVE LOVE LOVE slaloms - I set my hands on the wheel, get into a rhythm, and just dance my way through!

Eric: Learning the limits of the car. It has saved me from accidents on more than one occasion.

6. Describe your experience thus far with autocross and the club? The people you have met through autocross events?

Leigh: It's been great - the club members are welcoming. I've learned a lot from having many different instructors, both formal at the Novice School and informal from experienced drivers willing to ride along with me. It keeps me coming back year after year. The people are great - it doesn't matter what car one drives, everyone is there to have fun and socialize.

Eric: Standing around a parking lot for hours and driving less than four minutes isn't for everyone. I describe it to most people as a social event with a little bit of driving. If the number of weddings I've attended is any indication, autocross is a great place to make friends.

7. How do you prepare for a race/event?

Leigh: Just making sure we have the essentials that will be needed for a day hanging out in a parking lot. Eric charges all the devices, including the GoPro.

Eric: I put my helmet in the car and make sure I've got sunblock.

8. How often do you race/attend autocross events?

Leigh: We were season pass registrants until this year. My career change to Real Estate means weekends of working, so we may only make three or four events per season.

Eric: As often as possible.

9. Tips and advice for anyone interested in autocrossing who has yet to take the plunge?

Leigh: If you can, start with the Novice School. Learning the sport before a points event helps build confidence. Otherwise, come ride along and get a feel

for it. I bet you won't be able to resist registering to drive next!

Eric: If you are worried about the wear on the car, don't worry so much about it. If something breaks, it was going to break soon anyway. Where would you rather have it break? In a parking lot with 100 car enthusiasts, or on I-495? If you are worried about being competitive, don't be. It's supposed to be fun. Add a couple pounds of air to your tires and sign up for an event.

10. *Car or driver? Which do you see as more important and why?*

Leigh: Driver – you can only mod a car so much. If you don't learn to drive it properly, you won't improve.

Eric: Driver. Modifying a car is an easy way to go faster but will mask flaws in your driving. Getting a slow car around the course fast is a challenge. I've basically upgraded parts on my car as other parts wore out.

11. *In your opinion, which is more important: more power or less weight?*

Leigh: Less weight – since we drive a car with no horsepower and still post competitive times. On a short course with lots of turns, being light and agile is more important than straight-line speed.

Eric: That depends on the course. Generally, for autocross, less weight is advantageous. If the course is designed with some long straights, some HP would be nice.

12. *Are you a cone killer?*

Leigh: Not usually. I try to wobble them just a little, maybe misdemeanor assault, but not killer! I don't like penalties, but if you don't cone on at least one run, you aren't pushing enough.

Eric: No. (But my wife is!)



Sarah Abernethy

1. *What car (or cars) do you drive for autocross? Make, model, year, etc. What about prior cars?*

1999 BMW 328is in Avus Blue. This car has been autocrossing (not just with

me) for many years before I started, and hopefully for many more! Prior to this car, I had a Mini Cooper, which was what I originally used when I started autocrossing.

2. *What modifications have you made, if any?*

The car has quite a few mods, some by me and some by the previous owner, including: Eisenmann Race Exhaust, TC Kline Coilovers/Koni Yellows, 3.15 Thayer Diff (LSD), ZHP shift knob, lightweight flywheel and Stage 2 clutch kit, larger E46 330i brakes in the front, with Hawk street and race pads all around. I'm sure I'm forgetting something, but I think that covers the main items!

3. *How long have you been autocrossing? For co-drivers, how long have you been co-driving?*

Fall of 2012, so about 6 years now.

4. *How did you get into autocross?*

Mpact 2012 - I was there for the car show with a few friends, and I signed up for Autocross that day...the rest is history!

5. *What's your favorite thing about autocross?*

The people you meet. I love the thrill of autocross itself, but it's made better by the awesome friends I've made through the years of autocrossing.

6. *Describe your experience thus far with autocross and the club? The people you have met through autocross events?*

Autocross has been awesome. Starting with a FWD and moving to RWD was tricky, but I've learned so much autocrossing with NCC. The committee is awesome to work with, and in particular, I'm so glad I met Collin Smith (via Phil Yates) all those years ago.

7. *How do you prepare for a race/event?*

Get a good night's rest, make sure I've got snacks ready, a full water bottle, and my helmet ready to go!

8. *How often do you race/attend autocross events?*

About once or twice a month.

9. *Tips and advice for anyone interested in autocrossing who has yet to take the plunge?*

Don't be shy! I took my bone stock Mini Cooper (non-S) out and did fine. Never think that you don't have a fast-enough car or aren't experienced enough to do it (I only had my license for a few months when I started autocrossing)! Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for help, be it in just taking the plunge, or once you've registered – it's hard to have a bad time at autocross.

10. *Car or driver? Which do you see as more important and why?*

Driver – You can have the fastest car in the world, but if you don't have the confidence or skill to take the right lines and put down good times then it won't do you much good!

11. In your opinion, which is more important: more power or less weight?

Less weight. (As someone with a Non-M, I think my answer isn't allowed to be power.)

12. Are you a cone killer?

No! I always try to be extremely clean on my runs...but lately, as I've been finding the limit on a new setup, I've unfortunately taken more cones with me.



Chuck Pompei

1. What car (or cars) do you drive for autocross? Make, model, year, etc. What about prior cars?

I autocross my 1971 BMW 2002, and occasionally I'll take my 2002 BMW 330i out on course as well.

2. What modifications have you made, if any?

The 2002 has a host of suspension upgrades (Ground Control coilovers, stiffer sway bars, camber/caster plates, poly bushings, etc.) as well as a five-speed transmission, a 3.91 limited slip differential, and some engine bolt-ons.

3. How long have you been autocrossing? For co-drivers, how long have you been co-driving?

I've been autocrossing for two years.

4. How did you get into autocross?

I joined the BMW CCA and a few members (namely Marc Caden) suggested I give AX a try.

5. What's your favorite thing about autocross?

The camaraderie. Throwing your car around the course is a blast, but competing with your friends and learning from others is even better.

6. Describe your experience thus far with autocross and the club? The people you have met through autocross events?

My experience with AX is rather short, but extremely rewarding. I'm not the fastest. Not even close. But over the past two years I've met a lot of great people I now call friends and I've also learned a thing or two about driving fast(er).

7. How do you prepare for a race/event?

Fill up the tank and set my alarm.

8. How often do you race/attend autocross events?

I try to attend every NCC event and when I can, I'll attend other AX and track events too.

9. Tips and advice for anyone interested in autocrossing who has yet to take the plunge?

You'll wish you came out sooner. At the end of the day, no one cares if you're the fastest or slowest. You'll have a fun time regardless of where you place. If you are new to performance driving, AX is a good place to start and the NCC program has veteran instructors that are always happy to help out.

10. Car or driver? Which do you see as more important and why?

Driver, hands down. I've watched a minivan and a Jeep embarrass at least half the field, including myself.

11. In your opinion, which is more important: more power or less weight?

Less weight. Lowering a car's weight makes braking, accelerating, and turning easier.

12. Are you a cone killer?

Not really, but with only 100 hp it's easy to see them coming.



Upcoming Schedule for the Rest of the Season:

9/9 – Points Event #5 - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf

10/13 – Points Event #6 - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf

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