

# *der* Bayerische







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**Cover:** Alexander Sims double stunting the Michelins to a first win for the M8 GTE. Read the article on the IMSA Weekend at VIR starting on page 18. Photo: Steve Tenney

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



## President's Message

As I write this article, I look back at all the fun events the past few weeks: NCC beat Porsche Club of America in golf to take the Euro Marque trophy, watched BMW Team RLL win the first race with the M8 GTE at our VIR corral, enjoyed the Baltimore waterfront eating crabs, and spent an incredible day on Solomons Island with a pier full of BMWs and enthusiastic owners. And we still have plenty more to go during our 'busy season': Passport BMW's Oktoberfest celebration, our Cars & Coffee/New Member Reception at BMW of Sterling, three straight DIY weekends, and our final Pie Run highlight our calendar for the rest of 2018. We've had another extremely busy year and will finish another year with 100+ member event days. None of this happens without our volunteers, the people that plan and run our events, and they are the heart and soul of what makes this chapter so special. Thanks for all your hard work!

And speaking of volunteers, as we come to the end of the current term for our Board of Directors, we must fill their shoes. Anyone wishing to run for an elected Board position (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary) must nominate themselves during the Nomination Period, November 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018, for the 2019 term (please see our website for more details). To find out what it takes to help run this chapter, contact a current Board member or come out to our monthly Board meetings. Plus, what's not to love, running the largest and most active BMW chapter has its perks. Planning fun car events, hanging with the best BMW enthusiasts anywhere, and unlimited pay raises! Well, we can always dream, right...



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It can be checked and updated at the [www.bmwcca.org](http://www.bmwcca.org) website.

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Ah the seasons. As we turn the corner into Winter, and the Autocross and HPDE seasons come to an end and we put away the cars that we prefer not to drive on winter tires in inclement weather, we reflect on what has been an action-packed Spring, Summer and Fall.

This issue is packed with retrospective content that reflects what has been going on during the past months, and even if our club activities slow down a touch as we approach Winter, there are plenty of events happening.

In this issue you will read about social events, such as our annual golf outings, ably covered by David Constanza. There is an article about a past tour, and James Chew encourages us in his article about the Golden Gate Chapter to visit with other CCA chapters when we are out traveling across the country.

Our excellent DIY program is well represented in this *dB*. Two recent DIYs, one held at Aktiv

Automotive in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and one at Benchmark Motors, make the pages of this issue. And there is a great little article that outlines tips for beginner DIYers. I would encourage anyone who has never been to a DIY to try one! Sign up to change your oil – a DIY is a chance to learn about your car's innards and socialize with your fellow car club members. Members are always willing to lend a hand with your job if you need it.

James Chew writes a couple of interesting review articles in these pages; the 2018 New York Auto Show and the 2018 330i. Not to be excluded, there is an article by Jaclyn Heck: another useful how-to as it outlines the essential items you need for Autocross.

Looking to the future, there are many events that will take place between now and the next *dB* edition. Our annual crab fest, the annual NCC takeover of Solomon's Pier, NCC Karting at SPK at RFK Stadium. NCC members are always welcome

to volunteer for what is truly a meaningful day for teens as they learn important driving techniques that could save their lives or the lives of others on the road. Lastly, we look forward to the annual November Pie-Run that sets us up with yummy pies for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Just because the season is winding down does not mean the fun stops. We will continue to meet, socialize, drive our cars, talk about our cars, tinker with our cars, and regard other people's cars with awe and admiration. It's what we do. Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring. All you need do is pick an event or two and join in.

Anna Maripuu

## 2019 NCC Officer Nomination Period

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

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

To run for an elected position, you must be a CCA member in good standing and nominate yourself during the Nomination Period which runs from Nov 1 to Dec 31. Please submit your candidacy statement to our webmaster at [webmaster@nccbmwcca.org](mailto:webmaster@nccbmwcca.org) so it can be posted to our website, [nccbmwcca.org](http://nccbmwcca.org).

Voting will take place online starting Jan 1, 2019 and end during our 2019 Annual Meeting.



## Bill Riblett

BMW CCA member 2762



We recently lost a great member of the BMW family. On Saturday September 15th, William R. (Bill) Riblett, Jr. passed away at 74 from supranuclear palsy which is a form of Parkinson's disease. His longtime BMW ownership and support of the CCA include holding positions in the National Capital Chapter (past President and Club Store keeper). Bill's collection of Vintage BMW's started with a new 72tii all the way to an E46 ZHP Coupe with many 2002's, E9's and his trusty Schwarz 635CSi in between.

His deep knowledge and experience with working on many BMWs was amazing. Bill could recall many minute details and provide technical assistance to anyone who reached out to him for help. Over the years, he amassed a large collection of parts which were inventoried and sold with help by Grice Mulligan and Chris Isacson.

I first met Bill during an NCC Fall driving event in 2007. It was my first event after joining the CCA and he and other Vintage NCC members warmly welcomed me into the club. Over the years, Bill and I enjoyed travelling together to Vintage events in Pittsburgh, North Carolina and NorthWest Arkansas. His laid back demeanor and humble nature were always present along with his loyalty to the club.

Bill was a longtime resident of Arlington, VA and had moved to Loveland, CO to be closer to his brother Chuck after developing health issues. He graduated from Michigan State University and had retired from the US Customs Service. September 8th was his birthday. In addition to his brother, Bill leaves behind his longtime companion Nancy O'Hara in Arlington, VA.

Jim Gerock  
BMW CCA member 381868

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 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

- 1 NoVa Social- BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 3 BMW CCA Cars & Coffee, BMW of Sterling
- 3 DIY @ BMW of Sterling
- 3 BMW CCA Fall 2018 New Member Reception/Open House
- 8 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 10 DIY @ BMW of Annapolis
- 10 Great Pie Run XXII
- 11 NCC Karting SPK Capital Event #3
- 14 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 15 Nov MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

## December

- 6 NoVa Social- Lost Rhino Retreat, Ashburn, VA
- 12 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 13 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 20 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD



# COMING EVENT

## Cars & Coffee and New Member Reception

**Saturday, November 3rd at 9:00 AM**

Join Us in Celebrating Vintage BMWs, new BMWs and Welcoming New Members to the National Capital Chapter!



**BMW of Sterling**  
**MINI of Sterling**  
 21710 Autoworld Circle  
 Sterling, VA 20166



BMW CCA membership is NOT required for this event. Whether you've owned your BMW for 30+ years or are thinking of picking up a new one, we look forward to seeing you and your friends on Nov. 3rd as we welcome our newest club members to the NCC family!

**National**  
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 BMW Car Club of America

join the experience



# 4th Annual Euro Marque Golf Tournament

It would not be a Euro Marque Golf Tournament without controversy and this year's event was no exception. On a lovely and unusually comfortable late August Saturday, golfers representing BMW and Porsche clashed once again at the Raspberry Falls Golf & Hunt Club. While the original plan for the Euro Marque was that teams representing multiple European makes would participate, over the years the competition has devolved to an annual BMW versus Porsche grudge match with those of other marques just along for the golf, food, and fun.

Outfitted in snazzy BMW polo shirts, M-power hats, and mostly matching blue shorts, Team BMW fielded three competitive foursomes and one social twosome. Team Porsche sent out two competitive foursomes and the remainder of the golfers, including those representing Aston Martin, played in the social flights.

As for the controversies, it started early this year, during Raspberry Falls Director of Golf, General Manager, and host extraordinaire, Willy Lutz's pre-match briefing. Willy announced that the winner of this year's competition would be determined by the combined scores of the top two foursomes from each marque. Team Porsche objected noting, accurately, that in the previous three Euro Marque competitions, only the top scoring foursomes counted. Willy relented, low-scoring foursomes only, and off the players went.

Among the competitive flights, Team BMW's reorganized top foursome of Willy Lutz, Rich Sperry, Cynthia Heller, and team newbie Mike Oler carded an impressive 9 under par 63. The foursome of Paul Seto, Ryan Mosel, Mike Mosel and your author turned in a respectable 67, a score that could have been better if any one of the four of us had been able to hit a decent approach shot.

The third competitive group, consisting of not one, not two, not three, but four new players, Jose Tungcod, Greg Sakes, Todd Schaberg, and Randy Beeman ended the day with a round of 74. The final two Team BMW players, Peter Battaglia and newbie Lu Goon, were paired up with two players representing Aston Martin and posted a solid round of 72. Team Porsche's top foursome of Darrell Carlisle, Wes Johnson, Mi Jee Song, and Charlie Murphy also posted a 9 under par 63 while their second foursome carded a 2 under 70 for the round.

Because the top Team BMW and Team Porsche foursomes tied, there was

an extended conversation about how to break the tie. An occasionally boisterous, and occasionally contentious, group discussion in the clubhouse was followed by the two teams huddling to discuss options. Team Porsche recommended following Ryder Cup rules under which a tie goes to the current champion, meaning Team Porsche would retain the title. Team BMW recommended either using the second-best competitive foursome as the tiebreaker (it is a "team" event after all) or, barring that, USGA tiebreaking recommendations. More discussion ensued, and, in the end, it was agreed that the USGA tiebreaking procedures would be used.

Under USGA, ties are broken by looking at the last nine holes, then the last six, the last three, and the last one. Even then, there was discussion about how to interpret that because the teams started on different holes, meaning their last nine holes played were not the same ones. Fortunately, USGA also stipulates that if this tiebreaker is used in a competition with a shotgun start, the "last nine holes" means holes #10-18.

On the plus side, both teams' foursomes played all 18 holes this year, so a fair comparison was possible. Thus, using the USGA tiebreaker for the last nine holes, Team BMW was declared the victor, shooting a 32 to Team Porsche's 34. For what it is worth, had the teams decided to use the second foursome as a tiebreaker, Team BMW still would have won, 63-67 to 63-70. After four years of spirited competitions, Team BMW had finally won the coveted Euro Marque Trophy.

Willy and Paul accepted the trophy on behalf of Team BMW from a gracious Team Porsche Captain Charlie Murphy. After that, all the players enjoyed a delicious Raspberry Falls BBQ followed by the announcement of the individual competition awards. Team BMW players took home several awards including Jose Tungcod's Long Drive on #3 and Paul Seto's almost unbelievable closest-to-the-pin shot on the very difficult and devilish 13th hole. I personally have never seen anyone get a ball within a couple of yards of the cup (my shot was pin high but because the green is really wide, it was almost sixty feet from the flag) and yet Paul calmly laced an 8-iron to a mere fifteen inches for a tap-in birdie.

Team Porsche now leads the Euro Marque series 3\*-1 but with Team BMW finally on the board and a growing stable of new golfing Bimmerphiles, everyone is looking forward to next year's competition.



(Top) The famous and handmade Euro Marque golf trophy is finally in the hands of its rightful owner. (Above Left) Ryan Mosel, Mike Mosel, David Costanza, and Paul Seto lined up and ready to head out to their first hole. (Above Right) Low-scoring foursome for Team BMW – Willy Lutz, Cynthia Heller, Mike Oler, and Rich Sperry.



# BMW CCA Golden Gate Chapter Cars and Coffee You Meet The Nicest People

**A**fter a thirty-year-plus career in jobs that require frequent travel, I've learned two things. First, if you want a good meal at a reasonable price, ask the hotel staff where they eat when they have a break. Again, don't ask for the "concierge's recommendation;" ask where they eat.

The second is that seeking and embracing the local car culture is a unique way of satisfying my "car guy" urges.

In past articles, I've written about driving a Trabant on the streets of Berlin, visiting a BMW dealer in Bordeaux, being in Rome at the stage of a Mille Miglia, and touring a volunteer-driven "classic" car museum in Sacramento. During a recent business trip that required a weekend stay in the Silicon Valley, I was delighted to learn that the BMW CCA Golden Gate Chapter was hosting a cars and coffee at the Presidio.

My first cars and coffee event was the now famous "Donut Derelicts" meet in Huntington Beach, California. It was fascinating to see how car enthusiasts personalized their prized vehicles. In many cases, the design modifications significantly improved the vehicle's appearance. Attending became even more fun when staff from the various Southern California OEM design studios participated with some of their latest driving prototypes. If you ever find yourself in Southern California over a weekend, I highly recommend you attend. (<https://www.donutderelicts.com>).

I found the Golden Gate Chapter Cars and Coffee event through the internet. You'd be surprised how many car events one can find through your favorite search engine by typing "Car Events in my area." Of course, typing

in "BMW Car Club Events in My Area" may produce some interesting, surprising, and more relevant results.

Whether you're a new or returning visitor, the Presidio is simply a delight to visit. In my humble opinion, it's the most beautiful part of San Francisco. Not only is it next to the Golden Gate Bridge; there is a wonderful view of the San Francisco skyline, Angel Island, Alcatraz Island, and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

**By James Chew**



*(Above) A welcome sign for any BMW fan. Wonderful meeting to see wonderful cars and meet wonderful people.*

What's even more remarkable is that for 218 years, the Presidio had been an Army post. I've always thought that it was a mistake for the Army to close this base. The Army and our country would have been much better served by converting the Presidio to become the premier Army Research, Development, and Engineering Center; consolidating all existing Army Research Labs and Research and Engineering Development Centers, with the exception of the Army Tank and Automotive Research and Development Center.

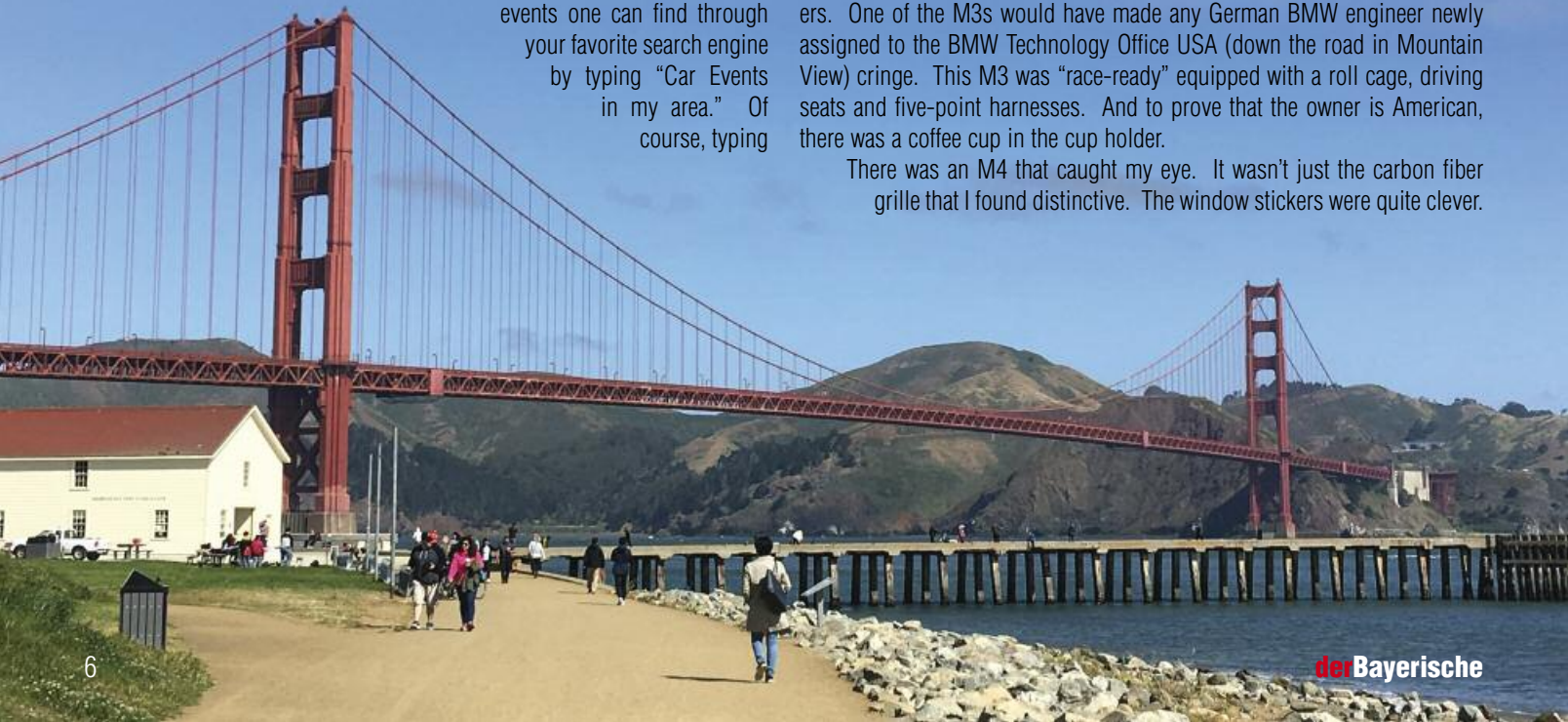
Enough about my day job. I was there to see the BMWs.

I enjoy cars and coffee events because of seeing "real, living" vehicles. Cars are meant to be driven.

Another reason why I enjoy cars and coffee events is that there is a chance to see fellow members' personalization of their vehicles. At this event, there was an E24 6 Series that was in perfect condition. Best of all, it seemed to be a daily driver.

There were a number of M vehicles, all driven and loved by their owners. One of the M3s would have made any German BMW engineer newly assigned to the BMW Technology Office USA (down the road in Mountain View) cringe. This M3 was "race-ready" equipped with a roll cage, driving seats and five-point harnesses. And to prove that the owner is American, there was a coffee cup in the cup holder.

There was an M4 that caught my eye. It wasn't just the carbon fiber grille that I found distinctive. The window stickers were quite clever.





Only a real “car guy” would understand them and appreciate the significance.

Approaching this M4 from the passenger side, the rear window stickers immediately identified the owner as a proud member of the BMW Car Club of America. I did wonder how many people would recognize the manual shifter pattern sticker.

On the driver's side rear window were a number of race-track shape stickers. Showing a picture of these stickers to “non-car guys”, they had no idea what they were. In fact, some of them asked if it was some alien language. As for my “car guy” friends – well you all see the picture and have some fun (the website for these stickers is [www.trackdecals.com](http://www.trackdecals.com)). Studying these stickers had me day dreaming about some of the tracks that I had driven, as well as how long it has been since I had driven them.

I snapped to reality when my father asked if we could walk the Presidio. While patient, my father is not a car guy. So off we went.

Attending this event reinforced my instinct that in the course of my business travel, I should always review the local BMW CCA chapter website. Events such as this cars and coffee not only made me proud of the diversity of our membership,

but also the diverse personal expressions our members have for their BMWs.

While I hope you all enjoyed this article, I hope you have not missed the major point – if you would like to contribute to this publication, write something about your car experiences. Perhaps you'd like to write about your participation in the BMW Driving Experiences– or your participation in a competitor's event. Maybe you a have recent BMW dealer experi-

ence to share. Did you take delivery of your new BMW in Germany or at the factory in Spartanburg? If so, please write about it. Or have you recently traveled overseas and either rented or noticed BMWs that you won't find in the US? Have you recently used the BMW website to locate a particular certified pre-owned BMW?

Be assured that If I win ANYTHING from this year's BMW CCA raffle, there will be an article.

*(From Top Right Down) Quick! Name these tracks! A unique way to showcase ones BMW/“car guy” crews. Maybe that carbon fiber grill should be standard on M vehicles.*



*(Above Left) In a sea of E46 3's, there's a “showroom” condition E24. (Below Left) This location is a welcome relief from the DC-area summer humidity. (Below Right) That coffee cup would make every German BMW engineer cringe.*







By Pearl Aliga Jones | Photos by Pearl Jones and Jill Sambrano

# Meander Along with the NCC — **Fun, High-Flying Driving It Is Meant to Be!**

What is the difference between Google Maps and NCC four directions?

1. Google Maps gives you the shortest, direct route, in plain, matter-of-fact language; the NCC tour directions give you a circuitous, winding route, in descriptive language.
2. Google Maps says the distance between Fulton and Middletown (both in Md) is 55 miles, 1 hour; the NCC tour says 146 miles, 6 hours (with pit stops).
3. Google Maps gives you a boring drive; the NCC tour offers you a lot of fun, exciting, and hair-raising driving on picturesque routes, plus bonding time with fellow chapter members.





(Opposite page) A panoramic view from the monument. (Above Left) Our tourmeister warned us about the abundance of police officers. (Above Right) Unexpected skidpad! (Below) Tour participants at Cars and Coffee, among them Paul Seto, club president, right, standing, in white shirt; and Walter Jones, dB co-editor, front row, in green shirt.

The above Exhibit One was overwhelmingly convincing for NCC members to join the Maryland Monument Meander Tour on a lovely Saturday, June 16. It proved to be an enjoyable way to spend a part of the last weekend of Spring that included Father's Day. It was also a busy day for fans of car racing and soccer, as two big events were occurring: 24 Hours of Le Mans in France and World Cup in Russia, yet 33 chapter members in 20 cars participated in the drive. We met at Sidamo Coffee and Tea at Maple Lawn in Fulton, Md at 9am to sign waivers and attend the mandatory drivers' meeting. Our tourmeister was the superb Steven Pera, along

with an enthusiastic tourmeister-in-training, his 15-year-old son Mark.

Adding to the day's delight was meeting fellow members for the first time, like Jingo and Jill Sambrano and their 14-year-old son Josh, and Merce Morales and her husband George Durk. It was also heartwarming to see familiar faces, among them Paul Seto, our Club President; David Mitchell and his wife Eugenia "Jenny" Nesterenko, John Francis, and Rob Clark - longtime and avid members all; and Alicia Gordon and Alaina Mohanco, our newly minted Co-Chairs of Chapterfest 2019.

It was the perfect assembly point for a Cars and Coffee, with

Sidamo and its Ethiopian coffee and pastries, and a Starbucks at the Harris Teeter. Steven gave us the usual precautionary reminders. When he did the dry run on April 29, "the roads were lovely and only a few places had bottlenecks of any kind." He pointed out that there were horseback riders, bicyclists, and even chipmunks on the road. We were to be mindful of traffic signals, congestion, narrow turns, limited passing opportunities, and blind turns. We were going to be driving from Howard County to Montgomery County (where speed traps are common; Damascus and Poolesville especially have more police officers than other areas),

and then to Frederick County. Once again, as NCC members, we were reminded to be good ambassadors.

At 9:30am, under bright and blue skies and with moderate humidity, we were ready to roll. Steven and Mark were leading us in their gray Audi. We had assured Steven we loved him even if he drives an Audi; well, it is all in the name of German-car brotherhood anyway. Besides, it manifests our club's welcoming celebration of diversity. Paul Seto signaled the start of the drive by announcing, "And we're off! The start of the NCC 6 Hours of Le Mans, better known as the Maryland Monument Meander Tour. Heading out to drive





some awesome roads and lunch at Bassett's in Poolesville!" That was an apt description as half a world away, race cars were revving up at Le Mans.

Early in the drive, we encountered some unexpected "skid pads" from water running off the fields onto the roads. There were also some road repairs going on, so we maneuvered around...chicanes. Paul Seto was not kidding when he said this was our local Le Mans race - complete with skid pads and chicanes. We also shared the road with cyclists (a great number, in fact), making our drive reminiscent of a "mixed-class race," when race cars with different specifications (e.g., top speed, horsepower, engines) - the Prototypes, GTLMs, and GTDs - compete on the same race track.

Fields of corn, whose stalks were not yet "as high as an elephant's eye" this early in the season, dominated the landscape. The scenery was dotted with vestiges of dogwood flowers, and now burnt-orange and gold Asiatic lilies, pink spireas, butter-yellow Stella D'Oro daylilies, and scarlet wild roses were abundant by the roadside. An early-blooming white crepe myrtle even made an unexpected, showy appearance. At mile 21, we slowed down in accordance with Steven's warning - "Please

watch speed on Carrs Mill Road, or as your horoscope says, 'LEOs WILL make this an unpleasant day for you.'"

More "skid pads" appeared on the road. But a beautiful sight came upon us - that of a holiday-tree farm on a hill! It was a welcome panorama on a warm day in June, with only six months to go till Yuletide.

Besides road repairs, we encountered another bottleneck in the form of 18 bicyclists grouped together to monopolize the narrow road. Here come the rocket-like Prototypes barreling down the road! Oops, there are "pokey" GTDs in the way. Now, now, no nose-to-tail driving allowed on this race track. Not to NCC racers anyway (remember we are good ambassadors). It took several minutes to follow the GTDs, I mean the bicyclists, through the esses and find a safe passing opportunity on the straights.

Empty stomachs reached Bassett's at 12:15pm. A usually quiet spot, the restaurant was buzzing with the arrival of 33 racers. The food was good in variety, taste, and amount. Breakfast was available all day at Bassett's, so were starters, soups, salads, entrees (steaks, sandwiches, pizza), and desserts.

Some of us got up before the crack of dawn to make it on time to

the tour prelude of Cars, Coffee, and Cautionary Cues, so breakfast was appealing. Bassett's country breakfast is a big plate of 3 eggs any style with (pick 2) bacon, ham, sausage, turkey sausage, scrapple, or corned beef, served with toast and mini-tots. Poolesville Picker's BBQ (pulled pork) with a soft potato roll and coleslaw was outstanding, as was Smithwick's fish and chips, with battered cod fillets served with hand-cut fries, coleslaw, and tartar sauce. Desserts of key lime pie, French silk, chocolate lava, toll house pie, and funnel cake fries were scrumptious.

Besides assessments of the first leg of the drive, sports dominated our conversations over lunch. The then-big up-to-the-minute World Cup news was that Iceland had just tied the score 1-1 with Argentina. Iceland's jubilation made it sound like little Iceland had vanquished Lionel Messi and the "Spartans" from Argentina. But hey, blessed are those who don't expect for they shalt not be disap-

pointed, and in fact, shalt exult to high heavens when they score a draw with a powerhouse.

At 2pm, we resumed our caravans and set off for the 54-mile leisurely drive to the Washington Monument State Park in Middletown, Md. We were mostly driving on rural country roads punctuated by a couple of higher-speed highways.

Entrance fee at the Monument State Park was paid through honor



(Top) The Sambrano Family at the First Washington Monument. (Middle) Merce Morales with Jill, Josh (wearing hat), and Jingo Sambrano enjoying cold treats. (Below Left) Showy Stella d'Oro daylilies lining the roads. (Below Right) Road construction necessitated chicanes for the NCC racers!





system (\$2 per vehicle in-state and \$4 per vehicle out-of-state). It must have been a busy weekend there – the fee receptacle was so full that it refused additional feeding. So we brought our fee to the visitors center where we learned more about this historic site.

Washington Monument State Park is the home of the first completed monument to honor George Washington. Volunteer villagers of Boonsboro, Md built the monument

in 1827 on a mountain ridge, and Union forces used it as a signal tower during the civil war. It has been rebuilt twice, and in 1934 the 108-acre park became a state park. Besides the monument, it offers recreational opportunities, such as hiking, picnicking, youth-group camping, and bird watching.

From the visitor center, a circular, uphill, quarter-mile hike along a wooded trail took us to the monument. The hike also provided additional historical information with plaques and markers along the way.

Climbing 35 steps up the 40-foot stone structure in a darkened stairwell heightened the anticipation of reaching the top. A clear day blessed us with breathtaking, panoramic vistas of beautiful Maryland and its environs, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, and includes a view of the Antietam Battlefield. The drive, hike, and climb were all worth it.

Visibly enjoying this excursion was the Sambrano family, who

came in a 2017 black sapphire metallic M2. Jingo has been to other tours and club events, but this was Jill and their son Josh's first drive. Jill said this Meander Tour reminded her of "the scary but exhilarating drive at the Nurburgring in Germany last year" after they took European delivery of their M2. And how did Josh enjoy the drive? His stomach got queasy on the first leg, but once he switched seats with Mom and became Dad's co-pilot/navigator, he felt better and enjoyed the rest of the tour. According to Jill, "Josh is motivated to study hard and get a good job so he can also buy a BMW." The young man has his priorities straight! That definitely reflects good parenting, Jill and Jingo; BMW-inspired parenting, at that!

At 4:15pm, everyone was hot and sweaty from the fun-in-the-sun atop the monument and the hike and was ready for a cold treat. We all thought ice cream would really hit the spot right then. Alas, our tourmeisters had to depart to get to Mark's soccer practice (and I was going to buy them some huge scoops of ice cream as an expression of thanks).

Middletown's South Mountain Creamery, just 4.5 miles from the

state park, was the perfect place to relax on a hot afternoon. Its claim-to-fame is its farm-to-table ice cream. Milk is made into ice cream within 12 hours of milking, and all of its dairy is produced and processed right on the farm. It was difficult to choose an ice cream flavor from a wide variety, among them coconut joy, monkey butter, sea-salted caramel dream, grasshopper, birthday cake, mocha chip, and blueberry cheesecake. Each flavor was refreshingly delicious! Besides ice cream, dairy (cheese, yogurt), and eggs, South Mountain Creamery carries produce, meat and seafood, artisan breads, and beverages.

Lively conversations continued over ice cream. With so many club events happening month after month, there is always one in common between any two members in any given conversation. And because the events and outings are always a lot of fun, happy conversations are bound to happen. Our Meander Tour was such an event. Deepest thanks to Steven and Mark Pera for the hard work they did of planning and implementing this tour. Their instructions and directions were right on the...money, and fittingly so. "Pera" in Tagalog, the language native to several tour participants, means..."money."

*(Top) At South Mountain Creamery – Jingo Sambrano's smile says it all! (Middle) Our great tourmeisters, Mark Pera and his Dad Steven Pera, on the trail leading to the monument. (Below Left) The road-hogging "GTDs" (bicyclists) at the NCC 6 Hours of Le Mans. (Below Right) Glorious Asiatic lilies basking in the sun.*







By James Chew

# 2018 New York Auto Show

## A Time for Change

No matter the reason, a 2:30 am departure time for any trip is far too early. To make matters worse, I had to be wide awake at that ungodly hour. I live an hour away from the train station, and once I arrived I had to be alert enough to find a parking spot on a parking lot under construction. Even after I settled into my train seat, I was far too stressed to sleep.

But the quiet train ride did give me time to think about the 2018 major auto show season. For BMW, the 2018 major auto show season

was a time for change.

Most people think the major North America auto show season consists of four major shows – Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, and New York. But there are other shows that the auto manufacturers support, including the Consumer Electronics Show, the Specialty Equipment Manufacturing Association show, and the North American Dealer Association convention. Supporting these shows is a major expense and the annual “return on investment” analysis most likely identified which

shows were no longer worth the expense. For BMW, it was no surprise that participation in the Detroit show was eliminated. It wasn’t just Porsche and Mercedes leaving the Detroit show – even the “Detroit 3” automakers held their major new product announcements away from the “black hole” known as the Cobo Center.

And as I entered the Jacob Javits convention center glass entryway, it was clear to me that the auto manufacturers would always support the New York Auto Show.

This was the official end-of-the-season show – and the mood of the manufacturers and their exhibits reflected the joy and relief at the conclusion of yet another major consumer auto-show season.

My rationale for attending only the bookend major auto shows is simple. The Los Angeles show presents what the manufacturers hope the new sales year will bring, the New York show presents how the market has voted.

The train ride also gave me a chance to review the sales statistics.



After analyzing the numbers, I could almost predict what I would see and hear at the manufacturers' media events; many would either confirm or contradict statements made at the Los Angeles show.

My first thought was that the alternative fuel vehicle market is in its final death knell. Despite Tesla being the darling of Wall Street (which will soon come to an end as Tesla continues to fail to deliver on the Model 3), EV, HEV, and fuel cell vehicle sales have significantly decreased. Used as a ploy to seize additional taxes from the automakers, the previous administration's questionable "green" mandates have been struck down and the free market is once again at work. Near-bankrupt California is desperately trying to pass legislation to prop up their ill-conceived environmental vehicle mandates. But the Federal Government is finally challenging the California regulations, so these ill-conceived and ineffective regulations should soon fall.

My second thought was that interest rates will increase. These inevitable rate increases, coupled with the real price for profitable autonomous vehicles, and the undisciplined manner that autonomous vehicles are being developed and tested will slow down the transition of both connected and autonomous technologies.

Unlike the other manufacturers, BMW opted not to have a major media event. While some loyal BMW fans may be disturbed by this decision, from a business perspective it makes sense. The timing of the New York Auto Show is actually close to the end of the sales year. It's a much better time for celebration.

Then when I saw Mr. Kuhn, it was clear that he was in the mood to celebrate. Under his watch, BMW NA sales were again on the rise. The BMW sales were keeping pace with Mercedes, with Mercedes relying more on SUV sales. BMW car sales were outpacing Mercedes. It should be noted that BMW is the only performance luxury vehicle brand that still sells more cars than SUVs. The previous Lexus sales challenge was no longer extant. If it were not for the Lexus RX and the NX, Lexus would be in financial trouble. Audi sales never exploded, despite having great products. And Acura, Infiniti, and Cadillac, continue to be considered second tier performance luxury brands.

Under Mr. Kuhn's leadership, BMW marketing and products changed to a back to basics approach. The North American marketing campaign again focused on BMW being the Ultimate Driving Machine and the products were engineered to keep that promise.

The M products were prominently displayed. At the Los Angeles show, BMW proudly stated that the U.S. is the number one market for M vehicles. And every business knows that it's best to give the market what it wants. What I liked about this M vehicle display is that it showed BMW coming back to its core. Yes, the M4 GTS was a very nice

car but it really wasn't an M vehicle. To me, an M vehicle is one that excels at both street-legal and track driving. The M2, M3, and M5 prove that the BMW M brand has again returned to that design philosophy.

A good mix of BMW products were displayed. I found it interesting that



(Above) A quite civilized way to start the morning.

(Opposite Page) A VERY impressive product line-up. (Below) The vintage M1 race cars reminds all of BMW's performance roots.



the 6 GT was given such a prominent display spot. This product is clearly a hold over from the previous BMW leadership. While a nice vehicle, it's been shown that such a product has a very limited appeal. Does anyone remember the 5 GT? I didn't think so.

The new X2 was the star of the BMW display. The design is clearly aimed at a younger buyer than the X1. With a "typically equipped" MSRP of under \$50,000, the X2 could become the BMW alternative to the VW GTI and to the Subaru Outback. Of course, if BMW were to have an optional six-speed manual for the X2, it would increase the appeal to the younger enthusiast. If the X2 sells as well as the X1, it will be the product that pushes BMW over the edge in terms of selling more SUV than cars.

The "i" exhibit was toned down, though the i8 Roadster was sure to draw attention from the show attendees.

The sleeper BMW product was at the truck display. While I've never understand BMW M X vehicles, the X3 M simply looks wonderful. Perhaps because of its size and its proportions, the X3 M just looks right.

Perhaps it was BMW regaining its mojo, showcased by their outstanding Los Angeles auto show media event, that resulting in a relatively muted Mercedes exhibits by comparison.

It's clear that Mercedes marketing is not matching their sales — Mercedes now sells more SUVs than cars. The best-selling Mercedes in the U.S. is now the GLC/GLK. While the Mercedes display has the usual assortment of AMG, S-class, and SL-vehicles, their SUV product line drives their revenue and margins.

Audi, who also is now selling more SUVs and cars, did have a significant car launch at the New York show. The new Audi A6 is a very impressive sedan. It will be interesting to compare that vehicle to the BMW 5 Series. However, the 5 Series outsells the A6 by 5 to 1. With the best selling Audi being the Q5, one wonders how much patience the Audi leadership will have for the A6.

Despite their SUVs outselling their cars by 2 to 1 (Lexus sells more RX SUVs than their entire car line combined), the Lexus display emphasized their cars. The relative lack of success of the Lexus "F" sub-brand was evident by a rather subdued display, announcing the 10th anniversary of that

sub-brand. Toyota is learning the hard way that irrelevant racing does not drive sales — there is no one rushing to buy a Camry after Toyota wins a NASCAR race. Lexus' concern with their high average owner age was reflected in their new UX SUV. Their concern must have doubled when they saw that the equivalent Toyota SUV that has that same styling, the CH-R, is not resonating at all with buyers. However, Lexus is a master of using heavy incentives to launch new products. Based on the reaction of media attendees, Lexus will need massive incentives on the UX.

I suspect that Honda may soon abandon the Acura brand. Acura's halo

vehicle, the NSX, has lost all market visibility. To make matters worse for Honda, despite being a very nice car, the new Accord has not sold well. Having a 104-day supply of Accords has been an unwelcome surprise. When the Acura brand was launched, I mused that Honda would eventually learn the hard way, the challenges of supplying and supporting two brands. In two sales years, it would not surprise me to see the Acura product line folded into Honda.

Cadillac was a disappointment. The current product designs, on their fourth generation since the Kip Wasenko "Art and Science" Evoq show car, simply don't work. Yes, the XT5 sells well. But the new XT4, which premiered at the New York show, was hardly noticed. The "we're too sexy for this place" marketing campaign has flopped. I suspect that experiment of basing Cadillac marketing in New York to house their "we're too cool to be in the auto business" faux four marketing team will be ending soon.

One of the best surprises from the New York Auto Show was when we gave our BMW Product Specialist friend,

Yasmin, a print copy of the *der Bayerische* with our review of the Los Angeles Auto Show. Yasmin was the one who drove the BMW electric scooter during LA Show media event. She was delighted to receive that copy, which featured her photo. Word of me presenting her a copy got around the BMW display, bringing smiles and thanks from all. Who knew that our humble publication would bring such joy?

It will be interesting to see what BMW brings to Los Angeles this November. You can be sure that we'll be there!



(Above) A "subtle" reminder that BMW makes Ultimate Driving Machines.





## DIY at Benchmark Motors, July 21, 2018

### 'Tis Always a **Sunny Day** When Spent the NCC Way

The forecast called for a soggy Saturday, with some rain possible as soon as sunrise. The coastal storm system was touching down, leading to a string of seven wet days, marked by thunderstorms and sometimes heavy rain that caused localized flooding. But to us Bimmer enthusiasts, it was the perfect day...to spend indoors and forget all about the unpleasant weather brewing.

Eighteen of us, National Capital Chapter members, converged at Benchmark Motors in Columbia, Md before 8:15 am for Cars and Coffee. We admired one another's cars and welcomed the newest kid on the block, an attractive 2011 M128i in an eye-pleasing baby-blue shade called blue-water metallic. Her "mom," Christine McKee, is one of our newest club members; in fact, she had just received her BMW Car Club of America card.

Just before 8:30 am, we felt gentle raindrops, signaling the end of our car show and the beginning of

a day of earnest work on our cars. The personable owner of Benchmark Motors, Danny Grant, along with one of his outstanding technicians, DJ Mills, welcomed us with open arms and clean bays in a bright, spacious, tidy shop. The good-

humored Phillip Cummings, Chair of NCC's DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Program, gave us a safety review, important reminders, and tips. He assured us that this DIY event was going to be educational, enlightening, and fun! No one doubted that at all. The first

seven members according to the time and date of registration were directed to the bays.

Powered by camaraderie, doughnuts, and coffee, we embarked on a variety of tasks, such as changing oil, replacing a crankshaft sensor, rear exhaust system, front brake pads, fuel filter, spark plugs, oil and cabin air filter, front control arm bushings; as well as transmission-fluid drain, fuel filter, master brake cylinder, and brake fluid/oil/power steering fluid flush. Disco and pop music were playing the whole time, masking the sound of the rain.

Danny was a very attentive host. He provided us with good guidance. I was replacing spark plugs, and when he saw me doing the painstaking job utilizing my regular socket wrench, he immediately offered the use of his Snap-On micro-lithium cordless ratchet. It made a world of difference, effort-wise and time-wise, what with its powerful torque and high speed for

#### By Pearl Aliga Jones



(Top) Perlita Jones replacing spark plugs on a 330i. (Above) Smiling faces set the tone for a fun DIY (From left) James Laws, Danny Grant, and Phillip Cummings.

quick spark plug-removal and -installation. This tool is now on my Christmas-wish list.

When I was about to apply anti-seize compound on the spark plugs (which I did the last time I changed them), Danny said it was not needed because it would mess up the ground. Good to know. Again, he made my job easier and faster.

Among those hard at work was John Francis, an NCC member of 11 years. He was working on his silver-gray 1991 E34 M5, changing the oil, ripping off a rusted part of the exhaust heat shield, and finishing the installation of a door brake. Tasks done, he helped a fellow club member change a couple of ignition coils and repair some headlight wiring. John is an avid chapter member who attends events and participates in outings regularly. I could tell he was having a fun time at Benchmark. He says that DIY is a

great opportunity to learn new things about maintenance and repair procedures, and to improve technical skills. I agree with John. Without this DIY, I would still be applying anti-seize compound on my new spark plugs!

Our DIYs are not all about doing serious work. My assigned bay was closest to the door of the reception room where abundant doughnuts, coffee, and bottled water were offered. The song "Stayin' Alive" was playing just as fellow member, the exuberant Chris Wooten, emerged. He suddenly broke into a dance a la John Travolta! This Zumba instructor, who never lets good dance music go to waste, put down her socket wrenches and joined him in an animated disco dance. An unscripted, spontaneous, fun moment with Bimmer friends when the music and spirit move you? Happens all the time!

Chris then went on inspecting (for sloshing water) then fixing the rockers of his Titanium Silver 2000 E46 3 Series wagon with manual transmission, dubbed the "Sexiest Car in the NCC." It has to be, if you are the John Travolta of the NCC!

This fun episode gave me an idea. "Stayin' Alive" has 100 beats per minute. I am going to calibrate the use of a traditional socket wrench with the tempo of "Stayin' Alive" to determine how many quarter-turns of torque are needed to install new spark plugs, as in how many beats of the song correspond with the right amount of torque. "Stayin' Alive" works with CPR; it must work with spark plugs, too.

A friend of mine was kind enough to give advice on the delicate art of torqueing spark plugs. He cautioned me, "Always torque the plugs to the exact torque number. The reason for this is the plug is



(Top) A sight that brought chuckles.  
(Below) A colorful trio of patriotic (almost) Bimmers.

designed to get rid of the heat through the threads to the cylinder head. Under-torque, and not enough heat goes away and you can be prone to detonation. Over-torque, and you will slightly pull the center







(Above) A thumbs-up from Marlon Spencer (right) says it all. With James Laws, NCC Vice-President and Membership Chair.

white porcelain section away from the body and have no ability to pull the heat out of the plug and can be even more prone to detonation. Tightening the plugs exactly is the most overlooked part and a super-important part of replacing spark plugs. This is more critical in racing-stressed engines." I reckon this friend knows something about the nature of spark plugs in Bimmers, but what does he know about racing-stressed engines? A little bit, I imagine, if you are the legendary race-car driver with the most wins in the history of the BMW marque, Bill Auberlen.

Across from my bay was a colorful sight of red, almost-white (under the light), and blue Bimmers. Erich Bonny was replacing the rear exhaust system of his red 2000 Z3 Roadster, while Brian LoVecchio was changing the front control arm bushings and brake pads of his blue 2001 330ci. Christine McKee was work-

ing on her above-mentioned M128i as well - changing the oil and brake and power-steering fluid. She also replaced the air filter and reprogrammed the time to change the oil sensor.

As a new member, Christine shared her refreshing impressions of her maiden DIY participation. Read her article titled "DIY for Beginners" in this issue.

In the midst of this "fun time at Benchmark" appeared a familiar, smiling face. It was club member Marlon Spencer. He embodies the spirit of the NCC. He did not need any work done on his own vehicle, but just wanted to come and help out and be with his Bimmer family. He individually greeted everyone and offered an extra pair of hands.

Profound thanks to Danny Grant, our outstanding host, and DJ Mills, a great technician, for their hospitality and for making us feel at home at their topnotch shop.

Tasks accomplished and feeling gratified by this "educational, enlightening, and fun" event, we left Benchmark Motors and braved the wet weather. We encountered blinding rain on the way home (and an accident on the scene), but the rain did not matter to our Ultimate Driving Machines one iota. They were humming swimmingly and running ever so smoothly after some pampering on their "day at the spa" at Benchmark Motors.



(Above) Snap-On cordless ratchet.



(Above) The John Travolta of the NCC, Chris Wooten (right) with Walter Jones, dB co-editor, at Monterey Weekend, 2018.



By Steve Tenney

# 2018 IMSA Weekend at Virginia International Raceway Tarheel & NCC Corral



**A**t the 2018 VIR WeatherTech event we were able to celebrate the very first victory for the BMW M8 GTE in GTLM. They were close at a previous race at Road America in Wisconsin but ran out of fuel at the very end of the race and did not finish. It was a very disappointing result, but it left the very first victory for the brand new M8 GTE for VIR and our enjoyment.

The WeatherTech SportsCar Championship at VIR (Virginia International Raceway) consists of a

series of races including the WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Michelin GT Challenge at VIR and the Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge (the Biscuitville Grand Prix). Traditionally the WTSC has been the race series for the factory BMW race program in the USA. For 2018 with the adoption of the FIA GT4 based cars for the CTSC we also have a second strong series that includes some top teams competing with BMW automobiles. In the WeatherTech series in the GTLM

class BMW Team RLL has fielded two of the new M8 GTE cars supported by BMW Motorsport and in GTD we see familiar Turner Motorsport with an M6 GT3. Significant to the Turner entry is their lead driver Bill Auberlen, who spoke at the National Capital Chapter Holiday Party in February. Bill has over 400 race starts for BMW and is second in wins at IMSA with 58 to Scott Pruitt who has only three more and he leads in poles. BMW reduced Bill's race schedule for

2018, including him with BMW Team RLL for the longer endurance races, but giving him the Brand Ambassador title for the remaining events. Bill is motivated to compete for more wins, so he has signed on with Turner to go after those wins in GTD.

In the CTSC, we have numerous teams who have come forward with M4 GT4 cars to compete in the series. A regular BMW entry, Bimmerworld has brought an M4 GT4 to go along with the 328i they





have run for some time and this year leads the CTSC Street Tuner (ST) Championship. In the Grand Sport (GS) Class in the CTSC in M4 GT4s we have Classic BMW and Stephen Cameron Racing fielding two cars each. Bimmerworld with Tyler Cooke and James Clay driving are currently in fourth place in the drivers' standings and third place in the constructors standing.

The IMSA teams are always available to the fans and as a part of the joint Tarheel/National Capital

Corral we were able to make paddock visits to BMW Team RLL, Bimmerworld and Turner. The paddock visits to hear about their race plans and season prospects are always a highlight of the weekend.

If you have followed the discussion about the balance of the performance of the cars in the GTLM series, you will know that a Balance of Performance (BoP) is applied and managed by IMSA in the attempt to equalize the wide variety of cars in the series. This isn't unique to IMSA

but is standard operating procedure for all of the sports car/GT based races. Going back to January and the first races of 2018, we see that IMSA has continually applied adjustments in the BoP to the BMW M8 GTE. The car wasn't competitive to start the season, it was given more power for Sebring (perhaps too much) and then was adjusted all the way down until it reached the same point where it started in January until they started back up again. They have adjusted power in the

lower RPM band as well as the higher range. For VIR, after making BoP changes for the first five races, IMSA has let the BoP stand from the previous two races. When I spoke with people from BMW at Oktoberfest, the feeling was they were going to be okay and they would figure it out. I couldn't get a

*(Above) The BMW Team RLL celebrates a first win and both cars on the podium.*



even though I was unhappy myself. It seemed to me as though IMSA was making sure that the M8 did not win a race in its first year. I'm pleased that I was wrong on that.

We visited the Bimmerworld and Turner Motorsport Teams on Saturday morning and then with BMW Team RLL in the afternoon. The CTSC teams had qualifying on Friday evening while the GTLM cars had qualifying on Saturday around noon and Bimmerworld had their race in the afternoon. So, we would see each of them after their qualifying and before their race. Over the years the teams have been very good to us and open about their plans and struggles. For Bimmerworld, we heard last year about the coming of the M4 GT4 and how it would be a change in how they do business.

Since they also have an older 328i ST car (that is doing very well), the comparison of how that car came about was still a valid point for discussion. Bimmerworld built and developed the 328i from its beginning as a road car to a race car. They provided all of the funding to conduct the development, engineering and fabrication of all of the new and modified parts to make it live as a race car. For instance, the turbocharged engine in the 328i was not designed by BMW to be a race



(Above) The Bimmerworld M4 GT4 competing in the CTSC.

car. There's lots of heat generated by the turbocharger, but not enough cooling as it comes from the factory for a racing environment. In the case of the M4 GT4, the car was fully developed by BMW and purchased by Bimmerworld to race in the series. James Clay from Bimmerworld said that they have made some minor modifications to make it more to their liking, but otherwise haven't had to do much more than tune it and race it. They get updates from BMW, but it is still a factory-built race car. For the Michelin GT Challenge at VIR, as the Continental Tire Sports car Challenge is called at VIR, the Bimmerworld M4 GT4

qualified as the highest placed BMW in 6th place. James Clay had told us that they have been through a similar problem to that of the M8 in that they have gradually had horsepower taken away from them by IMSA. They had good power at Daytona and Sebring, but the power has been reduced as the season has gone along. The M4 as developed by BMW for GT4 has its power management based on what is called a Power Stick. The Power Stick is simply a USB memory stick that is plugged into the USB port on the car, setting the engine power map. At Sebring they used a "Gold" Power Stick, but that was reduced to the

"Red" Power Stick and now up to the "Silver" Power Stick for a few races. Weight has been adjusted along the way as well. The Mustang has had a power advantage, but IMSA is starting to address that while the McLaren is now more than likely the leader in power according to Clay.

Turner Motorsport is competing with the M6 GT3 car in GTD as they have for the last few years. This is another customer BMW race program like many that are around the world. Will Turner has done a wonderful job over the years putting his program together coming up with sponsors while finding some great drivers. His top driver this year

(Below, Left and Right) In the Bimmerworld garage.





is none other than Bill Auberlen. As I mentioned earlier, Bill wants to pursue those last two wins to be the winningest driver in IMSA history. We were hoping this would be the weekend that he would get his next win. Bill is certainly driving well enough to make that happen. The M6 GT3 is a well-known car and will be eligible to race in the series for the next few years at least.

As it worked out, when we visited BMW Team RLL the weather turned to rain and our host Bill Cobb invited us to take a tour inside their hauler. It's been some years since any of us have gotten an inside look at the RLL operation for engineering and the drivers inside their large semi-based hauler. We got to see the engineering team reviewing data from the just completed qualifying and drivers Jesse Krohn and Connor De Phillippi in their hangout area. Connor De Phillippi even reviewed data from his qualifying run with Paul Seto and Alaina Mohanco.

We got to take a close look at the cars in the garage with Bill Cobb and driver John Edwards as preparations were underway for the race. The M8 GTE is built more as a pure race car rather than an adaptation of a production car. It's a slightly different machine than the M6 GT3 because it was not the development

of a production car to a race car, it was designed to be a race car. The engine is production based, but it also employs a more race-based philosophy. The M8 race car is very high tech with multiple steering wheel adjustments that the drivers can access corner by corner.

Qualifying for the WeatherTech SportsCar Championship took place on Saturday at noon and was followed by the Michelin GT Challenge. Qualifying for the GTD cars took place on a dry track, but once the GTLM cars came, the rain arrived. In the end, the GTD cars had better times than the GTLM cars and it was a struggle to stay on the track and achieve a respectable time. The race would start with the GTLM cars placed ahead of the GTD cars though. The #67 Ford GT driven by Richard Westbrook was on pole with the BMWs in 3rd and 5th. Bill Auberlen in GTD put the Turner car in 3rd place. When we visited Turner, they mentioned that they seemed to have a boost problem with the car. If they could fix their boost issue they felt like they were going to the front.

The CTSC race started while we visited BMW Team RLL and the rain that got us an inside tour of their hauler completely upset the race due to a very slippery track where many



(Top Right) Bill Auberlen (right) speaks to the BMW CCA corral group. (Middle Right) The driver's office in the M8 GTE. (Below from Left) Connor De Phillippi reviews his on track data and Bill Cobb speaks to the corral visitors







tried to continue on in the wet conditions with slick tires and others made the change to rain tires. The Bimmerworld M4 GT4 and James Clay made a great start moving from 6th to 3rd, but then fell into problems. Clay was in the car at the start and made a great move to jump three places before the fifth lap when the rains came. Then once the rain started he remained on slicks and held that third place. The 328i ST car with Nick Galante driving started on the pole and held that position through the rain. Clay experienced sheared wheel studs and eventually fell to 33rd place after soldiering on to do the best possible with an unusual mechanical issue. The ST 328i continued on in first place losing some positions in the shuffle of pit stops to put on rain tires eventually finished in fourth only to be elevated to second when two teams were penalized for technical infractions. In GS, the highest finishing BMW was the Stephen Cameron Racing #19 M4 in 7th place. The two Classic BMW cars were in 11th & 12th. The second Stephen Cameron Racing M4 finished in 20th. Not the sort of finish that any of these teams would have preferred, but the that could be achieved given the wild card thrown in by the weather.

Of course, on this GT only weekend the big WeatherTech show is the GTLM/GTD race on Sunday. Qualifying had been upset by the rain on Saturday, but BMW Team RLL was not overly concerned with their grid placings in 3rd and 5th. In GTD, Bill Auberlen put the Turner Motorsport M6 GT3 in 3rd place and would be in the car to start the race. Usually, with these races, one gets a preview of the race during the warmup in the morning. Setting the fastest lap in GTLM was the #24

BMW M8 GTE with Jesse Krohn driving with the #25 in 3rd place in the hands of Alexander Sims. In GTD, Bill Auberlen set the fastest lap showing that the boost problem had been fixed and they would be a factor in the race. The weather was going to be hot, but no precipitation was expected for the race. So, we got off to a good start with the #24 in 3rd and the #25 in 5th.

Literally at turn one we had the two BMWs moving up into 2nd and 3rd and holding those positions until lap 28 when pit stops started and Richard Westbrook handed the #67 Ford GT to Ryan Briscoe and clutch problems worsened and the #67 went behind the wall. In GTD, Bill Auberlen starting the #96 Turner M6 held his 3rd in class until his first stop and then recovered to lead GTD. Bill then marched off into a 20 second lead in the class and held that until he stopped with 1 hour and 15 minutes remaining during the first full course caution to hand the car over to Robby Foley.

Foley rejoined the race in 6th but was never able to work his way back up the standings and in then end was slowed by broken rear suspension mount to finish in 10th. It was really looking like Bill was going to get that next win. Where Turner had misfortune BMW Team RLL was staying near the front. Their race was not without difficulties though in that the #24 had an off-track excursion after a collision with a GTD Lexus that brought about a drive through penalty for Alexander Sims and #25. As it would work out Sims was able to pit during the only caution period of the race and would come out of the pit stop in the lead. He was then able to build up a 45 second lead in the following laps and from the side of the track he looked like he had everything in

*(From top) The best placed (7) #19 BMW in the CTSC driven by Greg Liefoghe and Ari Balogh from Stephen Cameron Racing. Lap one with leading #67 Ford GT and BMWs moving into second and third. Alexander Sims double stinting the Michels to a first win for the M8 GTE. Bill Auberlen leading GTD.*



hand and was cruising.

He got there by double stinting his Michelin tires and doing a fuel only pit stop, but in the end, he began to struggle some with the handling and the Corvette of Jan Magnussen was closing in. While this was going on Jesse Krohn was taking the #24 M8 from 5th to 3rd. Krohn had led for a short time, but gave up the lead for his pit stop, then made up the deficit to put the car on the podium. When the race ended the race with the #25 car in first, but only by a little over a second after that quick stop for fuel. It was exciting to see that Magnussen was pushing, but probably didn't have the speed to get by if he got close.

A truly exciting weekend at VIR! In 2017 it looked like BMW Team RLL was going to win the VIR race after dominating, but tire issues hit them twice. For 2018, not only did we celebrate a win for BMW and the first for the M8 GTE, but both cars were on the podium in 1st and 3rd. What a treat for us to enjoy and take part in the celebration with the team in victory circle.



(Above and Below) The Tarheel – NCC BMW CCA Corral.





**The IMSA Race Weekend at VIR on August 18-19 was very enjoyable. A win always helps.**

We had about 180 people and over 100 cars in the BMW corral at VIR. The weather was very hot and humid with rain several times on Saturday. Sunday remained hot and humid but no rain. I didn't think the location of our tent could get any better, but this was the best year yet. Slightly to the left of where we were last year where they have cleared some trees so we could see turns 1 thru 4 - to see that exciting win.

We again had artist, Bill Patterson, paint a picture live in our tent and had it auctioned off for charity. There was a visit from the BMW Performance Center folks with their generous gift of a free ///M school. Michelin spoke to the group and generously gave us a free set of tires. We had Parade laps, hot laps and Q and A with teams in the paddock, good food and exciting raffle prizes from our generous supporters. And did I say we WON. All in all, a fantastic weekend.

The Tarheel and National Capital Chapters would like to thank the following supporters for their contributions to our raffle:

**BMW NA, BMW Performance Center, BMW CCA, BimmerWorld, Blip Shift, Crown BMW, Flow BMW, Griot's Garage, IMSA, Michelin Tires, National Capital Chapter CCA, Tarheel Chapter CCA, and Turner Motorsports.**



(Above) John Edwards, Alex Sims, Jesse Krohn and Connor De Phillippi celebrate the 1-3 finish.

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# September DIY at AKTIV Automotive

By Marc Caden

Many enthusiasts consider the E30 3 Series manufactured in the 80's and early 90's to be the most robust BMW model ever built and I tend to agree with that assessment. Part of the reason is that it was manufactured during an era when vehicle electronics were still fairly basic and cooling system components hadn't evolved into a bunch of cheap plastic parts that eventually turned dry and brittle. Additionally, the body of the E30 was made of galvanized steel, which made it more rust resistant than your typical tetanus

shot inducing classic 2002. However, the E30 wasn't without its faults. It contains practically the only BMW powerplant to require timing belt replacement to avoid catastrophic failure. If you pull on the glove box handle too hard it will come right off in your hand, and the odometer gears over time morph into some sort of soft cheese. But, even the very best examples of a marque have some inherent foibles – I just prefer to think of them as wear items that require preventative maintenance.

I consider the E46 3 Series

platform (1999-2006) to be the modern equivalent of the E30. It has classic BMW styling, yet still looks very modern. You rarely hear of engine failure and most of E46s I see on the road have somewhere between 150-250 thousand miles and are still humming along. Best of all they are fully depreciated and a good one can still be bought cheaply on the used market. For the last ten years, I haven't been without an E46 in my stable in one form or another, including a 330i ZHP, M3, and now a Touring. Best of all, each of my E46s was

optioned with a manual transmission allowing me to enjoy rowing the gears.

If I was a Family Feud contestant and host Richard Dawson (hey, it's my article, so my era host) asked me to list the top five things that will likely fail on an E46, I would respond, in no particular order:

*(Above) Kevin Lucas, co-owner of AKTIV Automotive (on right), gives Ty Joseph some tips on how to remove and replace the power steering hoses on his 1998 Z3 M Roadster.*



front control arm bushings, entire cooling system, valve cover gasket, blower motor resistor, and window regulators. In fact, I have replaced all of these things on my current E46 and I still consider the car to be bullet proof – it is BMW's answer to the ever-reliable Camry or Accord. Now I have a friend who I won't name here (okay, it's Marshall) who complains about all the things that break on his E46 and yet when he identifies the failure item, I simply think that is quite normal for an E46 – accept, repair, and move on. Heck, the E46 is even becoming one of the most popular vehicles at our club HPDE events, finally starting to outnumber the E36 among the cars circling Summit Point.

All of this leads me to a phone call I received from my son explaining that he heard a cracking noise when trying to roll up the driver's side rear window of our 16-year-old Touring and now the window was stuck wide open. While I can't prove it, I think E46 window regulators have the tensile strength of low-grade balsa wood. I honestly think BMW engineers must have designed them to fail after they reached a specific number of up and down cycles. Maybe the conversation in Munich went something like



(Above) Chapter President Paul Seto flushed the brake fluid on his M3.

this (translated into English for your convenience):

BMW engineer #1: We must design ze window regulator so it can open and close ze window at very high speeds on ze autobahn.

BMW engineer #2: Yah, but such a design means ze window regulator will likely fail after only 1,000 open/close cycles.

BMW engineer #1: Wundebär this is much better than ze Peugeot window regulator failure rate!

Fortunately, we had a DIY event coming up AKTIV Automotive in a few weeks and I quickly signed up to replace the busted window regulator. This would be another

one of those repairs where the new part costs less than the labor to install it. I bought myself a new OEM window regulator for \$120, but the labor for a shop to repair it probably would have been around \$150-200. So coming to one of our club's DIY events was saving me a lot of money!

If you haven't replaced a window regulator before you shouldn't be intimidated. You don't need to raise your car on a lift and the whole repair requires very basic tools and should take less than two hours. I began by removing the door card on my E46 which has five torx screws holding it in place.

Next, I carefully peeled back the door's inner vapor barrier so I could gain access to the regulator. After removing a nut attaching the window to the regulator and three nuts attaching the regulator to the door, I was able to remove the faulty part. I quickly transferred my regulator's motor from the broken part to the new one and the re-installation was as simple as doing the opposite of removal. This is a very satisfying repair that doesn't take very long and is perfect to try at an upcoming DIY event.

Our DIY host AKTIV Automotive is a seven-bay independent facility located in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Owners Kevin Lucas and Chad Mustard are extremely knowledgeable about our cars and so are their technicians – several of whom have over 20 years of experience. They are a full-scale shop that can handle both routine maintenance and performance modifications. For example, they can swap your car from automatic to manual transmission. They can also help you with performance modifications for track and autocross events as well as improve your car's programming. They specialize in electronic upgrades and can install high-quality, BMW-specific aftermarket

(Below from Left) Brian Lovecchio refills his 2007 335i with fresh oil. Chapter Vice President James Laws replaced front control arms and tie rods on his 2000 740i.





products like BavSound speakers and Bimmer Tech solutions for navigation, back-up cameras, and bluetooth.

AKTIV offers a 10% discount on labor for all club members. They are located near Shady Grove Metro and can help shuttle you there. AKTIV can also get your car Maryland Inspected and they will do HPDE inspections for upcoming track events. They also offer a vehicle detailing service handled by Aye Peesing. Aye recently detailed DIY Coordinator Phillip Cummings' Z3 Coupe in preparation for his

journey to Oktoberfest and the results were stunning.

Many DIY tasks and projects were completed at AKTIV on Saturday September 15, 2018. DIY regular Ty Joseph replaced the power steering hoses and reservoir on his 1998 M Roadster. Doug Verner did an oil and filter change on his 2008 M3. DIY regular Brian Lovecchio adjusted his VANOS solenoids and replaced the oil and filter in his 2007 335i. Our Chapter's Vice President James Laws replaced the front control arms and tie rods on his 2000 740i.



(Above) Those four overlapping circles you see on the engine cover are not a venn diagram - its an Audi (pronounced ow - dee)! Alicia Gordon gave her M4 the day off and lavished some attention on her beautiful Audi S4.

(Below from Left) With the door card removed and vapor barrier peeled back, Marc Caden was able to quickly remove and replace a faulty window regulator on his E46 Touring; Chris Wootten had to make some minor modifications to his E46 Touring in order to fit a pair of Porsche brake calipers.



(Below from Left) Ty Joseph removed and replaced the power steering hoses on 1998 Z3 M Roadster. Jedd Vertman drains the motor oil from his E34 Touring.







(Above) Mike Watson from Insurance Group One pulled a small charcoal grill out of the trunk of his 550i and cooked everyone some tasty hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch.

Joseph Concaugh replaced the transmission fluid on his 2003 BMW 330ci. Rob Goodman replaced the fuel filter on his 2001 325i. DIY regular Clark Thomason replaced the power steering hoses on his 2003 540i M Sport. DIY

regular Mark Schaffer did a coolant flush and an oil change on his 2002 530i.

DIY committee member Chris Wootten installed a pair of Porsche 911 front brake calipers on his 2000 323it. Once he was done, the once

subdued silver station wagon wore a bright red set of front calipers proudly displaying the Porsche logo. I think Chris was satisfied with the result, but his car immediately left the shop with an identity crisis and was last seen at a local support group desperately seeking a Porsche engine swap to go with the new high-performance calipers.

This event also saw the longest oil change in DIY program history completed by Alicia Gordon on her 2014 Audi S4. From start to finish it took almost five hours to complete a routine oil and filter change on her Audi. Now I know what your thinking – I could probably use this moment to make some childish Audi joke here, like what is the difference between an Audi and a golf ball? The golf ball can be driven 300 yards. Well I am not going to do that! Seriously, Alicia's S4 is beautiful and its a reminder

that you are not required to bring a BMW to our DIY events – any marque vehicle you own is welcome.

Things started out smoothly with Alicia quickly draining and replacing the oil in her car. But things went awry when she realized she had the wrong oil filter. Fortunately, she was able to drive to a local Audi dealer, buy the correct filter, and successfully install it before our DIY came to a close.

The DIY committee provided everyone with coffee and donuts for breakfast. Huge thanks also to Mike Watson from Insurance Group One in Gaithersburg! Mike showed up in his Alpine White 550i and pulled out a small charcoal grill from the trunk and proceeded to grill everyone hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch. Finally, many thanks goes out to AKTIV Automotive for hosting another very successful DIY event.

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# Focusing on The Core

By James Chew

Bringing our 2017 X3 in for scheduled service, I asked my Service Advisor about some unusual leather upholstery wear. The piping on all the seat bottoms showed unusual wear. The Service Advisor consulted the Service Manager, who took photos and forwarded them to the BMW's Regional Service Director. Much to my surprise, I was informed that BMW would replace all the seat bottoms, free of charge. Our 2017 X3 was one of the first ones assembled. I suspect that there were an unusually high number of abnormal wear complaints. Once I saw the newly installed leather upholstery, which had a different piping design, my suspicions were confirmed.

Installing the new upholstery took a lot longer than anticipated, so our friends at

BMW of Alexandria provided me with a loaner vehicle – a new 2018 BMW 330i. After a few days, it was clear that BMW focused quite a bit of attention during the mid-cycle enhancement. The BMW 330i again drove as a BMW should. It was a very comforting proof that BMW was again working to strengthen its core, which is to produce the Ultimate Driving Machines.

BMW's approach to mid-cycle enhancements drives the competition crazy. In addition to addressing the identified deficiencies from the previous version, BMW always includes a powertrain upgrade.

This upgrade results in all the buff book hacks clamoring to evaluate the product. Therefore in the course of BMW's typical product life cycles, that model is evaluated at least twice. And receiving such attention from the automotive press is what drives BMW's competition crazy.

To say that the F30/F31/F34 3 Series was a bit of a disappointment for the BMW faithful would be an understatement. Launched in 2011, this was the first BMW that

featured electronic steering and the "Auto Stop/Start" feature. And while the "Auto Stop" (ruefully nicknamed "Auto Stall") was an issue, the overall problem with the initial F30 3 Series was that driving characteristics had been "dumbed down."

I suspect "dumbing down" was a result of new customers flocking to the BMW dealerships because of the attractive lease rates. Coming out of CamCords and crossover SUVs, many of people no doubt



*Eight years old,  
the F30's design has  
proven to be timeless.*



loved the idea of owning and driving a BMW, but had no idea how a BMW drives. They most likely liked the idea that they were driving one of the few production sedans that, when equipped with a roll cage, could beat the pants off race-prepared sedans on a road course. But they complained about how the ride was too rough and handling felt darty. The sales people, always willing to do anything to keep increasing sales, forced those comments onto the F30 product development team – which resulted in a watered-down Ultimate Driving Machine. The previous CEO was OK with launching a new 3 Series with watered down normal driving characteristics – he was focusing on saving the world through his i-series program.

I also suspect that the true believers within BMW noticed something unique about the F30. It is very close to the same dimensions (length track, wheelbase, height) as the legendary E39 5 Series. When the previous CEO was put out to pasture and the current, true believer CEO again unleashed the engineers to again make Ultimate Driving Machines, they attacked the problem with a vengeance, realizing the performance of F30 chassis and drivetrain.

The biggest difference seems



(Above) The 2.0 liter “TwinPower” Turbo 4 cylinder engine seems to have won owner the BMW faithful.

to the recalibration of the driver's settings. Normal no longer feels like CamCord and Sport no longer feels like Lexus F + AMG. Normal feels a like BMW E39 and Sport/Sport + feels close to an M.

As the new-car market continues to shift toward SAV/SUV, one hopes that someone at BMW notices the non-value-added expense of adjustable driver's settings. The solution is simple – eliminate that feature and electronically fix the chassis, handling, and drivetrain settings to Ultimate Driving Machine. Many of us BMW faithful own pre-adjustable driver setting BMWs that we would gladly volunteer to expose the new BMW engineers to BMW's soul.

Having the 330i over the week-

end allowed me to conduct my “if I only had one car” exercise. Much to my surprise, I discovered that the F30 3 Series has “swiss army knife” versatility. The 3 Series was more than up to the task as a family hauler, a dance team hauler, and a SLUGG vehicle. Driving the backroads from Fredericksburg to Charlottesville, the 330i was simply a delight.

But it was the Home Depot landscaping run that surprised me. Bags of garden soil easily fit into the large, cube-like trunk. BMW still has the best trunk lid and trunk opening design – the lid opens high, while the large opening allows for easy loading and unloading of cargo.

While our test vehicle did not

have folding rear seats, we were still able to fit a large number of potted plants in the rear seating area. And the rear seating area looked none the worse for wear after we unloaded the plants and removed the Home Depot tarps.

The mid-cycle enhanced 3 Series loaner is one of those vehicles that I'll been watching for when they ready for sale. The BMW engineers have addressed all the shortcomings on the first generation F30 by infusing a large dose of Ultimate Driving Machine soul and enhancements. This product not only will make an ideal daily driver for the BMW enthusiast, but also an ideal first BMW for new BMW family drivers.

The market and manufacturer shift to SAV/SUVs does present a bleak future for car development. If the X2 realizes its sales potential and results in BMW selling more SAVs than cars, there will be increased pressure on justifying car product development budgets. Thankfully, the F30 mid-cycle enhancement shows that there are still true believers at BMW who understand what makes an Ultimate Driving Machine and the importance of the 3 Series to BMW's image and market position. Long may they live.

Writing about a BMW-provided loaner vehicles is an excellent way to contribute to this publication. There is a chance to see through the biased fluff from most of the “me drive fast, me like cars” guys that now dominate the buff books. And because we are BMW enthusiasts, you'll provide a unique perspective on that vehicle, a perspective that your fellow BMW CCA members will appreciate.



(Left) Never underestimate the German penchant for practical design. Who needs an SAV?





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# DIY for Beginners

By Christine McKee

A DIY (Do-It-Yourself) is a great perk offered by the National Capital Chapter of the BMW CCA. At a DIY, an area BMW repair shop opens its doors for members to service their cars on site. Club members save loads of money by not having to pay the labor costs for fluid changes to front-end alignments, to installation of filters, mufflers, wiper blades, etc.

But what do you do at a DIY when you don't know how to do...anything?

Here are seven tips I learned from navigating the DIY experience:

1. Email the DIY coordinator to reserve your slot ASAP (slots go quickly). Leave your contact information and the service(s) you want to perform. Let the coordinator know you need help; fortunately, there are knowledgeable club members who often show up solely to help out other club members.

2. Arrive early to sign in or risk losing your assigned lift time. Lift time is assigned by date and time of registration. And be sure to dress to impress:



(Above) New member Christine McKee working on her M128i at her first DIY.

old clothes in which you look greasy-good.

3. I strongly suggest you buy all your supplies from the DIY repair shop host. It's only polite.

4. If another club member is assigned to help you with your repairs, then you should plan to stay to help that member with their repairs.

5. How can you help when you're clueless? Hold the flash light under the carriage for the mechanic, keep track of parts and screws, keep your workspace organized and clean, learn to run the lift, and anything else that strikes your fancy (BMW club members love to teach).

6. Free morning coffee and donuts. Free pizza for lunch. 'Nuf said.

7. Enjoy the experience!

I loved my first DIY. Everybody was friendly, eager to share their knowledge, and welcoming when you poked your head over into their engine.

Bottom line: I really had a fun time and I'm looking forward to more DIY adventures as a new BMW CCA member!

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**Caution, slippery when wet. Wet surfaces can make for icerink-like conditions and leading to sliding. A slow, but fun way to complete the course.**

By Jaclyn Heck

## Your Autocross Essentials Wish List: **Treat Yourself or Your Speedy Loved One**

**T**he Holiday season is right around the corner, and that means gifts! So there's no better time to start thinking about ideas for your car-enthusiast, or yourself. After all, Black Friday deals are knocking on the door.

Autocross is a great low-cost and safe way to enter into the driving arena, and what better time than now to start preparing for the upcoming season! The Novice School, and Chapterfest 2019, will be here before you know it! For all of those interested, it has

officially been confirmed for the 2019 year. Autocross will be taking place on Saturday, May 19th at Summit Point Motorsport Park! Get ready!



*(Above) Rain gear is pertinent when it comes to events with downpours. Don't be like our committee members. Stay dry, my friends.*

There are a few things you want to make sure you have on hand during events, as well as some fun gadgets and toys to make your experience all the more joyful and fun.

No matter the price range, there are a number of gift ideas you can get for your loved one, add to your own list, or tuck away for yourself.



## ■ Under \$50

**Tire Pressure Gauge** – All drivers need to know air pressure before and after their runs.

**Magnetic Numbers** – For the driver that always “forgets” tape and needs to borrow from a friend.

**Floppy Sun Shade Hat** – Because no one can avoid the summer sun beating down while working the course. Don’t forget the sunblock too!

**Folding Chair** – Sitting in a chair versus a curb or the pavement during the lunch break is more ideal.

**Latex/Disposable Work Gloves** – Have to keep those hands grease, dirt, and grime free when working on your car.

**BWM CCA Membership** – Membership to the club comes with numerous perks, including a free autocross session! Get started today!

## ■ Under \$100

**Driving Gloves** – For enhanced grip and increased control of the steering wheel or shifter. Also to look and feel like a real racer.

**Rain Suit** – For when the skies inevitably open up, rain suits keep you dry and warm.

**Gear Bag** – Keep all of your cool race gear in one easy to remember spot.

*Punching through the rain for some wet n' wild fun.*



*Member Ivan Slavov makes a splash during our September event.*





**Torque Wrench** – To prevent over-tightening the nuts for the wheels on the car so they can go round and round, without worry.

**Portable Air Compressor** – Tires lose air and need to be filled back up. Don't get caught with too-light tires. It'll affect performance and times.

**Car Jack** – Because sometimes sh\*t happens and you need to lift the car up.

## ■ Under \$500

**Gift Card to Tire Rack/Discount Tire/etc.** – Tires are expensive. Give them the gift of new tires, but let them research and pick out their own.

**Helmet (Snell 2015)** – No one wants to wear the loaner helmets. Also, it feels cool to own one and pretend to be a racecar driver.

**Driving Shoes** – Depends on how invested you are in racing. Prices vary and can range to under \$100. They allow for grip and better feel of the pedals. Don't walk around on pavement with them; they're meant for driving.

So, keep this list on you and get on to shopping. Prepare yourself or your loved one for the upcoming season of autocross, including Chapterfest 2019 autocross, and enjoy the most wonderful time of the year!

*Slipping and sliding the way through the course.*



*It's just a little rain, guys. Nothing to worry about.*



*You make me happy when skies are gray. A little ray of sunshine on a rainy day.*





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