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Cover: Mike Renner giving a charity ride during the club's annual Chapterfest HPDE at Summit Point Raceway. Read the article by Marc Caden on page 8. Photo: Steve Tenney

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derBayerische

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



President's Message

May was such an incredible month, filled with memorable events every weekend! We started out with BMW guru, Mike Miller, hosting a Live Tech Talk for our chapter once again. To hear him rattle off the maintenance required to keep our cars running smoothly or tricks of the trade to perform common repairs was really fascinating. As part of our DIY program, they really focus on making sure we have the knowledge and expertise to keep our BMWs in shape and Mike is the walking encyclopedia who has led the charge for many years. Always great to have *Roundel* royalty amongst us! Next up in May, was our annual rite of Spring, the Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance. On a perfect sunny day, it was amazing to see the best of BMW, Mercedes, and Porsche, lined up across Nottoway Park. With perhaps the largest BMW field in recent memory, there were some absolute pristine 2002s, E21s, various E30/E36/E46 M3s, E39 M5s, and even a rare Euro 735i. Congratulations to all the class winners and everyone now has a full year to prep for next year's DM!

Memorial Day weekend started off with a bang, as our most popular tour, the Pie Run, brings a great combination of both longtime and new members out for some great driving. Starting at the historic Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick, we hit some thrilling backroads in Western Maryland visiting several 'covered bridges' along the way to Catocin Mountain Orchard (CMO). For those who have never been to CMO, they have some of the best fruit pies and apple cider ever! It's normal to walk out with a half dozen pies, as I've done many times in the past. After that pit stop, it was on to more covered bridges and our final lunch stop, AKA Friscos, a favorite sandwich shop of previous Pie Runs. It's amazing how our BMWs handle the curvy, banked roads and elevation changes with ease; can't wait for the next tour!

The biggest event we had in May, was Chapterfest, a culmination of all things NCC. With multiple events held throughout the day at Summit Point, the biggest challenge was hoping for great weather. Luckily, as bad as the forecasts were, we escaped the rain until nightfall. Many of the individual events will be highlighted in this newsletter, so let me thank all the volunteers who planned and pulled off such a phenomenal day. Also, many thanks to our sponsors, without them, this event absolutely wouldn't happen. Everyone from Mike Renner of the BMW Performance Center, Matt and Judy Curry of Craftsman Auto Care, Paul Moorcones of Radial Tire, Matt Olson of RRT, and all the support from BMW of Fairfax, Annapolis, and Sterling, hats off to you for your long time support of NCC and BMW enthusiasts in our area.

Finally, after such a busy Spring, we're not done! There are some big events that hopefully you've already planned to attend, if not, don't forget to sign up. Our annual trek north to the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix is this month, and my favorite event of the year, our BMW CCA Car Corral for IMSA weekend at VIR is mid August. Registration is still open, so make sure you sign up early because space will be limited. Most importantly, 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of BMW CCA and a record number of members will flock to Greenville, SC for our annual Oktoberfest in October. Please make sure you save those vacation days to join us for some really unique events. While our cars initially bring us together, it's the people in this club that make it so special. And our annual gathering at O'Fest is one of the few times of the year I get to see some of them. NCC will have a huge turnout in SC, so we look forward to seeing you there too!



TheSteeringColumn

I finally got in my little 135is recently and joined a gang of cheerful club members on a tour of the covered bridges in western Maryland on our annual Pie Run. The fun driving and pleasant camaraderie reminded me why I love this club so much.

I'm all signed up for the 2019 50th Annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest presented by Michelin in Greenville, South Carolina, "celebrating fifty years of BMW CCA". It felt very early to be signing up for an event that is still a little less than half a year away. But when I realized the host hotel, the Hyatt Regency Greenville was already almost sold out, I thought I had better jump on the bandwagon. Registration opened on May 8 at 11 am. I registered roughly a week after registration opened, and the host hotel was already almost at capacity. Apparently, we have the entire Hyatt Regency occupied for the week of October 14-19. It looks like this is going to be a

very popular, if not record-breaking, O'fest.

Among the events I signed up for is a half-day ladies-only driving program to be held at the BMW Performance Driving Center in Greer, SC and another half-day event at the Performance Driving Center, that looks like it will be a truncated version of the M-school, including rat races, skid pad driving, and timed events. Both half day events will include lunch at the Center.

There will be a Fall leaves driving tour, a car show and concours on Main Street in downtown Greenville in front of the Hyatt Regency, and various social, driving and anniversary events at the BMW Performance Driving Center, the Spartanburg BMW Plant (where the X3, X4, X5, X6 and X7s are assembled), and the grand opening and tours of the brand-new BMW CCA national campus, including the Foundation. For those of you who purchased bricks, this will be your chance to see them up close and personal.

There will be the usual sponsored dinners, lunches and events by Shell, Hagerty and Pirelli, and the annual BMW of North America dinner. Tire Rack is sponsoring an autocross. And there are always the requisite fun O'fest events such as tech talks, photo contest, trivia contest, gymkhana, a Fun Rally, a TSD Rally, vendor hall receptions, Michelin Drive and Compare, and the Dinan Beer Garden. All this culminates with a dinner sponsored by Pirelli at Eagle Mountain Winery in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

I don't know about you, but I am not about to miss all this fun! Apart from the great cars and driving, what really makes this club special is the great people in it. I can't wait for the big reunion in South Carolina. Hope to see you all there!

Anna Maripuu
Co-Editor

Help Wanted

The National Capital Chapter is in need of a volunteer to take on its marketing responsibilities. This position provides the opportunity to interact with some of the leading businesses in the automotive sales, repair, accessory, and support industry.

Previous marketing and/or business development experience is necessary, a strong desire to interact with sponsors, and a belief in the benefits offered by the BMW Car Club of America and the National Capital Chapter in particular are a plus.

Briefly the **Chief Marketing Officer** is responsible for the following:

- Develop overall marketing, sponsorship, and communications strategies
- Identify and secure new advertisers for the chapter's newsletter, website, email, and social media outlets
- Ensure that current advertisers are properly invoiced and collected

- Work with the *der Bayerische (dB)* newsletter staff to ensure that ads are correct, timely, and current
- Marketing/sponsorship communications for all social media and membership growth activities

This position will report directly to the NCC Board of Directors and has the flexibility to build a team immediately.

If this position appeals to you and you feel that you have the skills necessary to meet the position requirements, please send your resume to Paul Seto, mail to: Paul.Seto@nccbmwcca.org, immediately to schedule an interview.



W E E K L Y C A R S & C O F F E E E V E N T S

Hunt Valley, MD

Saturdays, 8-10 am, Hunt Valley Towne Centre at Joe's Crab Shack, 118 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD

Burtonsville, MD

Sundays, 7:30-10 am, "Curch of the Holy Donut," Dunkin' Donuts, Route 29 & 198, Burtonsville, MD

Great Falls, VA

Saturdays, 7-9 am, Katie's Cars & Coffee located at 760 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA

Dulles, VA

Sundays, 7-9 am, Dunkin' Donuts @ Dulles Landing Shopping Center on Loudoun County Parkway north of US 50

Leesburg, VA

Sunday 9 am, Dog Money Restaurant
50 Catocin Circle, NE
Leesburg, VA

Winchester, VA

3rd Saturday, 8-11 am, Truban Motor Company
located at 60 W. Jubal Early Drive
in Winchester, VA

Bethesda, MD

Saturdays, 8-10 am, Corner Bakery Cafe
10327 Westlake Drive, Bethesda MD
Westfield Montgomery Shopping Mall



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May

- 2 NoVa Social - TBD
- 4 Live Tech Talk w/ Mike Miller @ BMW ExcluService
- 5 Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance, Vienna, VA
- 8 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 9 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 10-12 NCC May 2019 Summit Point, Main Circuit HPDE
- 10-12 NCC Chapterfest 2019
- 11 2019 NCC Autocross Points Event #2 (Chapterfest)
- 11 Chapterfest Tour
- 16 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 18 DIY @ BMW of Sterling
- 25 Pie Run XXIII

June

- 6 NoVa Social - Crust Pizzeria Napoletana, Vienna, VA
- 12 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 13 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 15 Drive and Vine (Tour)
- 16 2019 NCC Autocross Points Event #3
- 20 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 22-23 ///M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center
- 22 DIY @ Proctor's Foreign Auto Service
- 28-30 Summit Point, Jefferson Circuit HPDE *
- 29 NCC Golf Outing, Raspberry Falls Golf Club

July

- 7 2019 NCC Autocross Points Event #4
- 10 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 11 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 12-14 Mountain Country Summer Tour
- 18 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 20 DIY @ Benchmark Motors

August

- 1 NoVa Social - Crust Pizzeria Napoletana, Vienna, VA
- 3 Tech Session - Westminster Speed & Sound
- 8 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 10 2019 NCC Autocross Points Event #5
- 10 DIY @ BMW of Annapolis
- 14 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 15 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 17 Summer Family Tour and Picnic
- 18 DIY @ Craftsman Auto Care
- 23-25 BMW CCA Corral & Hospitality @ Michelin GT Challenge, VIR

September

- 6-8 NCC Sept 2019 Summit Point, Shenandoah HPDE *
- 7 NCC Autocross Points Event #6
- 11 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 14 Eastern Shore Tour
- 21 DIY @ AKTIV Automotive
- 22 Street Survival (Waldorf, MD)
- 22 TRSS Coach & Volunteer SignUp-Sept. 22, 2019
- 28 Solomons Saturday Social - Solomons Island, MD

October

- 5 NCC Autocross Points Event #7
- 5 OKTOBERFEST presented by Passport BMW
- 9 Board Meeting/Social - Vicino Restaurante Italiano, Silver Spring, MD
- 12-13 Fall 2019 ///M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center
- 15-19 50th Annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest (Greenville, SC)
- 26 DIY @ Proctor's Foreign Auto Service
- 27-28 Fall Tour to Monticello

* 2018 and newer X3s and X4s are eligible for HPDE



AUGUST 23RD THRU 25TH BMW CCA CAR CORRAL AND HOSPITALITY TENT VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY (VIR)

RESERVED INFIELD PARKING • TRACKSIDE SPECTATING
CATERED LUNCH AND REFRESHMENTS • PARADE LAPS
RACE FEED ON THE HOSPITALITY TENT TV • Q&A SESSIONS WITH TEAMS



TAKE SOME HOT LAPS AT VIR, MAYBE EVEN WIN AN ///M SCHOOL

The gang from the BMW Performance Center will be wowing the crowd and blowing passengers' minds in the latest ///M performance cars from BMW—don't miss your chance to win a Hot Lap! They will also be giving away an ///M School to one lucky winner!



PILES OF PARTNER PRIZES, PLUS TWO CHANCES TO WIN AN HPDE!

From hats to shirts to travel bags, the Tarheel - NCC Corral has the best prizes in our daily lunchtime raffle, with two of the top prizes being a gift certificate to an HPDE Weekend with the Tarheel Chapter or the National Capital Chapter (\$450+ value each)

DON'T MISS OUT - BUY YOUR CORRAL TICKETS TODAY AT
[HTTP://VIRNOW.COM/EVENTS/](http://virnow.com/events/)

COMING EVENTS

Sunday, July 7, 2019
2019 NCC Autocross Points Event #4

Friday-Sunday, July 12-14, 2019
Mountain Country Summer Tour

Saturday, July 20, 2019
DIY @ Benchmark Motors



Street Survival: Regency Furniture Stadium,
September 22, 2019

What is Street Survival? It's a car control clinic for teens. Street Survival's goal is to teach teen drivers the car control skills, and more importantly, the situational awareness and judgement to keep them safe. Sign up at: msreg.com/NCC-TRSS-Student-2019-09-22

HPDE Shenandoah
Friday, September 6-8, 2019



Westminster Speed and Sound (WSS)
August 3, 2019

Have you been waiting for another Tech Session? Well, your wait is over. We have a wonderful event planned on August 3rd with Mark Miller and his team at Westminster Speed and Sound (WSS).

The team at Westminster Speed & Sound are acknowledged experts in the area of high-performance car audio, custom installed radar & laser detectors, car alarms, remote starting devices, navigation systems, blue tooth integration and backup cameras/collision avoidance. They also have a film division that specializes in window tinting and paint protection film.

The company began fifty years ago and has continued to grow by offering their clients the finest products on the market backed up with impeccable installation quality. Their driving goals always focus on one thing; a commitment to excellence. They are also the most awarded vehicle customization facility in the Mid-Atlantic. Some of their awards include:

- Best Car Stereo Shop by *Baltimore Magazine*
- Nine-time recipient of one of the top Mobile Electronics Retailers in the nation by *Mobile Electronics Magazine*
- Trek bicycle race team chose them to outfit their vehicle with a complete audio system
- Lexus race team chose them to outfit their vehicle with a state-of-the-art audio/video system

Mark Miller is also an enthusiastic BMW owner and a BMW CCA member, and his team has done numerous BMW installations. One of their specialties is a "modern technology upgrade" where your older model vehicle is outfitted with current technologies.

WSS is normally closed on Saturday but will be opening their state-of-the-art 12,000ft facility for us. Multiple BMW vehicles will be on display in their installation department so you can see and hear first-hand the upgrades that are possible. Tours of the showroom will also be given.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

50TH ANNUAL

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

OKTOBERFEST

— GREENVILLE —

Presented by Michelin

Oct. 15-19, 2019

Host Hotel:

Hyatt Regency in downtown Greenville, SC

Host Driving Venue:

BMW Performance Center

This will be an unforgettable event as club members make the journey back "Home" to the Greenville/Spartanburg area from all over the country and the world. We will have exciting social, driving, and exclusive anniversary events taking place at the BMW Performance Center, BMW Plant Spartanburg—where the X3 through the X7 are made, and the BMW CCA national office. This will be an absolutely amazing event with many great surprises in store for attendees!

Visit ofest.bmwcca.org to learn more!

2019 NCC Spring Tour to Gettysburg

After all the cold weather, one can imagine there was a lot of anticipation for the first tour of the year. We lucked out weather-wise aside from it being a bit blustery, but the warm spring sun blunted the worst of the chill as we huddled at the Urbana Park-and-Ride. I hardly noticed as I was focused on checking in the 49 attendees (in 35 cars) gulping down the occasional bite of breakfast (a blueberry bagel), as my co-Tourmeister Steven Pera made some of the rounds of the folks showing up. If you're in the Rockville area, definitely check out Bageltown Deli; the bagels have that genuine NY taste. With the last savory bite, I checked my watch and the clipboards, and it looked like everyone was here. It was time for the Drivers' Meeting and then saddling up and heading north.

With the help of Drew Lenhart, a local NCC member, and a couple of test runs, I planned a route that kept us off the main roads and on the fun roads. Steven led the first group of tour-goers and I followed up with the remainder. In late April, it's finally the time of year when the greenery of the countryside starts to wake up from the winter weather. We enjoyed more than our fair share of groundhogs and other little critters while pacing our cars along the roadside. We passed farms, and our cars daintily ducked, swerved and weaved through river valleys and past old mill lakes. Gradually the mountains grew larger in our field of view, and we reached our first stop in Thurmont. One minute it was

By Robert Hopkins



just a normal Sheetz stop, the next an impromptu Cars and Coffee as we squeezed into the parking lot. A few cars rejoined at the base of the Catoclin Mountains after getting lost. We even got to check out a cool Austin Healey Sprite Mark 1 converted for track duty that was just hanging out.

After refueling, we taxied out onto the shoulder and our groups took off again and up into the mountains via Route 550 and the first switchbacks of the trip and up to Charmian and past some cool vacation estates. Then some more switchbacks down and switchbacks back up again as we turned onto Iron Springs Road. For the first mile, you felt like you were driving practically

straight up like you're being winched up the big hill of a roller. What goes up must come down, and on the other side was five miles of basically deserted mountain-road bliss, relatively speaking - a road that was challenging and fun. This brought us back down out of the mountains and back into the foothills to the west of Gettysburg. As we started seeing interlocked wood fencing and the town loomed, we fell in line with the tourist traffic and crossed town for the first time of the day to get to Mason Dixon Distillery.

At Mason Dixon our group enjoyed a prepared buffet made with locally grown ingredients (when possible). Dishes included a Seasonal Salad, Chips and Salsa, Goat Cheese Brulee, Fried Brussel Sprouts, Pork Skewers and Grilled Chicken with Gravy and a side dish of Carolina White Rice. With the

(Above) On July 3rd, Confederate and Union Cannon shelled each other's position on opposite Ridges for hours before Pickett's Charge attempted to break the Union position at Cemetery Ridge in the center background of the picture. A confederate cannon sits in the foreground. Photo provided by Xiaoxi Wang. (Below) Several of us toured the Gettysburg Battlefield via the Auto Tour Route following Lunch. Two M235i and a 428xi Convertible are shown. Photo provided by Xiaoxi Wang.





(Above) A group of us taking a break on the shoulder after regrouping southeast of Thurmont.

food taken care of, there was plenty of time to focus on the vast drink menu of Whiskey, Vodka and Rum-based drinks. Many folks tried the five-drink sampler to get a feel for what the Distillery offers. With a visit or two under my belt, it was a choice between the Apple Pie Vodka, which tastes remarkably like apple pie, or the sweet Vodka lemonade, which I decided on for

this particular occasion. Drinks ordered and delivered, everyone settled in to enjoy food and make chit-chat.

Once food and drink were consumed and given a chance to settle, it was dessert time! We restarted our engines and made the quick trip to the north end of town to make a stop by Half Pint Creamery, a favorite local creamery with 36 daily

flavors to choose from. Many with longer drives decided to hit the road, but several of us stopped into the Gettysburg Visitor center where we dispersed to enjoy the visitor center or head out for a driving tour of the battlefield. I made several stops on the Confederate sections of the Battlefield memorials honoring the sacrifices North Carolina's and Virginia's soldiers made in the area of

Pickett's charge and the State of Mississippi Monument. With the sun starting to set and the blustery winds finally giving me the chills, it was time to head home. I hope that I will find the time to return in the near future between planning other tours and spend more time honoring those who gave up so much so that we are able to enjoy the lives we have.

(Below) Our group gathered in a corner of the Thurmont Sheetz parking lot waiting until it was time to get back on the road, the Catocin Mountains waiting in the background.



(Left) An Austin Healey Sprite Mk1 set up for racing was just hanging out at our rest stop for the tour.





Chapterfest HPDE

By Marc Caden

Photos by Marc Caden and Ty Joseph

Ever wonder what it would be like to drive your car on the track?



Our chapter kicked off the season with its first HPDE event and it was timed to coincide with Chapterfest at Summit Point's Main Circuit on May 10-12. If you don't already know what the acronym "HPDE" stands for, it means High Performance Driver Education. The "High Performance" part means that you drive on a closed circuit or race track in your own car where there are no posted speed limits, constables, speed cameras, pedestrians, or stop lights. However, you are not racing other cars and participants are divided up into four run groups based on experience ranging from novice to advanced. While passing is allowed, a pass is only permitted upon first receiving a "point-by" hand gesture that is provided on your terms and in a controlled manner.

The "Driver Education" part of these events is perhaps the most important aspect. HPDE events will help teach you about your car and its potential in a safe and controlled environment. You will learn some of the technical aspects of driving, such as threshold braking, proper throttle

application, driving the fastest line, and improving car control skills. There are classroom sessions where skilled instructors will reinforce the concepts you are learning on the track. I can say without hesitation that every participant leaves an HPDE a better driver than when they arrived. Should you ever be presented with a real-world road predicament, you may find yourself better equipped to manage or completely avoid it. The skills you learn could literally save your life one day should a deer decide to jump out in front of your car! Because you are driving on a closed course with a skilled instructor by your side, you may also find that you feel safer driving on the track than you would during a hectic, rush hour Beltway commute.

Summit Point's Main Circuit has long been a popular destination for our Chapter's HPDE events. Located in West Virginia just 90 minutes away from the DC area, it is the oldest and most

historic of the three circuits located on site. It opened in 1969 and has played host to many professional SCCA and IMSA races over the years.



(Above) Matt Curry's Craftsman Auto Care was the named sponsor for Chapterfest and HPDE events. Besides homemade soft taco lunch, tech support, and door prizes, Matt served as a driving instructor. From left are Asha Saeed, Matt Curry, and Judy Curry.



Even some celebrities have raced on Summit Point Main like Paul Newman (for Datsun) and Tom Cruise (for Nissan). It is a very challenging track that combines the thrill of a long straight with 10 turns that range from high-speed sweepers to slower more technical turns. The chapter's first event of the season at Summit Point's Main Circuit was a huge success with 85 participants and 50 instructors in attendance.

Our HPDE program's instructors are probably the best and most qualified of any chapter. This is because NCC has some of the strictest instructor requirements of any HPDE organization. To become an instructor, you must first pass a lengthy training program that includes skills in communication and driving ability on both the track and the skid pad. Participants are assigned an instructor to accompany them for all of the on-track sessions. Your instructor is present to help you to achieve your goals and improve your driving skills.

If you are thinking to yourself that because you don't own an M-powered BMW or another high-horsepower car that you probably shouldn't attend an HPDE, you can dispel that notion. Many instructors believe that when starting out you can learn much more from driving a stock,

(Above) This E36 M3 nearly lifts its inside front wheel while negotiating turn 5. (Below) Craftsman Auto Care provided technical support to drivers in the paddock, like helping this Z3 Coupe driver check his brakes before going back on the track.





base model BMW on the track than its "M" powered counterpart. A base model BMW will help you learn the finesse and smoothness necessary on the track while also allowing you to extract more overall performance out of the car. And, let's not forget that every BMW is itself a performance-oriented

vehicle, engineered to be able to cruise the autobahn at speeds of 100 mph. In fact, a recent *Road & Track* article rated the base BMW E36 (1992-99) and E46 (1999-2006) 3 Series models as among the best for a first-time track participant. Why? Because these cars are affordable, fast enough, and

(Above) Turn 5 provided a good place to view several cars on track. (Left) No car goes on track before Tommy Ivec from Tier Car Care gives it a thorough on-grid tech inspection. (Below Left) Charity hot laps with Mike Renner in the new M5 Competition Package were a hot item.

handle very well straight out of the box. I attended my first HPDE in a 30-year-old 1987 BMW 325is, and found it to be the ultimate learning machine. While it may not have been the fastest car in a straight line, in the corners it out-handled just about everyone else in my run group.

You also don't need to make any special modifications to your current BMW to attend an HPDE event. You just need fresh brake fluid, which you should be doing anyway, and a tech inspection completed in advance (note: a downloadable version of the tech inspection form is available on the HPDE page at <http://www.nccbmw-cca.org>). Craftsman Autocare (five locations in Virginia) and Tommy Ivec's Tier Car Care (in Maryland), will perform the HPDE tech inspection at no charge.

Every HPDE event includes a daily session of driving on the skid pad. The skid pad is a huge circular piece of pavement essentially in the shape of a giant doughnut. Once the skid pad is soaked by a sprinkler system, it becomes very

slick and provides much less grip. Your skid pad instructor will guide you through a series of exercises designed to show you how to induce, manage, and correct oversteer (when the rear tires lose grip) and understeer (when the front tires lose grip). Again, the benefit of a HPDE is developing these skills in a safe and controlled environment so that should you ever encounter these situations in the real world or on track, you know just how to react and correct them. I have heard people comment that they learned more about car control in a single session on the skid pad than they had previously in a whole lifetime of driving experience.

At every HPDE there are also on-track exercises designed to help you improve and practice specific skills. For example, at our Chapterfest event drivers played the leapfrog game – where two cars paired off and practiced how to properly give and receive passes back and forth for an entire on track session. Another exercise encouraged participants to drive "off-line" or off the track's normal fastest line,



(Above) A 1980's E30 leads a group of BMWs down the pit lane to get ready for their next track session. Many instructors believe a novice student can learn more in a low-powered or momentum car. (Below) Chapter President Paul Seto spoke at the barbecue dinner thanking Mike Renner, the volunteers and our sponsors for their continuous support while he gave out nice awards and raffle prizes.

which helps drivers explore places of the track they might not otherwise experience during a normal session. The off-line exercise is very helpful because you can easily find yourself on unfamiliar parts of the track when either passing another car or when driving in the rain.

Sponsors help make these events possible and deserve special thanks for their support! Craftsman Autocare was the named sponsor for both our Chapterfest and HPDE

events. Matt and Judy Curry have been long-time NCC and HPDE supporters. They showed up in full force with a huge trailer, tent, door prizes, snacks, and even a tasty lunch of homemade soft tacos. They also brought two technicians to help participants with mechanical support and repairs. Craftsman Autocare just opened their fifth Virginia store in Merrifield and they provide a discount on service to all club members.

Radial Tire and Michelin are devoted sponsors of our HPDE. Radial Tire's owner Paul Moorcones is a veteran racer, knows his tires, and may be the longest running sponsor of our club (they have been in business since 1976). They are conveniently located in Silver Spring and offer prices that are lower than Tire Rack. Radial Tire offers some of the best and most unique tire services in the area such as free tire rotations, free tire plugs, spin balancing for vin-

tage cars, and tire shaving for racers.

BMW of Fairfax is another long time NCC supporter. They are known for both for both their great service in sales and service. GM Mike Walker does a great job with customer satisfaction. James Duerbeck is a knowledgeable sales professional who is also a track guy that drives a M4. Rick Eccard is an excellent service tech, who fixes mechanical problems that frequently stump others.

Tier Car Care is owned by





(Above) Road & Track recently listed the E36 3 Series base model as one of the best for a first time track participant because it is quick, affordable, and handles well. Plenty of E36s were in attendance, including these two chasing each other in the carousel.

Tommy Ivic, NCC's Instructor Representative. Tommy was in charge of on-track inspections and caught several mechanical issues that could have been problems on track. Tier is a favorite repair shop for many performance drivers, many who live in Virginia but still travel to Maryland for Tommy's expertise.

Spec R53 provides parts for

Mini's and is owned by George Hovis. George is a superb driving instructor, and he knows how to make a Mini run fast and reliably. He is currently NCC's Director of Training.

At the end of the day on Saturday there was a nice barbeque dinner provided by the sponsors and served by Jordan Springs BBQ.

It was a really nice way to unwind with friends after a fun day on the track. Over 200 people were served and it also included many folks who had attended some of the other Chapterfest events.

Special thanks go out to Dennis Pippy, NCC's Chief Instructor, who organized instruction for this event. Dennis coordi-

nated the instructors, students, schedule, and volunteers and he made sure the whole weekend ran smoothly and without incident. We hope to see you at one of the upcoming HPDE events scheduled for later this summer.

HPDE schedule for 2019

*June 28-30 NCC HPDE Summit Point Jefferson Circuit

*September 6-8 NCC HPDE Summit Point Shenandoah Circuit

Thank You to Our Sponsors!



Dulles Car Concierge

BMW OF ANNAPOLIS

Hotlaps at Chapterfest

While the fastest two minutes in sports may be the Kentucky Derby, the fastest four minutes of the day at Chapterfest 2019 were those spent in the Performance Center's new F90 M5 Competition with Mike Renner behind the wheel. *Hot Lap or Taxi Ride*, whatever you call it, the experience gave 58 Chapterfest attendees a new appreciation for what BMW's flagship performance model can do on the track with an experienced, race-bred driver behind the wheel.

Riders paid a mere \$10 for two laps around the Summit Point Main Circuit, either riding shotgun and experiencing track traffic with the Instructor group or as one of three passengers on an open track that Mike had all to himself. The smiles on everyone exiting the car after the ride told the real story of this event. It's a great treat to get a ride with Mike on the track!

The M5 Competition is a four-door, 600+ horsepower luxury performance sedan that defies its 4,090 pounds by accelerating, cornering and braking like a true race car. During my ride, we reached just under 160 miles an hour at the end of the Main straight, with some room left to run. Mike's experience as a race driver was showcased by his ability to cleanly and safely maneuver through track traffic with other National Capital Chapter instructors. Squealing tires let you know that the car is close to its cornering limit and the carbon ceramic brakes slow the M5 as quickly and aggressively as the situation calls for. All this in a luxurious comfortable, stable and very safe four-door family sedan.

Maybe you are thinking you'd like to try this sometime. Maybe spend the day learning some of the techniques and skillsets that Mike showcases in his Taxi Rides. Maybe you'd like to drive the latest BMW ///M2, M3, M4 or M5 on a track for a day to see if you'd be comfortable owning one. Or maybe you'd like

to become a better, more knowledgeable, more skilled, more confident driver and have a whole lot of fun while your doing it. Well, have I got a deal for you! Your membership in the NCC BMW CCA entitles you to come to our ///M Club Day events at the Performance Center in Greer, SC. We've been running this program for 16 years and for only \$750 a day, you can experience all of the above with your fellow club members and their guests. More information is available at www.NCCBMWCCA.org.

NCC also runs a great High-Performance Driving Education program if you want to use your own car to learn these skills at Summit Point. And for new drivers, don't forget our Street Survival program for your teenager. Once again, information is located on the chapter website.

Many thanks to Mike Renner for driving up from South Carolina to give our members Hot Laps at Chapterfest 2019. Mike is a driving instructor at the Performance Center in Greer, SC. He has been racing for 36 years and instructing for 27 years. Many National Capital Chapter members know Mike from his past attendance at our annual meetings as a special guest speaker and his many appearances at chapter events, including the Baltimore Grand Prix and last year's Chapterfest. Mike is a regular at many BMW club events throughout the country and regularly gives Taxi Rides at IMSA races at VIR, Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen, Mid-Ohio and Laguna Seca raceway.

He is a true friend of the BMW CCA and devotes much of his time supporting the club and our chapter.

The Performance Center has several driving programs for all skill and interest levels, including a ladies' program and a teen program. More information can be found at: <https://bmwperformancecenter.com>.

By Doug Verner



(Above and Below) BMW Performance Center Instructor Mike Renner provided charity hotlaps in an M5 during the club's HPDE. Photo by Steve Tenney.



Photo by Darby Ashmore.

2019 Chapterfest Tour, May 11, 2019

Story and Photos by Pearl Aliga Jones

Viewing Impressionist Paintings on a Spring Day



A glorious Spring day. Mid-morning start. Colorful roadsides. Twisty roads. Near-zero pollen count. German-engineered cars. Back-riding fun. Claude Monet. Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Savory German dishes. Decadent desserts. Enduring camaraderie.

All of the above manifested themselves in this year's Chapterfest

Tour en route to the NCC's biggest event of the year, 2019 Chapterfest, which was in full swing at Summit Point Motorsports Park in West Virginia.

"No getting up before the crack of dawn" has always attracted a good number of club members to the tours. Twenty-eight participants in 14 cars converged at BMW of

Sterling at 9:30 for a drivers' meeting led by our dynamic tourmeisters, Robert Hopkins and Steven Pera. So enjoyable are our drives that one club member who had already gone to Summit Point that morning decided to drive all the way to Sterling to join us.

The forecast for "periods of moderate to potentially heavy rain"

(Top) Geraniums line a stable farm in Upperville, Va. (Above Left) Two-tone bearded irises aplenty!

did not materialize that day, and it was a pleasant sweater weather at 63 degrees when we started the drive at 10:10am.

We were separated into two run groups. Robert and his 2015 mineral-white metallic M235i led the hair-on-fire group of nine cars, while Steven and his 2008 Daytona gray Audi RS4 headed the show-me-the-scenery group of five cars.

In previous tours, I made up a third one: the I-wanna-stop-and-smell-the-flowers-and-take-photos-at-any-given-time group, along with a hesitant cohort, my husband Walter. But this time, he decided we would hang with the second group. The robust and delicious fare at Bavarian Inn was beckoning him, that is why. In fact, at one point, he pointed at the GPS and said, "We should have gone this way." I reminded him we were on a tour,



(Above) Members patiently awaiting the start of the tour. (Below) No fun until we sign those waivers.

where the twistier and more remote the roads, the more exciting the drive! I heard him mutter, "Be still, my stomach!" (I must admit there is a downside to stopping to smell the roses — you lose your group and end up driving all by your lonesome.)

Flowers of varied hues lined the meadows and dotted the countryside. In full, showy bloom were azaleas, alysiums, poppies, mustard flowers, hydrangeas, salvias, geraniums, rhododendrons, and bearded irises.

Keeping pace with the second group, I settled for admiring the flowers in a blur, akin to viewing Monet's and Renoir's impressionist paintings of flowers and landscapes, but presented on gargantuan

canvasses al fresco! Now, that's my definition of en plein air paintings!

It was a fun, high-flying driving with no roadblocks to speak of, except





(Above) A bevy of Bimmers in the tour. (Left) Time to start the trek to Chapterfest! (Bottom Left) Tourmeister Steven Pera's Audi heads the show-me-the-scenery run group.

for several roundabouts and a dump truck taking its own sweet time at a certain point in the first 30 miles. There were several wineries on that stretch along the Aldie-Middleburg, Va area. Wineries, such as Chrysalis, Cana, and Naked Mountain Winery, are part of the Middleburg Viticultural Area. Yes, Virginia, there is a Middleburg Wine Appellation. We could not escape the big placard proclaiming the newfangled global catchphrase and wine hashtag, "Rose' All Day." Banish the thought! We were not stopping for rose'. A mental placard was more prominent: Thou shalt not drink and drive. There was also a bird sanctuary along the way. A few

miles down the road was another delightful sight – that of kindred spirits, a caravan of 15 Miatas going the opposite way.

As always, spirited driving needs a little respite, so at mile 56, we stopped at a Sheetz gas station to stretch and regroup.

After driving a total of seventy-two miles from Sterling, and 2.5 hours later (12:45), we arrived at Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown, WVa. We were welcomed into the Inn's newest dining area called the Brew Pub, which includes a lounge and an outdoor beer garden with a fire pit. It is the home of the new Bavarian Brothers Brewery, where brews are made on site in full view



(Above from Left) The verdant Virginia countryside in Spring. Pink poppies welcome guests to Bavarian Inn. (Below from Left) A blur of alyssums looks like an impressionist painting. The Brew Pub at Bavarian Inn.





(Above) Finally made it Chapterfest!. (Above Right) The Bavarian Brothers Brewery at Bavarian Inn. (Right) Housemade English trifle - vanilla cake, custard, mixed fruit, and sherry. (Below) Longtime NCC member, Geoffrey Young, with fellow members at lunch.

from the dining room. Other specialty brews and cocktails are also available.

Bavarian Inn has been undergoing a renaissance of sorts, and the results are stunning. The Brew

Pub, with its liberal use of glass and steel as well as clean, geometric lines, sports a modernist look; quite a departure from the traditional, European-inspired rooms that dominate the Inn.

A "creative casual menu" is offered in the Brew Pub, and we enjoyed a variety of dishes, from salads and sandwiches to seafood, steak, sauerbraten (marinated beef), schweinebraten (roasted pork loin),





the pleasure of sitting across from one of our longtime NCC members (25 years), Geoffrey Young, he with some interesting stories about his experiences with club events and programs. I first met Geoffrey last year at the holiday party when he won the evening's ///M School grand prize. He has done many HPDE's (High-Performance Driver Education) and joined countless club tours. He especially enjoys the former. He says, "You learn every time you go to HPDE." Locate him at club events, and he will regale you with stories, starting with where he obtained his cosmos-black 1998 E36 (Martha's Vineyard) and how he restored it. He will also caution you against buying a car that was sitting by the sea with parts corroded by sea salt.

Lunch took two hours, and at 2:50, we headed out to Summit Point, eagerly anticipating the Chapterfest afternoon activities. Those of us participating in events drove there directly, while others continued on the tour for another 44 miles. All told, we covered 166 miles in 6 hours with a leisurely

lunch in between. We followed the tourmeisters' list of 11 instructions to a T. (May I suggest a No. 12? Eat a hearty breakfast so your stomach and GPS do not collude to dictate the shortest route.) We were definitely courteous and considerate drivers, living up to our moniker as "Good Ambassadors of the NCC BMW CCA."

We joined our fellow chapter members and guests in enjoying the activities at Summit Point. The weather continued to delight us. There were a few sprinkles, but they were most welcome. They tamped down pollen...and enhanced the

impressionist patina of flowers basking in the countryside.

Thank you once again to our warmhearted tourmeisters, Robert Hopkins and Steven Pera, for leading us by example and good humor. They showed remarkable dedication in spending many hours plotting the routes, doing dry runs, and fine-tuning the directions, all with the singular goal of providing us with a fun tour, one so befitting the special, signature NCC event called 2019 Chapterfest.

wiener schnitzel (breaded veal steak), and German sausages: weiswurst (veal), knackwurst (beef), bratwurst (pork). Desserts included apple strudel, black forest cake, German chocolate cake, chocolate torte, English trifle, and Bavarian nut ball. Everything was outstanding. It is no wonder Bavarian Inn is one of our club's favorite pit stops.

Lively conversations always accompany our club lunches. I had



(Top Left) Tourmeisters Robert Hopkins and Steven Pera speak to tour participants. (Left) Crispy, fried "avocado fries" – fresh avocado wedges, tomato salad, cilantro emulsion. (Below) Tourmeister Robert Hopkins with Perlita Jones. The room behind them is the Brewery.

(Below) Tourmeister Steven Pera ready to roll with precise driving directions and a walkie-talkie.



Traditions

BY John Hartge

PHOTOS John Hartge
Jim Gerock
Dave Roach

Mid-America 02 Fest



Who wants to drive their 45- to 50-year-old car halfway across the country and back in late April? Apparently 76 BMW 2002 aficionados wanted to. That's how many BMW 2002s participated in this year's "Mid-America 02 Fest" in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. It was a record attendance for the event that started nearly two decades ago with only a handful of attendees.

Jim Gerock and I traveled from the National Capital Chapter area to Kingsport, Tennessee, to meet three more 2002s for a five-car caravan across Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas countryside. Mike Pugh, acclaimed 2002 guru, and his wife, Eileen, led us at fun, brisk when conditions allowed speeds, through country roads, to the host hotel in Eureka Springs. Greg and Colleen Johnson, Dave Roach and Sam Adams completed our team. It was a joy for those of us who knew these cars when they were new and to drive in a group just like in the old days. We did experience a rather jolting moment during the morning in Dyersburg, Tennessee. No, a truck did not crash into the hotel. The loud bang and quick building shake was a 3.6 earthquake. That was a first in my

BMW traveling experience. We wondered if the Mississippi River bridge we would soon cross would be standing. It was.

At the 02 Fest motel, I saw license plates from all corners of the country - Florida, Maine and California. They drove a longer distance than I did. My trip odometer read 2,491 when I got home. That's a long distance to sit in a 2002-era seat, even if it has been rebuilt.

Eureka Springs, in the Ozark mountains, promotes itself as a ride-and-drive destination for motorcycle and car clubs. One of our weekend activities was a drive, dozens of decades-old BMWs, stringing through the hills, to Rogers, Arkansas. Only two broke down! Ever been to a restaurant that



serves only grilled cheese? Rogers has one, Hammontree's. Yummy. 17 sandwich choices are available, or invent your own grilled cheese

Most of the country's foremost authorities on the BMW 2002 were present and were put to use hosting 13 tech sessions. Paul Wegweiser, Ben Thongsai, Terry

(Top) 2002s filled downtown Rogers, AR, parking lots. (Above) John Hartge's Polaris 2002, showing off its power.

Sayther, Dave Mason, Jack Fahuna, and Mike Self hosted a general Q&A. We could not stump these guys. The weekend ended with a huge handout of door prizes from a large group of generous sponsors. It's an informal event. Dinners were outdoors in the parking lot, providing more time for socializing among the 2002s.



Bo Black is the main man responsible for continuing the tradition begun 19 years ago by Steve Good in a city park in Hermann, Missouri. As the BMW 2002 ages, there's a resurgence of interest in this iconic sport sedan, and a greater interest in this Mid-America 02 gathering. The 2002, the car that started our crazy cult, is alive and well.



(Above) Time to clean up after the long drive. (Right) Greg Johnson's recently completed totally restored 2002. (Below Left) Parking lot tech sessions were informative. (Below Right) Bo Black, long time event organizer, with his tii with Alpina injection.





(Above) Dozens of 2002s hit the Ozark roads toward Rogers, AR.
(Left) Jim Gerock's tii all cleaned up after the drive. (Below) It was a tight fit for the 70+ 2002s for the traditional group photo.





Vintage with a Passion

By Jim Gerock

The annual trek to The Vintage event in Asheville/Hot Springs, NC brought together a group of various vintage vehicle owners for friendship and fun the weekend of May 18th. We left Alexandria, VA just after 8 am on Thursday with a caravan of eleven cars:

- Marc Caden (2002)
- Kevin Grim (2002)
- Marshall Lytle (2002)
- Dudley Williams (2002)
- Chuck Pompei (2002)
- Manny Nieves and Alex (E30 318is)
- Lewis Zehmer (E30 325is)
- John Francis (E34 M5)
- Jonathan Shiu (E30 325is)
- Peter Grasso (E34 540i)
- Tom Kapikian (E28 535is)

I elected to drive my '69 2002 this year after performing a 5-speed transmission conversion over the winter. Once we traveled out of the Northern Virginia area, the light rain stopped, and we had beautiful driving weather for the remainder of the trip to Asheville.

Life is a Highway Tom Cochrane sings in his opening lyrics:

*Life's like a road that you travel on
When there's one day here and the next day gone
Sometimes you bend, sometimes you stand
Sometimes you turn your back to the wind*

Photos by Jim Gerock and Jonathan Shiu



(Top) Author Jackie Jouret talks with Mike Self about his 1969 2002. (Above) Our group of eleven at the Sierra Nevada Brewery.

We added two more to the pack on the way down: Clay Weiland in his Bavaria and Adam Armour in his 8 Series. Clay's car was a relatively new purchase, so he had to perform some last-minute repairs and parking lot brake and cooling fan emergencies. As in previous years, we stopped for an early lunch at the Crazy Greek Restaurant in Chesterfield, VA then continued to our destination of The Clarion and Fairfield Inns in Fletcher, NC. Grice Mulligan arrived in the crowded parking lot at the Clarion after driving solo to Blowing Rock, NC to purchase a used 5-speed transmission.

Friday morning, we attended the opening of "The Passion" event at the CCA Foundation Headquarters in Greer, SC which celebrated 50 years of the CCA. The exhibit had an assortment of BMW's that were selected based on long term membership and "passion" for the club. Additional NCC members I ran into were John Hartge, David Roach, Kourosh Farshadfar and Andy Perahia. After the



event, three of us (Marshall Lytle, Jonathon Shiu and I) took the back roads to avoid the highway and ended up on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Friday evening, we took the hotel shuttle to the Sierra Nevada Brewery and Restaurant to sample their huge beer selections and share small plates of delicious food.

Since the main Vintage event didn't open until 9AM, on Saturday morning Marshall ("M2"), John Francis (E34 M5) and I exercised our cars on more back roads that ended up in Hot Springs. This year's event highlighted the 5 Series BMW's (E12, E28 and E34 models) with many variations and modifications. Everything from bone stock early E12 sedans all the way up to modified E34 wagons could be found on the field. This year the weather was sunny and very warm and the skies remained clear without any of the thunderstorms we had experienced during past events. As this event has grown upwards of 700 registered

(Above) Marshall and Jim's 2002s at a scenic spot on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Mt. Pisgah. (Right) Our group waiting for our dinner reservation at the brewery. (Below) A highly modified 1985 535 with S38 engine nicknamed "Rusty Slammington" built by Mike Burroughs of StanceWorks.



vehicles, just walking around trying to see everyone and their vehicles takes a while. The field included micro-BMW's like the Isetta and 700's, 1600/2002 variations, Bavarias, E30's, early 6 and 7 Series, 8 Series and of course all the 5 Series models. At the end of the day, our group of thirteen met for dinner at Pack's Tavern in downtown Asheville.

Sunday morning, we headed home taking major highways, stopping for lunch again at the Crazy Creek. When we reached I-95 just north of Richmond, we encountered heavy traffic, so most of us were willing from being in non-A/C equipped old cars. Even though we spent quite a bit of time navigating the highways, it seems everyone enjoyed the trip, wishing this could take place more than once a year. As we spend most of our time sitting in our cars with hectic schedules, taking the routes together makes trips like this worthwhile. Life is certainly like a highway.



(Above) Jackie Jouret speaks with the current owners of Parker Spooner's 2800 CS (Lonny and Lou Ann Shirk). Previous owner Michael Izor to their right. (Left) Marc Caden inspects a beautifully restored sierrabeige 1979 528i (E12) under the shade. (Below) Left-to-right Jonathan, Marc, Marshall and Jim arrived together at the CCA Foundation event.





(Above) Bobby Rahal's Inka orange 72 2002tii on display at the Passion exhibit. This car was also displayed at the 2018 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix/CCA Oktoberfest event.

PASSION: 50 Years of BMW Cars and Community

The BMW CCA Foundation's Museum in Greer, South Carolina opened its latest exhibit "PASSION: 50 Years of BMW Cars and Community" on May 17, 2019 to a sell-out crowd. The exhibit's opening was timed to coincide with The Vintage BMW event occurring in nearby North Carolina, so plenty of folks were already in the area and tickets went quickly. The exhibit celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the BMW CCA and it has assembled a special collection of cars and memorabilia demonstrating the "passion" that has driven our organization to become the largest single marque car club in the country.

It is often said that our events are more about the people than the cars and to that end this exhibit focuses much more on the "passion" our members have for their cars and the car community, rather than the vehicles themselves. *Roundel* writer and former *Bimmer Magazine* editor in chief Jackie Jouret was there, microphone in hand, walking the room and

briefly stopping to discuss each car and in several instances to interview its adoring owner. Jackie has authored the latest exhibit book, *PASSION*, which tells the story of how the BMW CCA was formed in Boston back in the late 1960s and discusses the 22 cars on display.

Some of the highlights of the exhibit include Bobby Rahal's - the Indy 500 winner, BMW dealer, and owner of Team Rahal - Inka 1972 BMW 2002tii. Apparently, Bobby was given an identical car when he went off to college, and he gives some credit to that car for helping him become such a successful driver. After he retired from racing, Bobby asked the Werk Shop to find a similar car and build him an exact replica of the Inka 2002 that he so fondly recalled from his college days. The restoration was completed 15 years ago, but you would never know from looking at it. And, despite his busy schedule, Rahal still regularly drives it!

Also on hand was a car famous enough to have its own name - Rusty Slammington - the car that Mike Burroughs from StanceWorks built over the course of

a decade. It began life as a rather pedestrian 1985 BMW 535i, however, Mike has transformed the car into something that looks more like a DTM racecar designed for a Mad Max movie. Mike stripped the paint from the hood to let it rust, chopped two doors off to make it into a coupe, and then dropped in an S38 race engine that revs straight to 9000 rpm. This incredibly unique Rat Rod E28 is truly striking and has been featured at SEMA and on Jay Leno's Garage. In 2018, Mike sold the car to noted collector Rey Rivera.

There were many other interesting cars on hand, like *Roundel* writer Mike Self's 1969 2002, Former *Roundel* Editor Parker Spooner's 1970 2800 CS (now owned by Lou Ann and Lonny Shirk), and BMW CCA Foundation President Lance White's 1980 M1. The Passion Exhibit will run through January 18, 2020. If you plan to attend the 50th Oktoberfest this fall in Greenville, South Carolina, you should make a point to stop by and visit the Foundation's newest exhibit. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children.

Marc Caden

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The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Autocrossers: Habits Three and Four

By Jack Raymond | Photos by Jaclyn Heck

It's hard to believe that we're already more than halfway through the autocross season. (See the season calendar near the front of the magazine.) You're doing better and better, but there's still more to learn. Let's recap the autocross tips from the last two articles before we move on:

- Leave the car unmodified; run what you bring
- Go to an autocross school or two and as many events as you can
- Focus on training the driver, training the driver, and training the driver
- Dial in your tire pressures by chalking the tops of the sidewalls and experimenting with pressures, judging the results by how much chalk is rubbed away and, more importantly, by your times on the course
- If you're ready to seriously commit to autocross, acquire a set of extreme performance summer tires and a set of OEM-size, lighter weight wheels to put them on. (Tirerack.com is a good source.)
- Get a competition alignment with a little toe-out in front, and dead-neutral toe in the rear (for front-wheel-drive or all-wheel-drive cars) or half the rear toe-in of the factory specification (for rear-wheel-drive cars), plus as much negative camber as you can get with your stock suspension in front, then match that in the rear
- Arrive at your competition event with just ¼ tank of gas so as not to carry excess weight

LOOK AHEAD, THINK AHEAD

Keep looking and thinking around two seconds in front of the car during the entire run - remember, the car goes where the driver is looking

ENTER WIDE, EXIT TIGHT

- Almost all the critical turns in autocross demand a late apex

Think of the course as being a series of arcs, not a series of line segments

What's next? This article is the second of several entitled "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Autocrossers" (with apologies to Stephen Covey). Habit number three is this: IN SLOW, OUT FAST.

I know what you're thinking. "Slow? Slow?!? I don't want to slow down! I'm trying to go fast!" Have you ever entered a corner really hot, and as you're exiting the corner, the car is understeering, pushing, plowing, and you're telling the car "c'mon, recover, RECOVER"? The car is telling you that you entered the turn too fast. Every half-second that you spend waiting for the front end of your car to regain grip is a half-second that you're not accelerating out of that turn. Do that several times over the course of an autocross run and it really adds up. So what should you be doing?

Diagram #1. In Fast, Out Slow, Late Inputs, Jerking the Wheel

Understeer, pushing, scrubbing...

C'mon, recover!

My momentum carried me way out here

Slow down?!
Why would I Ever
slow down?

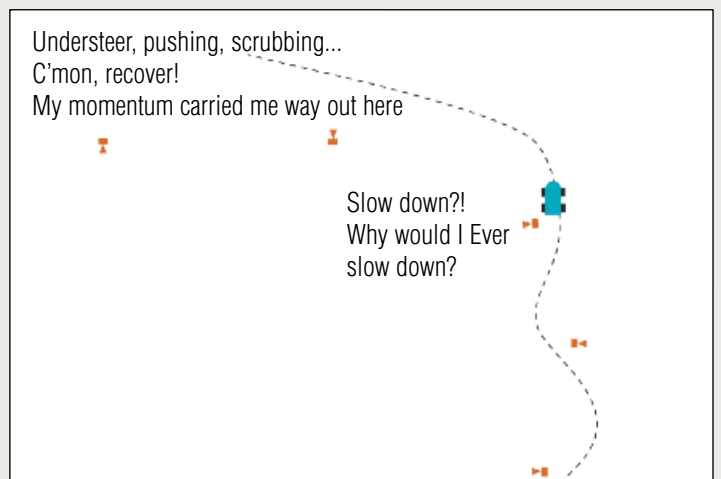
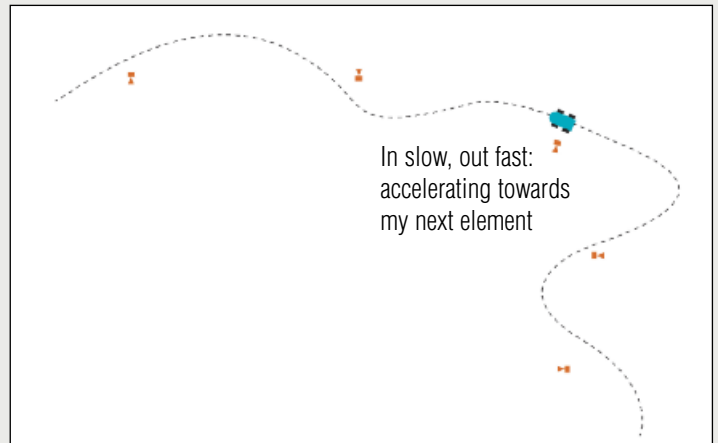




Diagram #2. In Slow, Out Fast
Looking ahead, thinking ahead -> plenty of time to set up the turn and drive smooth



If there's any sacrifice to be made between entry speed and exit speed, then sacrifice entry speed so as to be able to resume accelerating as early as possible and maximize exit speed. Why? Better to be fast for the 50 feet to 75 feet exiting the turn than for the 20 feet at the entry of the turn. Plus, this will help you set up better for the next turn, and the one after that, and the one after that. Entering slower requires self-discipline; you'll need to control your aggression. (Tell yourself "wait for it, wait for it...") The results will prove the autocrossers' adage that "sometimes you have to slow down to get a fast time".

Next is Habit Four: SMOOTH IS FAST. If you watch the top drivers from the sidelines, their runs often don't look that quick. Why? Because their driving is so smooth. This is easier to understand when you imagine the opposite: driving herky-jerky. Jerking the wheel left and right, especially in combination with stomping on the gas or stomping on the brake, unsettles the suspension and unsettles the car. This is especially true with softer factory suspensions. Stomping on the gas pitches the car's weight to the rear. Stomping on the brakes pitches the car's weight to the front.

Unsettling the suspension by being jerky with the inputs is begging for a serious case of understeer or oversteer and loss of car control. In fact, one of the most likely ways to make a car spin is to brake hard (or sometimes even just lifting completely off the gas) and then jerk the wheel left or right. The braking pitches the car's weight forward and unloads the rear suspension, momentarily loosening the rear tires' grip; the sharp turn then tosses that loosened rear end to the outside of the turn (opposite the direction that you're steering), and around she goes. If you've ever been to track day and heard the instructor say that your driving is "too autocrossy", this is why: your inputs are too jerky, and that's asking for trouble at triple digit speeds.

Looking ahead and thinking ahead greatly facilitates driving smoothly, especially with heavier cars (3400+ lbs) with factory suspensions (even factory sport suspensions). As Danny K says, for a heavy car with a factory suspension, do everything early: get on the brakes early, turn in early, get back on the gas early. Anticipate what's coming up, prepare for it early, and give the car's suspension a moment to react to your input and settle down. Then you'll see, quick but smooth is fast.

We talked about competition alignments in the last issue. What about shocks & struts? And a sway bar? And a cat-back-exhaust? If this is still your first season in autocross, remember the first corollary of the effective autocrosser: leave the car alone. If you already have a season or two of motorsports experience under your belt, then let's talk about shocks and struts, since this is still consistent with the philosophy of running in street/stock class.

First, it helps to understand what shocks and struts do. Don't just make changes because you can, or because "it'll make the car ride better / perform better". Make changes because you understand what the car is doing, what you want the car to do differently, and how to achieve that.

Most modern cars are delivered from the factory with a McPherson strut type suspension. What you may think of as the front shock absorbers are actually struts. The rear suspension of the car has shock absorbers. Most Americans use the term "shock absorbers", or just "shocks", to refer to both.

The Brits refer to shocks and struts as "dampers", which is a name that better describes their function. Dampers dampen the oscillation of a spring, returning it more quickly to its resting position. Imagine holding a Slinky (remember those?) vertically (coils down) in one hand and letting go of the bottom three-quarters of the Slinky while holding on to the top portion. What does the Slinky do? It goes down, up, down, up, down, up, a little less each time, until it stops moving, in a somewhat extended position. If your Slinky had a damper (like performing this experiment while holding the Slinky in a bucket of water), it would return to its resting position more





Looking ahead.

quickly, because the damper would slow down each oscillation until the Slinky stops moving. The damper would also reduce the distance of each oscillation of your Slinky. Dampers do the same thing on your car.

Without dampers, your car's springs would cause it to oscillate up and down with every bump in the road, every time you brake and then release the brakes, or every time you turn, initiating body roll. Dampers slow down that action, and return the springs more quickly to their resting position.

Springs perform two actions that your shocks and struts dampen: compression and rebound. Compression is just what it sounds like. When you corner, the car "leans over" to the outside of the turn and compresses the springs on that side. When you straighten the car out, the springs "rebound" back to their original position. Lee Grimes, product manager for Koni, explains that compression is about maximizing tire grip by holding the tire to the ground (not holding the car up). Rebound is used to control the motion of "sprung" body weight, body transitions, and balance (oversteer/understeer). "Sprung" weight means the weight of the parts of the car that ride on the springs, essentially, the body of the car (and you). Unsprung weight refers to the weight of the parts of the car that are not supported by the springs: wheels, brakes, tires, axles. Now we're ready to talk about what to do about shocks, in the context of motorsports competition, particularly in autocross "street" or "stock" class.

If your car came with a "sport tuned suspension" or a sport suspension option, then you may be well advised to leave it alone. Automotive engineers know what they're doing; they've tuned the shocks/struts, springs, and dampers to work effectively together. I've spent thousands of dollars on big-name double adjustable shocks and struts, only to discover that the really didn't perform any better than the sport suspension shocks/struts that came with my car. However, if your car's ride is soft and exhibits substantial body roll when cornering, or significant nose dive when braking, then you may want to stiffen the suspension. In autocross stock/street class, that means stiffer shocks/struts (or a bigger sway bar – more on that later), since autocross stock/street class requires that you retain the car's stock springs.

My "go to" shocks are Koni Sports, also known as Koni "yellows". Koni Sport shocks/struts are excellent bang for the buck, as are Bilstein HD (heavy duty) shocks. You can get better shocks/struts, adjustable for both compression and rebound, but not at the price of the Koni Sport. (Koni Sports are single adjustable: rebound only, and Bilstein HDs aren't adjustable at all.) According to Lee Grimes, Koni Sports are rebound-

adjustable only because that's what you use to manage the motion of the car's body (e.g., body roll and understeer/oversteer during cornering and slaloms) in high-performance driving. Other tips from Lee include the following:

- Springs and sway bars will make a larger difference than shock changes will. Shock changes are more subtle and for finer tuning

- Author's note: the factory springs must be retained in autocross street/stock class, and street/stock class only allows you to change one sway bar: front or rear, but not both. This has dramatic consequences for handling, which I'll cover in the next issue.

- (Street/stock) Classes requiring stock springs and sway bar limitations may need more Rebound or Compression damping than otherwise preferred to compensate or mask other limitations of the stock parts but must stay within tire grip range

- Author's note: another reason why we're talking about shocks & struts first and sway bars in the next issue.

- Fix all handling issues from corner entry to corner exit.

- Corner Entry

- Rear Rebound (Firmer = Oversteer/Rear Rotation)

- Front Compression (Firmer = Better initial Turn-in)

- Corner Exit

- Front Rebound (Firmer = More Understeer)

- Rear Compression (Firmer = Faster power down, back on throttle)

- Run as much Compression as the surface and tire will allow to optimize grip. When too firm, the car will feel unsettled or "skate" over rougher pavement and/or launch off of bumps. Increase Compression until the car gets upset over the largest bump on course then back off adjustment slightly

- Note: Koni Sport (yellows) are not compression-adjustable

- Run as little Rebound as required to keep the car settled and the driver happy

- (Koni specific) Full firm and full soft are useable positions but don't jam the adjusters

- Try making big changes to shock absorbers so the driver can feel a big difference, especially helpful in practice runs. If big changes do not make any change in feel, look elsewhere (spring, sway bars, tire pressure, alignment, differential, shock bad, etc.)

What about that sway bar? And a cat-back exhaust? I'm outta space, so tune in next time for another installment of "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Autocrossers".



Thinking ahead.

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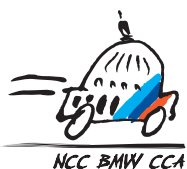
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