

Magazine of the National Capital Chapter BMW Car Club of America

May/June 2020

# der Bayerische



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**Cover:** Gene and Robin Warren write about life with their 2020 G29 Z4 M40i and compare it to their other two cars on page 17. Photo: Gene Warren.

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## BMW Car Club of America

### National Capital Chapter



## President's Message

As I write this article, it is week one of the mandatory "work-from-home" lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic. In the last issue, we talked about our "Change is Coming" campaign for 2020 and boy, did we get it right! Everything fun seems to be cancelled or postponed as we all hope we come out of this with our own health and sanity. Cabin fever already set in since I can't go to Cars & Coffee events, see a movie, or eat at a restaurant. The National Capital Chapter (NCC) already had to cancel several events as states make daily changes to guidance and restrictions in regard to the pandemic and we will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC and local authorities. It's amazing the amount of mis-information that exists when we need serious, unified direction the most. Be assured that our bi-weekly email blasts, club website, and Facebook page will be updated with the most up-to-date information about our events going forward, so please bookmark those sites if you haven't done so already.

Assuming things get back to normal for the summer, we will be full speed ahead with events! Track days, autocrosses, tours, and DIYs are all planned and we'll do our best to re-schedule whatever was cancelled in the spring. Hopefully we'll have some new faces at our annual golf event at Raspberry Falls Golf Club in June. This chapter always has a great turnout for the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix at the end of July, so mark your calendars for that incredible weekend. And for those who need a huge BMW fix, Oktoberfest returns in September in Palm Springs, CA; I can't wait to hit the track at the BMW Performance Center at the Thermal Club!

Finally, I hope by the time you read this, the pandemic is over or phasing down. It's times like these that I have to remind myself that while what we do as a club is important and fun, the safety of ourselves, families, and friends is always more important. That's why we took the measures we did to ensure the safety of everyone because without you, we don't have a club. We can't forget our members are our most important asset and we look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Please make sure we have your correct email address.  
It can be checked and updated at the  
[www.bmwcca.org](http://www.bmwcca.org) website.

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LANCIA LAND ROVER MG MINI

# The Steering Column

Change continues. *dB's* esteemed co-editor, Anna Maripuu, has decided to move on to the next chapter of her life and has stepped down from her position with the magazine.

Anna's name first appeared on *dB's* masthead in the September-October, 2014 issue. She joined Walter Jones as co-editor and helped shepherd the next thirty-two issues to publication. Being a co-editor is a demanding job, but Anna always put great amounts of energy and enthusiasm into *dB*; it was one of the loves of her life. I am grateful to her for inviting me to become her co-editor and for her consistent and unflinching support. We all wish her well in her future endeavors.

Since it's not good for an organization to be one-person-deep in a key role, I began the search

for a new co-editor. When Mike Bevels submitted his latest DIY article (see this issue), Paul Seto said, "Hey, how about Mike?" Mike is an Information Technology professional from Northern Virginia and recently joined *dB* as a writer of various articles. (Sounds familiar...) Like his predecessor, Mike exhibits great energy and enthusiasm for our publication. I reached out to him via email and we chatted over the phone. Of course, Mike had a number of questions about the responsibilities of the role, as should be expected. I am pleased to report that Mike accepted the invitation and is joining *dB* as our new co-editor as of this issue.

So, what's the moral of this story, other than the truism that change is the eternal constant?

Be positive; it'll all work out. It always does. When the call for help goes out, have faith that people will respond, because they invariably do. Our programs, from Autocross to Street Survival, and everything in between, survive and thrive because of this.

Thank you for allowing me to share.

v/r,  
Jack Raymond  
Co-editor

P.S. With regards to dealing with the coronavirus – be smart, be safe, practice social distancing, and remember, this too shall pass.



## Get Your 2020 NCC BMW CCA Calendar Now!

The new **2020 NCC Wall Calendar** is here! It is filled with a wide variety of pictures covering many of this year's events. It is a must-have for every club member and makes a great gift for all BMW enthusiasts! Order yours today.

**The price is only \$25.00** (plus \$10 for shipping and handling if applicable). Order a few, use them as gifts and share them among your BMW friends.



Order at <http://msreg.com/2020NCCcalendar>  
Future event dates are listed as known at the time of printing.



## COMING EVENTS

13th Annual

### GOLF OUTING

Join the National Capital Chapter (NCC)  
of the BMW Car Club of America for a day on the links

June 6, 2020  
12:00 pm

Raspberry Falls Golf Club  
Leesburg, VA

\$80 per person for BMW CCA members  
\$90 for non-members

Space is limited to 32 players - Shotgun Start  
Stroke Play - Competitive and Social Flights  
Skill Prizes - Closest to the Pin - Longest Drive



National  
Capital Chapter



<http://msreg.com/2020NCCGolf>

See <https://www.nccbmwcca.org/event/> for an up-to-date, month-by-month calendar, including information on cancellations and postponements

**May**

- 1-3 **[HPDE at Summit Point, Jefferson Circuit](#)**  
**Summit Point Raceway, Summit Point, WV**  
 Driving Experience is an opportunity for you to learn how your car behaves, and how to manage it, in a controlled environment, at speed, with a qualified instructor accompanying you in your car.
- 2-3 **[M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center](#)**  
**Greer, SC**  
 The Performance Center provides current model ///M cars, instructors, gas, tires, lunch, and a first-class facility for a fun-filled day at the track. Just show up ready to drive!
- 2 **[DIY @ Benchmark Motors](#)**  
**9033-C Red Branch Road Columbia, 21045**  
 The Do It Yourself (DIY) program allows National Capital Chapter (NCC) BMW Car Club of America (CCA) Members to work on their own cars under the supervision of expert mechanics and technicians provided by the DIY Sponsor.
- 9 **[DIY @ BMW of Sterling](#)**  
**21710 Auto World Circle, Sterling, VA 20166**
- 9 **[Spring 2020 New Member Reception/Open House](#)**  
**21710 Auto World Circle, Sterling, VA 20166**  
 Come enjoy Cars and Coffee and welcome our newest club members into the NCC family. You do not need to be a member or a BMW owner to attend this event.
- 13 **[May Board Meeting/Social @ Vicino Restaurante Italiano](#)**  
**959 Sligo Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910**  
 Our Board meetings are open to ALL MEMBERS; this is a great opportunity to meet other NCC members and see what goes on behind the scenes in the club.
- 14 **[May Columbia Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse](#)**  
**6181 Columbia Crossing Circle Columbia, MD 21045**  
 Come join us at our great Columbia location, BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse. With the explosion of craft beers and American breweries, BJ's offers a great mix of award-winning brews and great food. Please note that everyone is responsible for their own food/drink.
- 16 **[2020 XUV Tour](#)**  
**Family Meal, 882 N East St, Frederick, MD 21701**  
 Catoctin State Park, 14707 Park Central Rd, Thurmont, Maryland 21788  
 Join us for a fun XUV focused tour on May 16th. We'll meet for breakfast at the Family Meal in Frederick, MD before heading up to Catoctin State Park for a short hike up to Thurmont Vistas with a beautiful view of the valley. Though we're encouraging folks to bring out their XUVs, all cars are free to participate.
- 17 **[Autocross Test and Tune](#)**  
**Blue Crab Stadium (a.k.a. Regency Furniture Stadium), 11765 St Linus Drive, Waldorf, MD 20602**  
 Need to take your autocross skills to the next level? Want to dial in your car for the upcoming season? This is the event for you! We will have several advanced autocross instructors available to help those who just need a bit more to improve.
- 21 **[May MoCo Social @ Pizza CS](#)**  
**1596B Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852**  
 Come join us at our great MoCo location, Pizza CS in the heart of Rockville. Pizza CS is one of the highest rated pizza places in the DC area, so how can you not join us? Please note that everyone is responsible for their own food/drink.
- 30 **[Autocross Points event #2](#)**  
**Blue Crab Stadium (a.k.a. Regency Furniture Stadium), 11765 St Linus Drive, Waldorf, MD 20602**



**June**

- 6 **[13th Annual Golf Outing](#)**  
**Raspberry Falls Golf Club Leesburg, VA**  
 We will hold our 13th Annual NCC Golf Outing on Saturday, June 6th @ 12pm. Raspberry Falls is consistently rated as one of the best courses in the Mid-Atlantic area and was designed by Gary Player.
- 10 **[June Board Meeting/Social @ Vicino Restaurante Italiano](#)**  
**959 Sligo Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910**
- 11 **[June Columbia Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse](#)**  
**6181 Columbia Crossing Circle Columbia, MD 21045**
- 13 **[2020 Drive and Vine](#)**  
**Basset's Restaurant, 19950 Fisher Ave, Poolesville, MD 20837**  
 Food then driving then wine, what more could you want in a tour! We'll meet for brunch at Basset's in Poolesville MD and then head out into the countryside before ending up at a winery to be determined but likely Black Ankle Vineyards.
- 13 **[DIY @ RevTech Performance](#)**  
**21606 Cedar Lane #190, Sterling, VA 20166**
- 18 **[June MoCo Social @ Pizza CS](#)**  
**1596B Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852**
- 26-28 **[HPDE Summit Point, Shenandoah](#)**  
**Summit Point Raceway, Summit Point, WV**

**July**

- 8 **[July Board Meeting/Social @ Vicino Restaurante Italiano](#)**
- 9 **[July Columbia Social](#)**
- 16 **[July MoCo Social](#)**
- 25 **[Karting Event Number 5](#)**

**August**

- 8 **[Autocross Points event #4](#)**
- 8 **[August Board Meeting/Social @ Vicino Restaurante Italiano](#)**
- 9 **[Karting Event Number 6](#)**
- 13 **[August Columbia Social](#)**
- 20 **[August MoCo Social](#)**
- 21-23 **[IMSA weekend at VIR](#)**

**September**

- 9 **[September Board Meeting/Social @ Vicino Restaurante Italiano](#)**
- 9 **[September Columbia Social](#)**
- 12 **[Eastern Shore Tour](#)**
- 12 **[Autocross Points event #5](#)**
- 15-19 **[Ofest Forever](#)**
- 17 **[September MoCo Social](#)**
- 26 **[Karting Event Number 7](#)**

**October**

- 4 **[Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance](#)**
- 10 **[Karting Event Number 8](#)**
- 10 **[Tire Rack Street Survival](#)**
- 11 **[Tire Rack Street Survival](#)**
- 16-18 **[HPDE Summit Point, Main Circuit](#)**
- 17 **[Autocross Points event #6](#)**
- 24-25 **[M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center](#)**

**November**

- 21 **[Karting Event Number 9](#)**

# BMW CCA CARS & COFFEE AND NEW MEMBER RECEPTION



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



**Location:** BMW of Sterling, 21710 Auto World Circle, Sterling, VA 20166

**Date:** Saturday, May 9, 2020

**Schedule:** 9am BMW CCA Cars & Coffee • 10am New Member/Open House • 12pm Lunch

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



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 May 9 as we welcome our newest club members to the NCC family.



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<https://www.bmwofsterling.com>

Registration link: <http://msreg.com/2020NewMember>



# 37th Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance

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



**Location:** Occoquan Regional Park, 9751 Ox Rd, Lorton, VA 22079

**Date:** Sunday, October 4, 2020 - Rain or shine

Come join us to view some of the area's best-looking German cars at this annual event. We look forward to seeing you and your friends on October 4 when our Club members compete for the cleanliness and condition of their cars. Food and drinks are available.

See <https://www.nccbmwcca.org/event/deutsche-marque-concours/>



# January 2020 DIY at Bimmer Werks

By Mike Bevels

*Bimmer Werks, thank you for being a friend. With your expertise, I've traveled down the road and back again. Your passion for BMWs is true; you're a pal and a confidant.*

Yeah, that just happened. I adapted the theme song from *The Golden Girls* as an introduction to this article. It works though. Amr Alkhateeb, the owner of [Bimmer Werks](#), and his staff of BMW Certified Master Technicians have been friends to the [NCC BMW CCA](#) community by providing service, support, and a shoulder to lean on since opening in 2014. While they have the technical skills and expertise to work on a portfolio of car brands, it should be obvious what brand is their favorite based on their name.

Amr and his wife, Jan, graciously opened the shop on the snowy morning of Saturday, January 18th to host their second [NCC Do-It-](#)

[Yourself \(DIY\)](#) event. The Bimmer Werks facility is extremely clean, well organized, and provided the perfect setting for this event. Beyond their fantastic shop located in Beltsville, MD, Amr and Jan's passion for BMWs is evident when looking at their collection. Currently Amr's favorite personal car is his E39 M5, which features a

breathtaking custom interior. Jan's favorite is her X3, also sporting a beautiful custom interior. When I asked Amr to identify his favorite customer car, he spoke of a number of cars, including a supercharged E38 7 Series and E39 M5, but he eventually settled on the i8 parked at the front of the shop during the DIY event.



(Top) Bimmer Werks provided a spacious, clean, and organized facility for this NCC DIY. (Above) Amr, Michele, and Jan replace the water pump on the 2002 325xi.

To kick off the morning, Chris Wootten, the NCC DIY Chair who organizes and coordinates these events, spoke about upcoming chapter events and discussed the schedule for the day. Chris then turned it over to Aneek Roy, a DIY veteran, who delivered the rules-and-safety briefing to those in attendance. Work started promptly after Aneek's briefing, and throughout the day Amr and the DIY veterans were extremely friendly, helpful, and patient while providing guidance and assistance. Everyone else followed suit and spent the day getting to know their fellow DIYers and lending a hand where needed. In addition to those registered for the event, it was great to see a number of other BMW fanatics and NCC members, such as our Vice President James Laws, stop by and enjoy the event.

The group completed numerous jobs. I flushed the brake fluid on my 2015 328xi Sports Wagon.





(Above) Brian Montgomery changes the fuel filter on his 2011 535d.



(Above) Chris Moody flushes brake fluid on his 1997 M3 while work continued on the 2002 M5 and 2002 325xi.

Amr walked me through proper lift procedures, set me up with a power bleeder, and gave me some great tips along the way, making this a quick and easy job. Using a nearby lift, John Hewes brought his 2000 Porsche 911 and performed a transaxle fluid change. John laughed that you can buy a specific (and probably expensive) Porsche tool to measure the oil level, which should be 11mm down from the drain plug, or you can simply bend and insert a paperclip to check the oil level. Chris Moody used the club's power bleeder to flush the brakes on his 1997 BMW M3 with high-temperature brake fluid. [The NCC HPDE season](#) will be here before you know it, Chris! Kevin Voelling brought his recently acquired 2013 BMW M3 so as to install new spark plugs. Brian

Montgomery completed a fuel filter replacement on his 2011 BMW 535d.

Michele White overhauled the cooling system on her 2002 BMW 325xi. Unfortunately, after getting the cooling system back together there was a noticeable coolant leak. Michele and others took the cooling system back apart to find the replacement water pump hadn't sealed correctly. Amr was able to get a second replacement water pump delivered to the shop in a short period of time allowing Michele and the group to get the cooling system back together by the conclusion of the event.

Chris Parente replaced the spark plugs and boots on his 2002 BMW M5. Chris and I joked that after the plugs were changed on that beautiful S62 V8 engine you could

really hear the difference. Joking aside, routine maintenance such as the fluid changes, filter changes, and spark plug changes performed at this event keep our cars performing at their peak, ensuring years of reliable operation.

As with working on any projects, the group encountered some challenges along the way. The group overcame these challenges thanks to the collective experience of Bimmer Werks and NCC members in attendance; they exemplified the spirit of these DIY events. Mission completed! Perhaps a better 1980s television reference as the introduction to this article would have been *The A Team*.

NCC has ramped-up the number of DIY events for 2020. The DIY events are a great learning

experience, a great way to connect with sponsoring shops like Bimmer Werks, and a great way to share your automotive passion with fellow BMW enthusiasts. In addition to education and camaraderie, a nice breakfast and lunch were provided by the DIY committee to keep everyone fueled and on task. Even if you don't have a project for your own car, you can still register to attend and assist others as a "helper", just like Aneek Roy who provided valuable assistance from start to finish.

This was my first NCC DIY event and I'm definitely hooked. Thank you NCC and Bimmer Werks for organizing, coordinating, and making such an awesome event possible!

NCC and Bimmer Werks, thank you for being a friend. Stay golden!

(Below) Chris Parente changes spark plugs on his 2002 M5.



(Below) The first set of cars takes to the lifts after the safety briefing.





# NCC's 2020 Annual Meeting and Banquet

By Jack Raymond | Photos by Marc Caden

National Capital Chapter held its annual meeting at China Garden Restaurant in Rockville, MD on Saturday, February 8. The event exceeded my greatest expectations; while it was promoted as an “annual meeting”, I would have described it as a banquet, with a meeting thrown in for good measure.

During the planning phase, the goal was to sell 125 tickets to the event at \$75 each. Whew, a tall order, or so I thought. We actually had 140 people attend the event; it was jam-packed.

After a whirlwind of activity with setup, registration, name tags, waivers, selling raffle tickets, and finding a seat, the event opened with a slideshow and music memorial to our late friend, Phil Cummings. Phil was an active leader in NCC's Do-It-Yourself program; we will

miss his energy and enthusiasm and his smile. We are grateful to have had him in our lives, and we are grateful to his wife Theresa for attending the banquet.

Next, Paul Seto gave a “State of the Club” address, reiterating the recent message that “change is coming”. Paul reviewed the club's finances (where the money comes from and where it goes), and addressed the increase in annual dues from BMW CCA. As Paul mentioned, financial realities drove the decision for *der Bayerische* to “go green”, which I think will actually be a good thing, resulting in a better user experience for the reader.

Following that, our chapter officers for 2020 were sworn in. As before, they are as follows: Paul Seto - President; James Laws - Vice President, John Walker - Treasurer,

and Robert Hopkins - Secretary.

Our first guest speaker was Lothar Schuettler. A photograph of Lothar and his 328 roadster appeared in the January-February 2020 issue of *dB*. He is a local Maryland resident and a lifelong BMW enthusiast. Among his many BMWs have been a 1956 502 Cabriolet, a 1958 502, a Z1, a Z8, a 1972 3.0 CS, a 3200 Bertone CS coupe, an E28 M5, and a couple of motorcycles - any of which would be the jewel of most enthusiasts' collections. Lothar's greatest claim to fame, however, may be his restoration of his 1937 328. As he tells this story, the 328, his most expensive purchase, actually arrived in boxes as a bunch of parts. He then spent seven years painstakingly restoring every part and assembling it back into a perfect

BMW 328 roadster. He did such an amazing job that the car won Best In Class at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in 2016; quite an accomplishment. This is no trailer queen, despite its rarity and value; Lothar drove this car on the track at the Spartanburg O'Fest. Lothar loves collecting and restoring cars, and says that he is fortunate and grateful to have made a living with BMWs all his life. We all enjoyed being regaled by Lothar's tales, and aspire to have his energy, enthusiasm, and passion when we approach the octogenarian mark.

Mary Snyder and Chris Wootten gave a talk about the DIY program, particularly our Ladies' DIY events. What is DIY? A Do-It-Yourself is a regularly scheduled NCC activity at which the participants meet at an automotive service sponsor's shop



(Opposite Page) It was a packed house at China Garden in Rockville. (Above) 2019 Phil Cummings Volunteer of the Year Jack Raymond (seated, in blue shirt) in front of a slide show tribute to Phil Cummings.

so as to work on their cars themselves. The cars go up on the lifts, the tools come out, the conversations begin, and next thing you know all kinds of projects are underway: everything from oil and filter changes to car diagnostics to

washer-fluid pump replacements. You don't have to be a man to turn a wrench; Mary and Chris are especially proud of the DIY program's expansion into Ladies' DIY events. You don't have to be an expert mechanic either. If you're a novice,

the veterans in the group (and often the shop representative) are happy to offer help and advice. Look for our upcoming events at <https://ncc.motorsportreg.com/calendar/>.

Gordon Kimpel gave a brief overview of NCC's HPDE program.

For those unfamiliar with the NCC HPDE program, HPDE stands for "High-Performance Driver Education". NCC runs three (3) HPDE events a year, all held at Summit Point Motorsports Park in West Virginia (about 90 Miles

(Below) President Paul Seto, Vice President James Laws, Treasurer John Walker, and Secretary Robert Hopkins renew their oath of office.





(Above) Guest speaker Lothar Schuettler regales the crowd with a story about restoring his award-winning 328.

from Baltimore, 70 Miles from Washington, D.C.). HPDE, also known colloquially as “track day”, is not racing. HPDE is an opportunity for you to learn how your car behaves, and how to manage it, in a controlled environment, at speed, with a qualified instructor accompanying you in your car. HPDE will help you become a better, safer, more confident and more capable driver. (It’s a blast; I highly recommend it.) Again, look for our upcoming events at <https://ncc.motorsportreg.com/calendar/>.

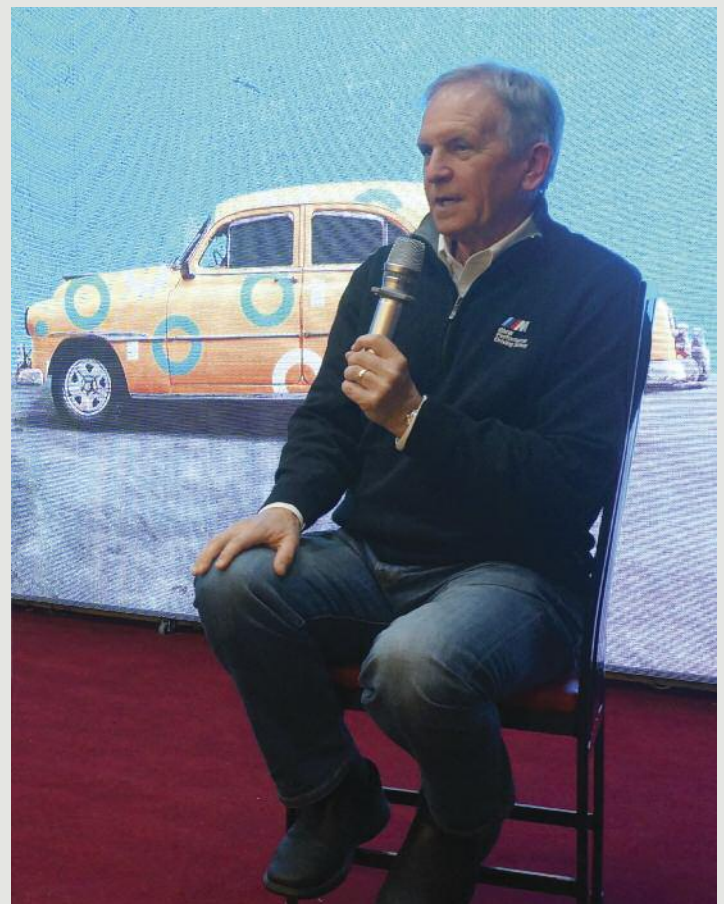
Next came the announcement for NCC’s Volunteer of the Year Award. Paul Seto started out with several honorable mentions, including Robert Hopkins (our Club Secretary and Tourmeister) and Chris Wootten (our energetic DIY program lead). The Program of the Year was HPDE, a favorite activity of many of us, led by Gordon Kimpel. As James made gestures in my direction and Paul described the contributions of the Volunteer of the Year (started writing articles in *dB*, became a co-editor, organizer for NCC’s Street Survival, member of the Autocross Committee, HPDE participant), I realized that his

description sounded familiar. The recipient of the 2019 NCC “Phil Cummings Volunteer of the Year Award” is yours truly. (I’m honored and humbled. Thank you.)

Our second guest speaker was Mike Renner. Like Lothar, Mike is full of energy, enthusiasm, and passion for all things BMW, particularly motorsports. Mike says he loves BMWs because they are well-balanced and provide speed without drama. His BMW journey is an example of how one thing leads to another. Mike lives in Greenville, SC, not far from the BMW Performance Center. As he became a better and better driver, he got noticed by Brian Redmond (yes, Brian Redmond; THAT Brian Redmond; the Brian Redmond who won the Targa Florio in 1970, the 12 Hours of Sebring in 1975 and in 1978, and the Spa-Francorchamps 1000 km race 4 times: 1968–1970 and 1972). Brian invited Mike to accompany him to race day at the track. That turned into Mike’s becoming a racer, which got him noticed by the BMW Performance Center (“hey young man, are you from around here?”), which turned into Mike’s becoming an instructor,

then an international instructor, then a business-person (corporate sales) for the Center.

(Below) Guest speaker Mike Renner offers tips on car control.



While his track days started out in a VW Rabbit, Mike has had the good fortune to drive many high-performance BMW exotics: Alpinas, a 507, an M1, and a 328. His favorite car, though, is the McLaren F1 GTR. The last time he drove it, it was worth about \$9 million. The message was “don’t bend it”. Now that the McLaren is worth \$20M, they don’t let him drive it anymore (not a reflection on Mike’s skills). Mike has also had the good fortune to drive at Indianapolis (yes, THAT Indianapolis) and most recently at the Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona (yes, THAT Daytona), where he gave hot-lap ride-alongs in the new M5 Competition. Mike’s favorite question to passengers is “Do you want to go fast or do you want to squeal tires?”

As interviewed on-stage by NCC’s own Doug Verner, head of our M-Club Days program, Mike

had a number of safety tips for everyday driving. I'll try to recap them briefly here, since they may save your bacon someday:

- Don't drive distracted. Put the cell phone down.

- Learn to recognize understeer. If you turn the steering wheel and the car doesn't respond, but instead pushes and plows and slides in the same direction as before, then your front tires have lost grip, resulting in understeer.

- **To recover from understeer, slow down** and straighten the steering wheel until you can feel the front tires regain grip.

- Learn to recognize oversteer. If the tail of the car starts swinging around and wants to swap places on the road with the front of your car, then you've lost grip in the rear, resulting in oversteer.

- **To recover from oversteer, countersteer!** That is,

turn the steering wheel in the same direction that the tail of your car is sliding. If the tail is starting to swing to the right, then countersteer right. If the tail is starting to swing to the left, then countersteer left.

- If the oversteer began because you lifted off the gas in a corner, which moved the car's momentum towards the front tires and "lightened" (reduced the load) on the rear, then *gently squeeze* the gas so as to put more weight back onto the rear tires and regain grip.

- If the oversteer began because you were too heavy on the gas and broke the rear tires loose, then ease off the gas.

- When recovering from understeer or oversteer, be smooth and gentle with your inputs: steering, throttle, brake. Abrupt inputs are just going to upset the balance of the car even more and make things worse.

Mike said that the single word that sums up his experience is "grateful". For an informative and entertaining bio about Mike, see <https://carsyeah.com/ourportfolio/mike-renner/>.

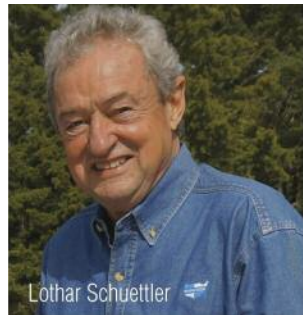
Did I mention that throughout all this, the servers brought food, then more food, and more food again. This was ostensibly a 10-course banquet, served family-style, but I swear there may have been 20 courses, all of them delicious. I am sure that no one left the event hungry. I didn't eat again until the next day.

The event culminated with a number of door prizes. The Grand Prize Giveaway was a free M-School; the lucky winner was Mike Kelly. Jim Lorimer from Dominion Raceway gave away a couple of track days at Dominion; the lucky winners were Dieter Willkomm and Soo-Lynn Van Kirk. Radial Tire donated

a gift certificate; the lucky winner was Al Lepeau. Other prizes included jackets, mugs, t-shirts, Bluetooth earphones and more.

Many thanks to our sponsors: BMW Performance Center (Mike Renner), Craftsman Auto Care (Matt & Judy Curry), Radial Tire (Paul Moorcones), BMW of Silver Spring (Donnie Mitchell), Dominion Raceway (Jim Lorimer), BMW of Annapolis (Bob & Chrissy Hoffman), and Bimmer Werks (Amr Alkhateeb & Jan Habaqe). And many thanks to our event volunteers, the lifeblood of any organization: Billy Dixon, Alicia Lindo, Alaina Mohanco, Steven Pera, Soo-Lynn Van Kirk, Doug Verner, Mindy Villaroman. Last but not least, many thanks for the leadership of our chapter officers: Paul Seto (President), James Laws (Vice President), John Walker (Treasurer) and Robert Hopkins (Secretary).

## Thank You to Our 2020 Annual Meeting Sponsors!



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*Matt and Judy Curry are the proud owners of Craftsman Auto Care.*

## NCC Sponsor Spotlight

# Matt Curry's Craftsman Auto Care

By Mike Bevels

Welcome to the first National Capital Chapter (NCC) Sponsor Spotlight! This is a new series of articles that gives *der Bayerische (dB)* readers a closer look at our sponsors: what services they offer, what drives and inspires them, and their community involvement. In this issue we will learn more about [Matt Curry's Craftsman Auto Care](#).

I had the pleasure of meeting with Matt and Judy Curry, owners of [Craftsman Auto Care](#), at their newest location in Merrifield, Virginia on a bright, beautiful Saturday morning. Craftsman Auto Care was formed in 2017 from the experienced Curry's Auto Service team. There are now four Virginia locations that include Arlington, Fairfax, Chantilly, and Merrifield. All are state-of-the-art

facilities equipped to handle everything from routine maintenance to performance modifications and tuning. Matt, Judy, and Craftsman Auto Care are active sponsors of several NCC programs including HPDE, Do-It-Yourself, and Concours events.

During my time speaking with Matt and Judy, it was clear that they are very passionate about their work. Matt said his favorite things about this job are "helping people and solving problems". Matt is also very passionate about racing. Matt and his [Craftsman Auto Care team](#) are currently campaigning a 2000 BMW 328ci (E46) in the [American Endurance Racing \(AER\)](#) series. Matt and his technicians have been able to take what they have learned on the track and apply it to the work

being done at Craftsman Auto Care. I can only imagine what a series of eight-hour endurance races will teach someone about vehicle diagnostics and maintenance as well as tuning suspension, steering, power, and performance!

The Currys very much believe in "Show-'n-Tell Service". Judy said that customers are always welcome to come inside the shop to see what issues the technicians have found. In addition to having an open shop, Matt gave me a demonstration of their ["Digital Car Care Inspection"](#) software. Each technician has a tablet which they use to write up and photograph issues found during an inspection, building a digital profile of the vehicle. The customer is sent a link to the technician's detailed inspection

report: a well-organized webpage of text and photos that details the issues that need to be addressed. The customer is able to see what the Craftsman Auto Care technicians see. While Craftsman employs ASE Certified Master Technicians with an average of 30 years of experience, they are also training a new generation of technicians that have excellent IT skills as well as mechanical and diagnostic skills. Judy said that one of Matt's strengths is "spotting talent and putting a team together".

Along with their NCC involvement, Matt and Judy are an inspiration and driving force in the community by "giving back" via a number of avenues. Craftsman Auto Care works with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to provide an apprenticeship program for

students. They volunteer their facilities for community events such as First Night Fairfax. They hold [Car Care Clinics](#) designed to educate customers and “take the guesswork out of maintaining their vehicles”. They are involved with both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Additionally Craftsman Auto Care organizes fun community events such as [Cars and Coffee](#).

On a personal note, I am a believer in the “Say Yes!” philosophy discussed in Matt’s book, *The A.D.D Entrepreneur*. As an example, when presented with the opportunity to be co-editor of this magazine I initially considered declining, thinking it would be too much additional work in an already busy life. As evidenced by this issue’s Steering Column, I said “Yes” and I’m very pleased that I did.

I truly enjoyed my time speaking with Matt and Judy. Their positive and passionate attitudes are inspirational. Craftsman can work on any vehicle, whether it be a daily driver, race car, or anything in between. See their website at <https://www.craftsmanautocare.com/>.

Without further ado, please enjoy dB’s interview with Matt and Judy Curry!

*dB: What is the origin story of Craftsman Auto Care?*

Judy: Matt set new industry standards from the late 1990s to 2013 with Curry’s Auto Service by creating new trends in delivering auto repair services. In 2017 Matt (came out of retirement and) created Craftsman Auto Care based on the Curry family principles of integrity and service to others. He is committed to earning his customers’ trust, easing their auto care stress, and ensuring their satisfaction. That’s why the industry’s only 36 Month / 36,000 Mile warranty is backed by the Curry family crest. It represents the values instilled by the late William Curry, patriarch of



**|** *The customer waiting area (Merrifield) would be suitable for a Fortune 500 corporation.*

the Curry family, to always bring one’s best effort to every endeavor with honesty and respect. It represents the commitment that is made to stand by our work and to provide the Craftsman Experience with each visit.

Matt: A good friend of mine came over and said, “Hey, we have this shop in Alexandria.” The timing

was right and I realized how much I actually missed the business. We got the old crew back together to include my managers and technicians; the original people. After the Alexandria location started rolling we opened the Fairfax location. Our old managers and technicians would call us and ask, “Hey, are you hiring?” That prompted us to open more stores.

Right now we have four locations.

*dB: What is your favorite part of your job at Craftsman Auto Care?*

Matt: I really like helping people and solving problems. It’s pretty cool because everything you learn from the track really translates to the shop. It makes you much more sensitive to cars. Solving people’s

**|** *(Below) This well-lit service area is in Craftsman’s Merrifield location.*



problems and helping people is the fun part.

Judy: Actually, it's our life, not just our job. What we enjoy most is the challenge to solve every customer's problem and deliver customer service that cannot be experienced anywhere else. As car enthusiasts, we love our project cars, track events, and supporting all the car clubs. That just makes the "job" cool and fun. We also enjoy being part of the surrounding communities and supporting any of their needs- with our track days, Cars & Coffee events, and other endeavors. Matt has a lot of pride in being the best, saying "yes" to all of our customers' needs and making a positive impact wherever he goes. New to our company is the training of the next generation of managers, leaders and technicians. We are excited to start a training and apprenticeship program this year.

*dB: What services does Craftsman Auto Care provide?*

Matt: We do everything! We have the expertise to diagnose, service, repair, and maintain everything in your vehicle. Our services include, but are not limited to: diagnostics, high-performance modifications and tuning, suspension, brakes, tires, routine maintenance, and hybrid and electric vehicle services. We also do all of the hard stuff that other shops can't do or won't do. We have twelve master technicians in the company. We have the best equipment. We consider ourselves suspension-and-steering experts. That's an area I really enjoy. Also, we can add horsepower, we can code, we can program, we can add big brakes -- we can do anything. A lot of it, especially performance modifications, translates from the track. We have over thirty years of racing experience and that really helps. We can work on your race car, your tow vehicle, your trailer, and your wife's car or your



*(Above) This beautiful new M4 CS is the latest addition to the Currys' stable.*

husband's car. Sometimes it's the wife that's the racer.

For a full list of services please check out the Craftsman Auto Care website (<https://www.craftsmanautocare.com/services>).

*dB: What is your favorite customer car or shop project? Favorite personal car?*

Matt: One of my favorite projects was for Fred, a really good customer of ours. He had a BMW 528 -- an '85 maybe. We gave that car a total restoration: interior, suspension, exhaust, wheels and tires, and just a complete mechanical restoration I think I even got it painted for him. He still has that car to this day and it's still on the road

twenty-two years later. That was one of my favorite projects just because he loved that car and he was so happy with the work. That was a pretty cool project.

That 430 Ferrari was probably one of my favorite personal cars. My Q7 for everyday driving. And for a race car, that BMW with the upgraded brakes. I love sorting race cars. I've built four race cars for myself over the years from scratch.

Judy: When people ask me, "If you had a million dollars what car would you have?" I say, "I don't need a million bucks to drive my dream car. I'm already driving it. I love my 2009 BMW 335i. The handling is just so tight and responsive."

*(Below) The Craftsman Auto Care E46 race car at the February 2020 AER race at Road Atlanta. Photo by Rudy Archuleta.*



*dB: What NCC programs and activities do you support?*

Matt and Judy: We support and sponsor many NCC events including DIYs, Tech Inspections, Track Support, HPDE Instruction, and Classroom Instruction as well as sponsoring other NCC events.

*dB: Given your involvement with NCC, what is your favorite NCC event?*

Matt and Judy: That's easy -- any event that involves the preparation for the track and being at the track! So that includes all of the ones we mentioned above!

*dB: Matt, I understand you wrote a book, "The A.D.D. Entrepreneur". What are the key lessons-learned that you would share with an aspiring entrepreneur?*

Matt: Learn your industry from the bottom-up. Embrace your weaknesses because they could also be your superpower. Outsource what you're not good at and focus on doing the stuff you excel at. And lastly, say "YES"!

*dB: What is your favorite movie in the car, car-chase, heist, or racing-related genre?*

Matt: I really like "The Italian Job". When they were racing the MINIs that was fun. "The Fast and Furious" series is also cool. When you're dropping cars out of airplanes -- that's cool.

Judy We also liked "Ford vs Ferrari". That was the most recent movie we saw. They did a really good job I think portraying what it was probably actually really like -- and that was pretty cool.

*dB: Thanks so much for your time!*

Matt and Judy: You're welcome!





*Proof that the BMW engineers did their job.*

# Why My Family And I Will Always Drive BMWs

By James Chew

During my sophomore year in high school, my English teacher assigned us a task dreaded by any student – select a poem from the textbook, memorize it, recite it in front of the class, and be prepared to provide an interpretation. To this day, I remember my anxiety as I walked that long journey to the front of the classroom.

The poem I selected was “*Auto Wreck*” by Karl Shapiro. Published in 1942, it was Mr. Shapiro’s commentary on the dark side of America entering the age of personal mobility. The line I most remember was “Cancels our physics with a sneer”. Films like “*Red Asphalt*”, showed to my high school drivers’ education class, illustrated the deadly consequences of auto crashes, making that point clear. The irony was that machines made so strongly and sturdily would be deadly to their occupants in a collision.

Fast-forward about 42 years later - I’m part of the I-95 morning commute to Washington, D.C., driving my 2012 135i convertible. As is common, for no apparent reason, traffic suddenly stops. My vehicle, as well as the ones in front of and behind mine safely come to a stop, leaving plenty of room between us. As we patiently wait for our commute to resume, the most dangerous scenario occurs: a vehicle that was well behind us, traveling at high speed, hits the vehicle behind me, pushing my vehicle into the one in front of me. Within milliseconds, for the drivers and passengers in four vehicles – all thinking it would be a typical beginning of the workweek – the world changed.

Reviewing the photos of my now-totaled 135i; it seems to be a miracle that my passenger and I were the only ones who did not

require immediate medical attention. Relatively speaking, we were unscathed (we didn’t even experience the “next-day soreness” that is associated with vehicle collisions). The others involved were not so lucky. I suspect that this was because we were the only ones in a BMW.

In the early 1990s, I visited the BMW vehicle development center. During that visit, I spent a fair amount of time with the structural engineering group. Our time spent together was chicken soup for my mechanical engineering soul. One of the most interesting topics we discussed was occupant safety. The objective for the BMW engineers was to design a structure that would isolate the occupants from the impact loads, while maintaining the stiffness required for a quality assembly and “Ultimate Driving Machine” vehicle dynamics,

while still having enough compliance to yield the benchmark BMW ride quality.

The physics of collision is that of momentum transfer. When one object hits another, it transfers its energy into that other object. Vehicle structural engineers use that fundamental understanding of collision physics to design vehicles that isolate the occupant from the collision impact loads.

The second law of thermodynamics tells us that there is no such thing as a “perfect” collision, i.e., not all of the energy from object 1 will be transferred to object 2 (that’s the reason why we don’t have perpetual motion machines). In practical terms, some of that energy from object 1 will be lost to sound and heat. The structural engineers use these principles in their design.

The physics to which Mr.

Shapiro was referring clearly showed that isolating the occupants from the forces of a collision was not a high priority for vehicle designers of the 1940s. Many may not remember that vehicle seat belts were not made mandatory until the early 1960s; I wonder how many of us remember the 1960s era public service TV commercials that encouraged the use of seat belts. Back then, there was a widespread false impression that it was much safer to be thrown clear of the vehicle during a collision or that a person could appropriately brace themselves during a collision to avoid injury.

As the vehicle structural engineers gained a much better understanding of collision physics, especially the loads that unprotected occupants would experience in a collision, they used engineering principles to transform their view of a vehicle from being a monolithic solid object to a system of springs and masses.

For BMWs, the components which comprise this complex system of springs and masses range from the molecular level (the molecules of the materials used in the structure, powertrain, and suspension), the microscopic (the grain size from the heat-treated metals used in the aforementioned areas), and the macroscopic (seat design, seatbelt tensioner design, competent crumple zone placement, competent "break point" design).

By the way, the airbag deployment is an action of last resort. While the airbags are designed to quickly push one against the seat as the seatbelt tensioners are applied, the force is the equivalent of being punched in the nose.

From my recent experience, it's clear that the occupant-isolation design worked very well. The seatbelt tensioners gently held us in the structurally sound, ergonomically designed seats. The loads from the severe rear and front impacts were transmitted to components that surrounded the passenger compartment, with metal panels crumpling, and brackets and mounts breaking to dissipate the energy. The vehicle electrical system was immediately shut off and the fuel tank spill avoidance systems worked as designed.

The only leaks from my 135i following that collision were from the coolant and windshield washer system.

Within moments following those two impacts, my daughter and I looked at each other and our surroundings. I pushed the BMW SOS button (the BMW Assist had already been activated) and we both unbuckled our seat belts and rushed out to help the others. Later, it occurred to both of us that our doors opened easily. Upon further inspection, I noticed how all the front and rear structural, suspension, and powertrain components crumpled or broke in order to isolate the passenger compartment, including the doors, from the impact forces. The interior was still in the showroom condition that one would expect from being owned and cared for by an obsessive BMW enthusiast (I know, that's redundant).

So Mr. Shapiro, collisions between modern vehicles no longer sneer at physics; rather, they embrace it. While my 135i died doing its job, the fact that my daughter and I walked away from a very severe collision is proof of that.

(Below) Rear seat, after the collision.



(Below Left) Rear crumple zone worked. (Below Right) Another look at the rear crumple zone.



# Life with the 2020 G29 Z4 M40i



*A profile shot of the G29.*

**By Gene and Robin Warren (ZSCCA Maryland Area Reps)**

You may have read all the articles, seen all the YouTube videos, and perused all the online postings about the new Z4 M40i (G29) from all the “experts”, but what is it really like? In this article we will give you our impressions of the G29 balanced against our assessment of our 2006 Z4M Roadster (M Roadster) and our 2014 M235i (M235i). All three cars have been driven on the same roads in West Virginia during Hard Charger events. Hard Chargers are comprised of serious driving on challenging, tight-radius, back-to-back curves with occasional long straights. These roads are exceptionally smooth and usually have very little traffic.

The following overviews of the M Roadster and the M235i are a good starting point to understanding our perspectives on the G29.

The M Roadster was purchased in July, 2007 with only 1,800 miles on the odometer, and it currently has 137,000 miles. It is essentially a stock vehicle with the exception of upgrading to Bilstein B5 shocks and replacing all the stock bushings with

urethane bushings. All other “routine maintenance” is up-to-date. The M Roadster was our “learning” car, and as we drove it on more and more challenging roads, we became more comfortable with its handling characteristics. The end result: we became quicker and safer.

We ordered the M235i in February, 2014 and took delivery of it at the Performance Center in Greer, SC that July. After I retired in July, 2016, it became my “hot rod”. New springs and bump stops from Dinan were installed that resulted in lowering the front by ½” and the rear by 1”. A lower control-arm monoball kit was installed along with Dinan front and rear sway bars. Furthermore, a Dinan Stage 2 engine upgrade along with the performance exhaust were installed. In short, it is one well balanced “rocket”. All this and it’s still a comfortable daily driver. (These upgrades were Robin’s idea, by the way.) “This car leans lots more in the curves than the M Roadster” translates to “let’s hot-rod the car”.

Our general impressions of the 2020 G29, as compared to our M Roadster, are as follows:

- It is physically bigger than the M Roadster (its direct comparison).
- It feels heavier.
- There is more room in the cockpit area.
- The trunk is larger.
- There are lots and lots of electronics.
- It has plenty of horsepower and torque.
- The brakes are strong and I have felt very little fade during hard, technical driving.
- The transmission is very intuitive with smooth and quick downshifting and upshifting
- The transmission four modes: Echo, Comfort, Sport, and Sport Plus.
- It has a heads-up display.
- The fit-and-finish is good.
- The sounds coming through the exhaust are intoxicating, especially in Sport and Sport Plus modes.
- Lowering and raising of the top is accomplished quickly.
- There is less noise in the cabin with the top up compared to the M Roadster.

## **Driving impressions**

### **Transmission:**

The G29 only comes with an automatic transmission, while the other two cars are manual six-speeds. Thus, it is a little difficult to objectively compare this aspect of the cars. Once the G29 was properly broken in, I began to play with both the paddle shifters and the gear selector to change gears. It is very easy to get the RPMs up quickly. Upshifting and downshifting require more attention when driving this car at “spirited” velocities on technically demanding roads. It is easy to come in “too hot” in the curves. The M Roadster and the M235i both provide that more controlled, visceral feel that comes from manually shifting the transmission. The Dinan engine upgrade on the M235i provides more of a feeling of quickness than the M Roadster, but not as quick as the G29.

With the car in Sport mode, we were very pleased with the G29’s automatic shifting. It seems to rev-match when slowing for curves and then it holds the gear to maximize the power when coming out of a

curve. We will still continue to play with, and gain experience using, the paddle shifters though. When daily-driving or in heavy traffic, comfort mode and the automatic transmission are great. However, Gene always puts it in Sport mode.

We understand enthusiasts' emotional need for a manual shifter. However, time marches on and technology keeps getting better and better. Just being able to concentrate on the road ahead is a plus, especially at fast speeds through curves.

### Suspension:

The G29's suspension is very settled, and it seems to absorb harsh road conditions very well. To us, it feels very neutral when driving spiritedly on fun, curvy roads. The M Roadster is a bit livelier in this regard. The M235i is more settled, but not as settled as the G29. At high speeds, the M Roadster feels less settled; it is affected by the road surface more, and

begins to feel lighter. The M235i isn't as affected by poor road surfaces. The G29 just hunkers down and feels more sure-footed. Since all of our cars are running the latest Michelin Super Sport tires, I can't attribute this feel to the tires. I think the additional weight of the M235i and the G29 add to the more-settled feeling, however, both have more torque than the M Roadster. Power overcomes many issues! In addition, the heads-up display makes it easier and safer to ascertain your speed.

### Engine:

The G29 has more horsepower and torque than the M Roadster and nearly as much horsepower as the M235i. It feels as though you have to rev the engine more in the M roadster and the M235i. The G29 seems to be more effortless in its power delivery. It's as if the power is just lurking and waiting for its chance to burst free. For those interested in gas mileage,

the G29 delivers more miles-per-gallon in echo or comfort mode. You pay at the pump for using Sport and Sport Plus.

### Brakes:

The brakes on the M Roadster and the M235i are both exceptional and up to the task of meeting the demands we make during "spirited" driving. I don't think we have ever said, "Gee, I wish I had more braking". With all the hard-driving we have done in the M Roadster, the front pads and rotors were replaced at 92,000 miles. The rear pads and rotors were replaced at 102,000 miles. The pads on both the front and rear still had 5mm of wear left. The M235i has only 52,000 miles and hasn't required new pads or rotors. Time will tell with the G29. It will be interesting to see with its heavier weight, automatic transmission, and four driving modes how the rotors and pads will hold up.

### Exhaust:

Let's face it, many of us car enthusiasts who like to drive cars as they are meant to be driven love to hear the sound of the exhaust as we rip through the gears. We love to blip the throttle through tunnels and underpasses. I've felt that the M roadster could use a more masculine-sounding exhaust. Unfortunately, many of the solutions I've seen weren't satisfactory. They were too raspy or resulted in drone in the cockpit. The Dinan exhaust on the M235i gives you that addictive sound. The G29's exhaust is intoxicating with its blips and burbles, and even more so in Sport and Sport Plus modes. Gearhead heaven!

### Cockpit:

The G29 has the most luxurious cockpit of the three cars. The controls are logical and within easy reach. The cupholders are laid out differently than the other cars and are an acquired taste. Both the netting behind the seats and the pass-through opening to the trunk are convenient. The standard-equipment mesh windscreen, which can be easily removed for cleaning, does a great job of reducing wind noise and turbulence. The infotainment and i-drive systems are fairly intuitive. Our good friend Terrance, who is very tall, can actually sit in the G29 with the top up and have room for a racing helmet. With the top down his line-of-sight isn't over the top of the windshield as was the case in his previous Z4 Roadster. We are trying to convince both him and his wife Angela that they should get one. I imagine them in a white G29 with red interior and black wheels.

### Top-down Driving:

The clear winner on this one is the G29. It is so much quieter at speed in the cockpit than the M Roadster. You can more clearly hear the stereo and more easily carry on a conversation. In the M Roadster you have to yell to be heard. When using the M235i in a ZSCCA event, Robin requires that the

(Below) Gene and Robin on the Back of The Dragon in the M235i.



windows be down and the sunroof be open; she wants that convertible feel. In that configuration, the M235i is noisier, and there is wind buffeting, as you would expect.

#### Service, Issues, and Dislikes:

The G29's oil and filter were changed at 1,202 miles and the rear differential fluid was changed at 4,000 miles. I believe in changing the break-in oil soon after the required break-in period is complete. It was hard to keep the tachometer below 4,000 RPM during the 1,200-mile break-in period! Moving forward, this car will have oil and filter changes every 5,000 miles.

There has been only one recall for our G29 and that involved the back-up camera. Our car did not exhibit the problem stated in the recall, but the software was upgraded nonetheless.

We had paint protection film applied to the whole front end, hood, and front panels. The car has also been ceramic coated, including the wheels. The windows and windshield have been tinted.

There is a bit too much technology in the G29 for our taste. It says something about the number of

technical goodies on a car when the manufacturer requires the dealership to have a BMW Genius (the poor soul that explains how to do things to us troglodytes) explain to the buyer how to use the new car's features. When is enough enough!?! Every driving mode, (Eco, Comfort, Sport, and Sport Plus) allows you to set your own preferences, in addition to the default factory settings. The Tech is what BMW refers to as the mechanic. The Genius is the one who knows the electronic gizmos.

The Intel-car system is a pain. When you cross or touch a center line you find yourself wrestling with the wheel as it tries to bring you back into your lane. You can imagine how disconcerting this is when trying to pass bicyclists or pedestrians. Even more so when driving quickly on curves. Robin figured out that signaling disengaged this feature momentarily. This feature might come in handy on long interstate drives. We typically disengage this feature when starting the car. It's funny that there are all types of customization options for this car, but you have to turn off the Intel-car system every time you start it.



(Above) Robin in the G29.

Robin prefers the smaller M Roadster and M235i over the G29. It's not as intimate. I like them all. Each car has a different feel and provides different challenges.

#### Future

We took the M roadster to ZFest in Branson, Missouri wanted for nothing. The only hiccup on that trip was that the horn decided to come on and stay on. The other six cars

in our convoy parked on the other side of the parking lot while we found the right fuse to pull. We'll be driving the G29 to Colorado for ZFest 2020 and expect to carry a small cooler and, for the first time in years, we'll each have our own suitcase.

With regards to future performance upgrades, I will be watching the Dinan website to see if they offer some goodies for this car.

(Below) The G29 in West Virginia during Hard Chargers.





(Above Left) The G29 visits Davis, West Virginia. (Above Right) M235i Suspension Kit. (Right) Z4M Roadster in West Virginia. (Below Right) Z4M Roadster at the Tail of the Dragon Hard Chargers

### Conclusion

The G29 is a technology-laden vehicle. It is very different from the M Roadster. It is a well-balanced and very competent as a "true sports car". It is an easy car for daily driving, but can be driven hard when desired. Last Labor Day weekend at our Cumberland Cruize event, Terrance noticed that I was slower in and out of the curves. However, the next day I was just as quick as I am in the M Roadster and in the M235i. Two weeks after the Hard Charger event, I was even quicker. It was nice seeing that extra-legal speed showing up on the heads-up display! I expect to be even quicker as I gain more familiarity with the car.

In short, the G29 isn't the M Roadster, just as the M Roadster wasn't the Z3. It doesn't come with a manual transmission, yet it is still a fun car to drive and drive hard. Would we buy one again? Sure! Life's too short to drive dull cars and bemoan how things used to be. See you on the road and through the curves. Godspeed.





# A BMW Performance Center Delivery Story

By David Costanza

I do not remember whether it was *Car & Driver* or *Automobile* magazine, but I know that it was last spring when I read that the new G2X-based 4 Series would, like its four-door sibling, no longer be available in the U.S. with a manual transmission. While I understand the relentless push toward efficient automatics, as an avowed devotee of three-pedal cars, I found this to be a revolting development. I took this news as a warning shot across the bow: buy now or forever hold my peace. My quest for a new BMW was under way.

Not that there was anything wrong with my 2007 E90 335i. Rather, after 10 years and 100,000+ miles, I was getting ready for something new anyway. I had pretty much avoided any major repair bills but a BMW of that vintage and mileage is a hole-in-the-pocket waiting to happen. That, combined with the impending demise of most manual-transmission BMWs, led me to start searching.

Generally, my car-buying approach has been to purchase two-or-three-year-old CPO BMWs, usually off-lease or program cars. However, finding manual transmission cars amongst this bunch was tough. At one point, my search yielded a grand total of six (!) CPO manual-transmission 3 and 4 Series cars in the entire country that were not black, white, silver, or gray (I like my cars to have a color). There were lots of M3s and M4s, but used ones worried me for a multitude of reasons (have you seen how people drive those things?) and the price point was a bit too high for my wallet.

So, I turned my sights to a new car, something I have only done once,

buying a new 1987 white Acura Integra Special Edition (my predilection for colors came after owning a black 1978 Pontiac Grand Le Mans and the aforementioned white Acura). The “Build Your Own” feature found on BMW’s website is a wonderful tool for new car buyers, one on which you can while away far too many hours playing with colors, wheels, interiors, and options. I narrowed my choices down to a RWD (for its mechanical simplicity) M240 or an M Sport 430/440, with an M340 thrown in for comparison purposes.

Fourth of July week was pretty quiet and there were some good manufacturer incentives available, so I took the opportunity to test-drive the three contenders. Full reviews of these cars are numerous but my twitter-length impressions were as follows: M240 – terrific car but a half-size too small for me; M340 – not a fan of the new chassis and the digitization of BMW; 430 – almost, but not with a four cylinder; 440 – ah, just right!

Unfortunately, once you specify the M Sport line, the color choices are limited to white, black, gray, and two blues that, while very nice, did not appeal to my eye: Estoril and Snapper Rocks. I figured I was going to have to special-order the car anyway (number of new RWD 440 manuals nationwide that are not black? zero), so I asked my Client Advisor about special ordering colors. He checked with BMW USA and they told him I could get any non-M specific color I wanted as long as I willing to pay (don’t ask).

I think BMW does blues better than any other manufacturer, and I had seen a number of them that I really liked, my Monte Carlo 540 and



(Top) Another angle of our new ride in front of the BMW museum and (Above) our new car in its glass garage before delivery.



(Above) *The new car! Nuff said.*

Monaco 355 among them. But the one that caught my eye was Tanzanite. Unfortunately, the dealer did not have any Tanzanite cars on the lot. I was just about to head home to re-evaluate my options when a car carrier pulled up that just happened to have a Tanzanite X5 on board. The bemused but accommodating driver indulged us as we walked around his truck, looking at the X5 from all angles. Once my daughter, Thalia (I brought her along as my resident design consultant and colorist), and I saw that color in person in the sun, and the way it changed hues and tones, I was sold.

The next step was to decide how I was going to take delivery of the car. While I have been to the Welt in Munich and definitely want to do a delivery there some day, a mid-semester trip (I'm a professor at GW) to Germany was not in the cards. However, a long-weekend trip to the BMW Performance Center in South Carolina for the Performance Center Delivery (PCD) program was certainly something my wife Robin and I could swing. So, in early August, I special ordered a Tanzanite Blue, F32 440 M-sport with a manual transmission, black with blue stitching leather, dark carbon trim, Dynamic

Digital display, Adaptive M suspension, Heads-up Display (a life changing option, believe me), and the desired manual transmission, to be picked up at the Performance Center.

Once the car has been ordered, you can track its status online at MyBMW. You see its progress through the build process, painting, assembly, testing, and shipping. I was hoping for real time video of the car but alas, you only get text-based updates. Because special-order colors take a while to get into the production queue, my build started on September 17th and it was ready to go to the port a week later. My Client Advisor sent me the name of the boat and I was able to track my car as it moved from Bremerhaven to Brugge, Southampton, Baltimore, Brunswick (Georgia), and finally Charleston. A few days later, late October by now, the car was at the Performance Center.

The delivery date was coordinated by my Client Advisor and the folks at BMW. We wanted a Friday delivery, the most popular day, so we could make a long weekend out of it. Once the car was being assembled, I booked our one-way flight to the Greenville-Spartanburg airport. We had to register with the Performance

Center, sign waivers (everything with BMW requires waivers – I got a BMW travel mug and had to sign a waiver in case I drank something out of it that burned my tongue [I jest – sorta]), and send them our travel details. The last interaction with the dealer was to actually buy the car, sign the paperwork, and pick up temporary tags. I'd like to say that was a simple transaction, but the finance guy was new, and it unfortunately turned into a typical multi-hour purchase slog. Once the car was "mine," all that was left was the wait.

Of course, the waiting is the hardest part (RIP Tom Petty), but being able to track the car, and the excellent communication and information we received from the PCD program, made it feel like we were making progress and that we would know what to expect.

Finally, the day arrived. After an uneventful flight to Greenville, we followed the instructions to call the hotel as soon as we landed. By the time we made it to the pick-up area, a brand new white X5 was there to pick us up. The driver was super friendly and helpful, describing everything that would happen over the next 18 hours. Because we arrived after 9 p.m., our driver made

sure to let the restaurant know we were there for a late dinner, helped with check-in (the desk clerk quizzed us on the model, color, and all the details), and delivered our bags to our room while we enjoyed a delicious, PCD-specific dinner menu.

After a short night of sleep (who could sleep knowing what was waiting for me just a few miles away?) and a lovely buffet breakfast, everyone taking delivery that day gathered together in the lobby, checked in, and then were driven to the Performance Center. Once there, we were greeted and divided into two groups. The first group went to the factory tour and then took delivery of their cars while our group was directed to a classroom where we met our instructors for the track and off-road exercises.

Following a brief orientation, we went outside where we were shown to cars like the ones we ordered. Our Snapper Rocks 440 had an automatic but otherwise was identical to the one we would be picking up later. Robin and I both participated in exercises including skid pad, emergency braking, and autocross (well, 3/4-speed track driving), allowing us to explore the vehicle's capabilities without putting any actual wear and tear on our new car. With all the braking, skidding, and sliding, I can only imagine what the Performance Center's tire budget is every month. The last track event was a hot lap in an M5 with one of the Performance Center drivers behind the wheel. Having recently retired from roller-coasters and passenger-seat high-performance riding (stupid inner-ear deterioration), I passed on the hot lap. However, Robin, with the iron stomach, gladly hopped into an M5 driven by NASCAR, NASA, and SCCA racer, Allison Bormann. I got a little queasy just watching but Robin emerged with a wide smile.

Next up was a switch to X7s for a drive over to the factory tour. The largest BMW SAV is quite





(Above) Nathaniel Russel House's famous freestanding spiral staircase.



(Above) Appomattox Court House (the building).

luxurious, although I don't quite get the crystal shifter, and served well as our factory-taxi. Our group of six got a personalized tour where we saw X3s and X5s being built beginning to end. The tour was fascinating and our guide was beyond friendly (in fact, everyone in SC was ridiculously friendly, almost irritatingly so), but I will say that the tour in Munich is more linear and you do get to see more stages of the production process there than in SC.

After the tour, we drove to the off-road course where we got to experience the capabilities and technology of the X7s. I thought for the off-road they would switch us to X3s or X5s but no, we ran the course in these 5600+ lb behemoths. The X7s nimbly navigated perilously steep inclines, a water hazard, side-hill driving, and a controlled descent that showed off the big Bimmer's impressive skills.

Lunch ended the first half of the day and we were fortunate that it was the employee Thanksgiving lunch,

so we enjoyed a feast with them. There was so much food and it was so good, I was quite happy that we had done the track driving in the morning. The hot lap could have been disastrous after lunch.

After all this came the main event: delivery of our car. Each car was in its own little glass-walled garage which we could see from the lobby, just waiting for us. We were led to our car by Performance Center Instructor Justin Fouts, got some PCD swag (hats, mugs), and then Justin gave us a bumper to bumper overview of the car. His presentation was thorough and his knowledge was excellent, the antithesis of many a cursory dealership delivery I have experienced (at marques other than BMW of course). He even mentioned how much he appreciated that the car was a manual, saying he saw far too few of them anymore. At the end of the delivery, the door to the front of the garage opened up, the clouds parted and the sun came out (literally, for the first time all day), and we drove off. I might have heard angels singing.

However, the day was not over. We drove over to the BMW Museum to take some pictures and enjoy a quick tour. As an added bonus, anyone who takes delivery of a car that day can park on the museum sidewalk, safely away from other cars and in perfect position for the most picturesque photos. The museum is small but interesting, focusing on

vehicles made in SC. Also worth a visit was our last stop – the BMW CCA Museum, at the time hosting the "50 Years of BMW Cars & Community" exhibit.

When we had finished with everything BMW had to offer, we headed off to Charleston to visit some friends and see the sights. Although the weather was a bit drab and rainy (ok, it was a lot drab and rainy), we enjoyed seeing Fort

Sumter (too windy to travel out there by boat) and historic Charleston. The Nathaniel Russell house was fascinating, and a walk along the river with a visit to the Old Exchange and the City Market capped our visit. The only slight negative was that I had my first passenger in the back seat (that's not the negative) and that was when I learned that BMW stopped shipping 4s (and M4s) with rear floor mats. Really BMW? A \$50 set of mats is going to break the bank on a \$60,000+ car?

We planned a snaking route home, stopping in Durham, NC for an overnight before continuing on to Appomattox Court House to see the site where the Civil War ended. Fun fact: Appomattox Court House (the town) is where Lee surrendered but he did not surrender in the Appomattox Courthouse (the building). The actual surrender took place a few hundred feet away in the McLean House.

After the war, some entrepreneurs bought the McLean house,

(Below) An X7 on the Performance Center off-road course.





(Above) David and Robin in front of the McLean House in Appomattox.

planning on reassembling it in Washington, D.C. and charging admission. Unfortunately, a market crash stopped their plans and the pile of house parts was abandoned. Over the years, many of the materials were taken by locals to build other things. Finally, in the 1940s, the National Park Service bought the land and remaining building bits and reconstructed the house. Due to the pilferage, the only remaining original element of the house is the front brick façade.

After visiting Appomattox, the

only thing left to do was drive home. It stopped raining for the first time since we took delivery of the car and so, on some wonderful back roads that previously served as part of a Fall Tour, I managed to stretch the legs of my new 440. Robin and I meandered our way back to Northern Virginia, stopping at our favorite Charlottesville bagel place, Bodos, for lunch: the best chicken salad around.

Upon returning home, I backed, *\*very\** carefully, into my garage, beyond happy that I had

exactly the car I wanted and that we had enjoyed such a terrific experience getting it. The PCD folks were absolutely wonderful. They offered first class service from start to finish and the fact that the entire experience costs absolutely nothing, other than getting to Greenville, makes it even more amazing.

A coda to the PCD experience: after delivery, they ask you to complete a survey. The incentive to do so is a chance to win a free Performance Driving School. Justin said since they only do a hundred or

so deliveries in the colder months, our chances were pretty good. A few weeks later, I got an email from BMW thanking me for my gift certificate purchase. Not having purchased a certificate, and knowing that having just purchased a new car, Robin had not bought a certificate either, I called customer service. The great news? BMW had purchased it for me as the winner of their November drawing. Looks like we will be headed back to SC!

Having gone through the whole process beginning to end, I have a few observations and tips. First, find a Client Advisor and Finance Manager who have done PCD deliveries before. Their knowledge and experience, guiding you throughout the process, will be very helpful. Second, know that you can special order almost any BMW color, if you like. If you have seen a car in Tanzanite, you'll know why I did.

Third, be patient. I test drove in July, ordered in August, paid in October, and picked up in November. Part of that delay was the special-order color and the fact that the car had to be shipped from Munich. If you are picking up a standard X3 or X5 that was built in SC, the wait is not nearly as long, although it can still be four to six weeks. Fourth, order a manual transmission car. There are too few out there and the only way BMW will keep making them is if we keep buying them. Justin said so.

Finally, do it! It was a fantastic experience all around and I cannot recommend it enough. The chance to design and build exactly the car you want, track its progress, pick it up at the factory, drive on the track, get a tour, and have your car delivered by an absolute expert is an experience not to be missed by any BMW fan. Now, I smile every time I go into the garage – enjoying the experience all over again as I push the Start button.

(Left) Back at home, Tanzanite in the sun.





# Window Tint Can Protect Your Health

Window tinting refers to the process of applying a transparent laminate film to a vehicle's glass. When people think about window tint for their vehicle, often the first thought that comes to mind is darkly tinted glass. It is true that you can have a dark tint-job done to your car, truck, or SUV (within the limits imposed by state law), but did you know that there are window films containing technology that can actually protect your health? Over the last decade, many improvements in window film technology have allowed manufacturers such as 3M, Llumar, Huper Optik, and others to create products with incredible features such as significant heat reduction, eliminating harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays, reducing glare, and improving eye health without having to use a dark window film.

## Significant Heat Reduction

One of the biggest benefits of a high quality window tint is heat reduction. There are products on the market that can block up to 97% of the sun's infrared heat. Better window tinting shops generally offer a heat lamp display that lets

you feel the difference with these better films. When you go from a clear piece of glass to a basic window film and finally to a high-heat-reduction window film, it's almost like the heat lamp is turned off. So, what does that mean in terms of

reduction window film you can significantly reduce those high temperatures inside your car.

## Eliminate Harmful UV Rays

The next big gain is a 99% reduction in the sun's harmful UV rays.

puts you in a bubble that protects your skin. Your valuable BMW interior is also protected from fading and cracking, which is another plus.

## Glare Reduction

Have you ever driven on a dark, rainy night when the glare from oncoming traffic makes it almost impossible to see? How about driving on a bright day, especially in the early morning or at sunset? What if you could add a window film that could reduce glare by 55%? Well, now you can. Pretty cool, huh?

## Eye Health

In several studies, tinted windows have been shown to reduce eye irritation in people with cataracts or who have had cataract surgery. It also helps reduce the eye strain and headaches that come with it. I am not a doctor, but the simple explanation is the tint helps stop the breakdown of proteins in your eye, thereby improving your health.

## MS and Lupus Patients

Do you know someone who has MS or Lupus? Studies have shown that

## By Mark Miller, Tech Talk



(Top) 2009 M3 with 3M 40% Tint. (Above) 2019 430i with 3M 35% Tint.

practical use? We are affected more and more by extreme heat as we age. On a typical sunny summer day we dread opening our car door since we are going to feel that rush of hot air. Now with a high-heat-

This is an incredible benefit to everyone in the vehicle. Unfortunately, skin cancer is affecting more and more people every year. Adding a quality window film to every piece of glass essentially

tinted windows help benefit MS and Lupus patients by reducing the extreme temperature shifts that happen when getting into a hot car, truck, or SUV in the summertime.

**No Need to Darken the Glass**

The final piece to this puzzle is choosing the visible light transmission (VLT) level, or darkness level, of the window tint. The good news is that many manufacturers of quality window film offer a virtually clear film that retains the benefits mentioned above. Some of our clients choose clear film, some choose

slightly darkened film, and some get it noticeably darker. The choice is yours. So if you would like all the benefits, but don't want a (heavily) "tinted car", no worries!

A quality tint shop can explain the available options and features of window tinting to you. My contact information is in my bio at the end of this article and I am glad to help in any way possible. Nineteen years ago, when I first started offering window tint, it was used as a draw to get people into our store. Nowa-days it is one of our major categories due to all its



(Above) 2015 M235i with 3M 50% Tint.

positive benefits. Experiencing Porsche, Ram, and Honda have these benefits in my tinted BMW, made a believer out of me.




Mark Miller is the owner of Westminster Speed & Sound, an award-winning vehicle customization facility in business since 1969. He is the Head Judge in the Mobile Electronics category for the SEMA New Product Awards, a two-time board member of the Mobile Electronics Retailers Association, and an 11-time recipient of the Top 50 Retailers Award by ME magazine. Mark is an avid BMW enthusiast and owner. You can reach him at mark@WestminsterSpeed.com or by calling his store at 410-857-5300.




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## My 2020 M240i convertible



# The Difference Between Wants and Needs

By James Chew

Like most car enthusiasts, I go “fantasy shopping”. With the BMW website, I’ve configured countless numbers of vehicles that “for sure” I’d buy when the opportunity arises. Whether it’s the certified pre-owned section of that website, or browsing Craigslist, BMW dealer websites, or eBay, I’ve “saved” a number of vehicles that would be “the one” when it was time to replace my 2012 135i M-sport convertible.

Reviewing the “for sure” list, similarities among my choices are immediately apparent. A majority of the vehicles on that list are fully loaded M vehicles, though there were also a fair number of low-mileage manual-transmission cars. Some made the list as “second vehicles”, others as “daily drivers”, some as “if I only had one car”, and some, of course, if I were to again live in Southern



(Top) Just delivered at BMW of Alexandria. (Above) Wouldn't it be nice if BMW STOPPED using engine covers?

California. My list was developed with a hearty fantasy about how I would handle the price, payment, and long-term maintenance, and because my 2012 135i M-sport was fully paid for and had extremely low mileage, I could indulge myself with these unrealistic fantasies.

Then the unthinkable happened – I HAD to replace my 135i (see the article, “Why My Family and I Will Always Drive BMWs”, also in this issue). That fantasy list was updated and then reviewed realistically through the lens of price, payment, and long-term maintenance.

The 6 Series and 7 Series were quickly eliminated. My experience with the long-term maintenance costs for both models served as a reminder as to why the prices were so low after the manufacturer’s warranty and free maintenance period expired.

The M vehicles were carefully reviewed and considered. To me, these vehicles are the epitome of the saying, “you knew the job was dangerous when you took it”. My many evaluations of M vehicles always ended with a smile on my face. However, due to the immaturity shown by some street drivers, as well as the condition of the Washington, D.C. metro area roads (for my 135i, I had to replace two bent wheels, thanks to the potholes in the local roads), the temptation for an M2 Competition was tempered.

You all know how much I enjoyed both the i3 and i8. However, the lack of charging facilities in the Washington metro area, as well as the aforementioned road conditions, forced me to eliminate them from my list.

Then there was the matter of new versus Certified Pre-Owned (CPO). Due to the financial considerations, my preference was for CPO vehicles - let someone else absorb the depreciation incurred since the time when the car was new. In addition, I did manage to locate the 4 Series with the manual six-speed transmission that I had previously reviewed – it was now a CPO vehicle at a mid-western BMW dealer. However, BMW’s elimination of the CPO complimentary-maintenance program was enough to give me pause.

So, armed with a fair insurance settlement and a good number of discounts and price incentives, I went new-car shopping.

The final decision was whether or not to buy another convertible.

Born and raised in Southern California, I had developed a perception that owning a convertible anywhere but California was ridiculous. Having been back in the D.C. area for over six years, though, I now appreciate how a convertible can help one fully appreciate those few days of “perfect” weather.

I was still waffling on whether or not to buy a convertible when I toured the Petersen Auto Museum in Beverly Hills. One of the display vehicles was a classic, first-generation Porsche convertible. The placard stated that it was

on loan from a family. It reminded me that my daughters very much enjoyed my previous four BMW convertibles, so the decision was made.

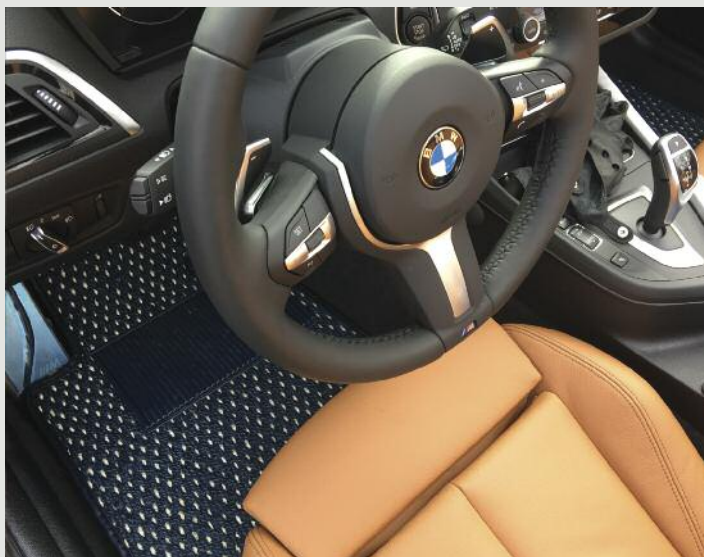
If BMW offered an M2 convertible, making that final decision would have been a bit more challenging. However, when considering whether the selected vehicle met all the criteria on my “want-and-need” list, the 2020 M240i convertible became the only choice.

Even with the unforeseen need to buy a car, the purchasing experience was quite delightful. Scouring a 100-mile radius, no BMW dealer had an M240i convertible in stock with the equipment options and colors I desired. (I hope the trendy blacked-out grills, blacked-out wheels, and carbon-fiber trim soon run their course). I also did not want x-Drive. So, I had the pleasure of custom ordering my new vehicle.

My time “fantasy shopping” allowed me to quickly and easily navigate the “build your own” section of the BMW website. I considered European delivery, but work and family realities didn’t make it practical. The real pleasure, though, was using the BMW website to track the vehicle assembly and delivery process.

After using the web site to “build” a 2020 Estoril Blue, Cognac leather 2020 M240i with Premium Package, fully adaptive LED headlights, Harmon-Kardon sound systems, bi-color wheels, and 8-speed automatic transmission (I know, but this car will go to my daughters), I sent those specifications to BMW of Alexandria, we negotiated a price, and the vehicle was ordered.

When ordering a new BMW, the “Owner’s” tab on the BMW website is a wonderful tool to track the progress of your build. You’ll see when the order was placed, your vehicle’s assembly status, its shipping status, and the date when your vehicle is ready for delivery. It also provides useful educational videos about your new vehicle.



(Top from Left) CoCo mats give the car a classic BMW feel. Guess BMW took the American desire for cupholders to heart. (Above) Loving the muted gun-metal look on the badging.



| (Above) If this doesn't make you want to drive then you should go away and look at flowers.

It seems that spending time getting familiar with your new BMW is now a standard part of the delivery process. That's a good thing – the amount of technology and new features in the eight years since buying my 135i is simply incredible. And while I was quite happy with how my M240i convertible was equipped, I did decide to add blue

and white coco mats. I first saw these mats at Vasek Polak BMW in the "Neue Klasse" vehicles. Since I had intentionally ordered my M240i to be as "classic" as possible, only this type of floor mats would be appropriate.

While using all the new features is quite fun, we buy BMWs for the driving experience. It should be

a nice surprise that 2020 M240i convertible excels in this area. My official "first drive" was the 200-mile round trip from Fredericksburg to James Madison University. To say that I was delighted would be an understatement.

I planned to pass my 2012 135i M-sport convertible on to my daughters. The unforeseen event

that resulted in my having to replace that vehicle proves that the adage, "the best laid plans..." is true. Now I plan to pass this 2020 M240i convertible on to my daughters. However, if the unforeseen again happens, I'll again have an updated "want-and-need" list at the ready.

| (Below) The muted gunmetal grill adds to the aggressive front-end styling.



| (Below) Very attractive rear-end design (yes, that's my dog).







# The Habits of Highly Effective Autocrossers:

## Interview - Jeff Noyes

By Jack Raymond | Photos by AJ Aviles and Jaclyn Heck

Over the last year, *dB* has featured a series of articles entitled “The Habits of Highly Effective Autocrossers”. The series featured tips and techniques for competitive motorsports driving gleaned from years of experience. *dB* now continues that series by interviewing successful autocrossers from the National Capital Chapter of BMW CCA.

We’re pleased to have the opportunity to interview Jeff Noyes, the 2018 and 2019 season champion in NCC’s S1 (Showroom Stock Group 1) autocross class. I’ve spent several seasons watching Jeff tear across the course; I’m impressed. Jeff consistently serves NCC by setting up and testing the course and by coaching at autocross and Street Survival.

*dB:* Tell our readership how and when you got started in motorsports?

Jeff: I’m a little bummed that I didn’t learn about autocross until I was in my forties, but better late than never. In 2006, a friend of a friend invited me to an Audi track day at VIR. I was apprehensive about risking my ride on track, and confused about why I had to join the Audi Club North America when I

owned a Cobb-tuned Subaru Legacy GT wagon, but I joined and made the trek down to VIR with my buddy who had the sedan-equivalent of my car. The day came, and it was chilly. I vaguely remember a conversation in the early morning darkness about tire pressures that left me worried that if I made a wrong choice, I wouldn’t make it home to VA on what was left of them. But eventually I got out there and began to experience what “high-performance driving” could feel like. I was a total noob – didn’t know when to turn in, or how much; did not even begin to comprehend what a traction circle was, or how it related to my ability maintain control of the car (but that didn’t stop the instructor from referring to it), and had absolutely no idea

how far below the limits of the car I was driving, even though it felt like I was going to go flying off track any second. A ride at the end of the day with an instructor in his Lotus Exige left me so puckered I could have used a laxative. The end of every straight had me thinking this was going to be the end of life as a functioning person who didn’t get fed through a straw. I left at the end of the day... mixed about the risk-vs-reward aspect of



(Top) Jeff’s favorite shot - NCC Points Event #1 at FedEx Field, April 2017. (Above) Jeff’s new M2 at Summit Point in July of 2019.

HPDE. Frankly, it kinda scared me and did not inspire me to get right back out there.

Several years later, I attended the BMW CCA Chapterfest at Bowie Baysox (in 2009, I think). I was only going as a spectator to see the cars and check out the autocross event (whatever that was), and no kidding it changed my life, at least with regards to motorsports. Autocross looked like the most fun thing I'd ever seen someone do with a car. I had no idea what it took to get involved, but it just looked like the perfect fit for me - all the dynamics of high-performance driving in a convenient package that didn't require nights in a hotel, a tow vehicle, trailer, or dedicated race car. I think I joined the BMW CCA that day or shortly thereafter and began talking to people and scouring the online forums about what the "best car for autocross" was since I (shamefully) was driving an SUV at the time. Wow - best car for autocross - don't ask too many people that question, or you'll never commit to anything due to all the conflicting help you'll get. Since I had just joined the club in which I saw the participants having all the fun - BMW CCA - I knew it would be a BMW. I didn't realize that my autocross car didn't have to be a BMW in order to participate in NCC's events, but at least that narrowed my choices. I settled on an E36 M3 because I wasn't yet addicted and wasn't yet ready to put a disproportionate amount of income towards having fun with cars, although that discipline has since left me. In retrospect, I couldn't have made a better choice, regardless of budget. The first three years or so, I was in full-on student mode, keeping the car stock while focusing on my own skills, but I never looked back after that Chapterfest. That event hooked me without even being in a car.

*dB: What's your all-time favorite personal car for motorsports?*

Jeff: That '98 M3 is unquestionably my favorite car ever. My autocross

skills grew over time as I "became one with the car". I learned to drive it in completely stock trim. Then I learned to drive it with 200 treadwear tires. Each winter for a few years I put a little money into it: camber plates, coilovers, sway bars, a more aggressive differential, and a better seat and harness to keep me properly seated in it. Handling was always the priority over power. Every upgrade meant re-learning how to drive the car, learning to squeeze out the extra speed made possible by the small improvements. It was such a great car because its limits are reachable within the bounds of autocross driving. You can use all of the car's capability, and that makes it very rewarding on those rare occasions when you manage to do everything just right on the course.

*dB: What were your criteria for selecting your current car?*

Jeff: I'm driving a '17 M2 now - it was my new street car before I started using it for autocross. Because of its originally intended purpose, I wanted something that would be great for road trips but still satisfying for what some call "spirited driving". I wanted Bluetooth and some other creature comforts. Simply put, the M2 was the new BMW that best provided the feeling of my analog M3, but with modern conveniences. I didn't plan on making it my autocross car, but an off-track excursion resulted in the loss of the E36, so the M2 was called in as the replacement. It's a great car, but you never forget your first love. I may go back to an E36 again for autocross if the right situation presents itself. Meanwhile, the M2 is really good in stock(ish) form, but at this point I've yet to really fully exploit its capabilities.

*dB: How did you come to be so involved in NCC autocross?*

Jeff: I jumped in with both feet in the first year, getting to the events early

*(Below) Here's Jeff cornering hard in his beloved E36 M3.*



and not leaving until after the trailer was fully packed up. I just really enjoyed spending time with a bunch of folks that were passionate about the sport and were willing to share their knowledge. I have to catch myself from saying they were a bunch of “great guys”, because our committee and club has never been just guys. There are times when whole families show up with a tent and chairs. I love that. I didn’t actually join the committee for the first three years even though I never missed an event – I just liked helping out. There isn’t one member on the NCC Autocross committee who doesn’t want to help you get faster and have more fun doing it. Who wouldn’t want to be a part of that?

*dB: What tips could you share with drivers who are new to autocross?*

Jeff: First of all, you (Jack) recently wrote a great series for NCC’s *der Bayerische* on the best practices for autocrossing. My advice to novices to find them, read them, and revisit them as you develop your skills over time. (\* See the link below.) Do the same with Ross Bentley’s book on autocross. No one is fast at autocross from the beginning – each aspect of it can be examined carefully and worked on individually if you really want to improve. It’s also fine if you just want to come out and have fun, casually competing with other novices without being too serious about it. Having said that, just work on one thing at a time and the pieces will come together faster than you might think. And unless you really like wrenching as a hobby all by itself, don’t be obsessed with modifying the car too much (except for getting better tires) for at least a season. You’ll be amazed at how many seconds you can knock off your time by improving your line, braking and accelerating in the right places, and looking further ahead. And those “mods” are free. Focus on smoothing out your steering and pedal inputs without backing off on the amplitude of those

inputs. Ask for an instructor at the events and really listen to what they recommend, as well as asking to ride along with some of the committee members. You’ve got to know where the limit is to be able to drive just under it. We build the courses to be safe for you to practice finding the limits, so be safe, but don’t be afraid to push it a little. Understeer and oversteer are part of the learning process and part of the fun.

*dB: What next-step tips would you share with intermediate autocrossers?*

Jeff: Autocross is all about using 100% of the car’s traction for the maximum amount of time possible through the course on the fastest line. I think the best way to find that 100% limit is by bracketing your runs. In other words, to the best of your abilities try driving the course at different levels of aggression. Try driving at 95% of what you think is the limit, and if the car isn’t breaking loose, push harder on the next run. Keep pushing until the car is a little too loose (asking for more than 100% of the car’s capability), then back off a click. Somewhere in the middle, you’ll find the run that is just right. Pay attention to your line and always, always look as far ahead as possible. Many things fall right into place when your eyes look there first.

*dB: And how about tips for advanced autocrossers who are seeking to squeeze out those last few tenths of a second?*

Jeff: The Evolution Performance Driving School helped me tremendously, as did the level II SCCA schools. I’ve always been more “into” the driving than the wrenching, so to me a professional car setup is money well spent. RRT’s work and setup on my E36 was always spot-on. I let them set it up, drove it for a long time without making any changes, then made very small

[\\* \(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NgZSrSP5EF3wD1Ip5ROuRYvL3zL\\_xZw\\_/view\)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NgZSrSP5EF3wD1Ip5ROuRYvL3zL_xZw_/view)

*(Below) Jeff in his white E90 during the NCC AX school at Bowie Baysox Stadium in July of 2013 with his daughter, Hannah.*



adjustments on my own to suit my driving style.

*dB: Any other advice you'd like to share with dB's readers?*

Jeff: Everyone is welcome at an NCC autocross. While there is a hierarchy of car classes, we are all out there to have fun. Speaking for myself,

*(Below) 2018 and 2019 S1 Class Champion - Jeff Noyes.*

I really, really love the variety of vehicles that we get at the events, so show up with whatever you've got. One of my favorite things to see at an autocross is parents taking car seats out of the back to prepare the car for their runs. The other is someone lining up at the start with temp tags still on the car from a recent purchase. It's all good fun.



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