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Happy New Year Michiana Chapter Members, it's Spring and the New Year begins here with fun social events and driving events on the horizon. It's time to dust off that carefully stored Bimmer and come out to the 2012 Michiana Chapter Spring Dust off. This year it promises to be a great event with a fun drive beginning at Harold Zeigler BMW in Kalamazoo and ending at a scenic lakeside location in St Joseph.

The Autocross Season begins the following weekend at the Tire Rack. I can't wait!

During the winter months we have been hard at work on the cars, getting them ready for this autocross season.

Last year was the first year my son Timothy (17 now and soon to be 18) competed in his 1996 328i Manual Sedan. We discovered that there were a few things in need of attention and have been working on remedying those items. We found that both the rear springs were broken on his car and the shocks and shock mounts were beyond their useful life, making the handling really "loosey goosey". We decided to go with a set of H&R Sport springs and



some Bilstein Sport Shocks and began the task of upgrading his suspension.

Timothy was really excited about the cool modifications to his car and he set about changing out the parts. We worked on it together but Timothy did all the real work himself, I took photos, so if my 17 year old can do this then you can work on your own BMW. I do recommend owning the Bentley Service manual for reference and torque settings. Changing the front shocks involved compressing the front strut springs, which is thought to be a very difficult and dangerous task. Not to understate the potential danger, but this is a very do-able task for a home mechanic. The springs can be compressed with a rented spring compressor from a local Auto store, I happen to own a set of basic spring compressors that work just fine if used properly. Having a friend with a lift in his barn was a bonus but this work can quite easily be done without a lift. The car looks a little cooler because it's lowered about 1-1/2 inches now and it also handles better than new.

These upgrades will push Tim's car into a slightly higher competitive class, the same one that I am competing in with my 1989 325i, so the competition is going to heat up a bit. I already have tough competition from my wife Abby, but have now enabled my son to get into the running.... what was I thinking?? Autocross is such a fun family activity!! If you have never tried it you just have to give it a go. No need for all the upgrades, your BMW is already equipped for fun. If you take it to the extreme you might want to upgrade some stuff but just to have fun all you need is a reasonably well-maintained car. We started autocrossing for the first 3 years in a 2000 323i Sport Wagon. People were constantly saying things like "Boy you're really throwing that grocery getter around out there!" It has 177k miles on it now and is no worse for wear because of autocross.



Our Newsletter is sporting 4 extra pages with a fresh appearance, and we hope to provide more valuable articles for our members to read. You could be a part of that. If you have an interesting story and or pictures to contribute, please contact Chris Burd. Check the Event Calendar for a list of other happenings and stay connected on Facebook.

Harvey Nuttall  
Michiana BMWCCA Chapter President.



Search for us under  
**BMWCCA**  
Michiana Chapter

## THE BMW CHROMOSOME

Interview with **Larry Koch**, enthusiast advocate of BMW North America

### What is your position?

As the Motorsport Manager for BMW of North America, I am essentially the BMW enthusiast advocate bringing to US customers BMW's participation in two North American racing programmes – the American Le Mans Series M3 GT programme and the Grand American Racing privateer support programme. I also work with BMW Classic celebrating BMW history in the US with our fleet of historical race cars at vintage races, Concours and club events. As liaison to the US BMW Car Clubs, I maintain a dialogue and implement programmes to foster good will and enthusiasm for all things BMW.

### How long have you been involved with BMW Clubs?

After college, I purchased a pre-owned BMW 2002 tii becoming a club member in 1979. Six years later, I joined BMW working in the Sales, then Marketing departments, always fostering an enthusiast mindset from within BMW. I took over as club liaison in 1998. I have watched a group of passionate vintage BMW owners start the BMW Vintage and Classic Car Club of America, while the BMW Car Club of America doubled in size. Today, both clubs are active, vibrant organisations with over 75,000 members.

### What do you see as the advantages of having a fruitful relationship with clubs and their members?

At BMW, we like to say that club members have a BMW chromosome, making the brand part of their inner being. That is, they are the most ardent enthusiasts and our most valuable customers. Our relationship is symbiotic – we enjoy supporting their fun and they love to tell others about their cars. No other car manufacturer has such a great group of customers ready to expand the owner base and their club membership.

### What does the cooperation with the BMW Car Clubs in America look like?

BMW Clubs in the US are very independent minded. While they enjoy BMW's support and enthusiasm for their endeavors, they want to manage their own programme, as it should be. In the US, we have fostered a very successful "promoter/sponsor" relationship. The club provides opportunities to promote BMW and we sponsor their programmes. There is equal value to each party, maintaining a very friendly but business relationship. BMW of North America values this relationship as good business for both parties and the club enjoys great benefits. Lastly, the club frequently helps BMW with customer satisfaction, hopefully keeping members while BMW keeps customers happy.



### What do you think is the best way you can support clubs?

Using the sponsorship concept, BMW NA supports both the club as a group and its individual members. As a group, we sponsor their annual Oktoberfest convention and "club corrals" at race tracks where BMW competes with the M3 GT and other race cars. The members love the races and they provide a huge BMW presence at race tracks that BMW could not accomplish on its own. For individual members, BMW in the US has for years maintained the "Club Reward" programme whereby members can apply for incentive money on the purchase of their next new BMW provided they have been a member in good standing for at least a year. Members get discounts while BMW maintains a high owner loyalty rate.

### What areas, if any, would you like to improve or change?

There are more opportunities for the relationship to grow which are only held back by available resources from both sides. Clubs are involved in great programmes that require lots of personnel to support. There is only so much either BMW or the club can do at once. The US relationship is very good and only limited by what we can accomplish.

### What do you see as the biggest challenge for clubs in the future?

Two major challenges over the long run: one, as the internet becomes more relevant, BMW owners can communicate online without the need for the typical club publications and programmes. Second, as BMW grows with completely new models and new target audiences, clubs will have to embrace this new breed of BMW owners to grow. Like any business, an inability to adapt to new technology will stagnate growth and in the long term reduces the clubs' importance to BMW.

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### UPCOMING MICHIANA EVENTS

- Spring Dust Off ..... May 12
- Autocross ..... May 19
- Michigan International Speedway Tour ..... June 3
- Autocross ..... June 16
- Autocross ..... July 14
- Autocross ..... August 11
- Autocross ..... September 08
- Fall Color Tour ..... October 13
- Christmas Party ..... December 8

### NON MICHIANA EVENTS OF INTEREST

- Windy City Challenge ..... June 2-3
- Deutsch Marques at Gilmore ..... July 7

### NON MICHIANA DRIVING SCHOOLS OF INTEREST

- Autobahn (Windy City Chapter) ..... Apr 28-29
- Mid Ohio (Northern Ohio Chapter) ..... May 26-27
- Barber Motorsports Park (Heart of Dixie Chapter) ..... May 26-27
- Waterford Hills 1 Day (Motorcity Chapter) ..... Jun 15
- Putnam Park (Hoosier Chapter) ..... Jun 22-24
- VIR North Course (Tarheel Chapter) ..... Jun 29-Jul 1
- Grattan (Windy City Chapter) ..... Aug 25-26
- VIR Full Course (Tarheel Chapter) ..... Aug 24-26
- Octoberfest Mid-Ohio (Buckeye Chapter) ..... Sep 21-23
- Road America (Badger Bimmers Chapter) ..... Sep 28-30
- Grattan (Motorcity Chapter) ..... Oct 5-7
- Mid-Ohio (Buckeye Chapter) ..... Oct 19-21

More information at [www.furrin.org](http://www.furrin.org)

### FURRIN GROUP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Autocross #1 at West Michigan Auto Auction ..... May 12
- Autocross #2 at West Michigan Auto Auction ..... May 13
- Test and Tune Autocross #3 at Cruising Muskegon ..... June 1
- Autocross #4 at Cruising Muskegon ..... June 2
- Presents the Hot Rod Power Tour Royal Purple Autocross ..... June 3
- Autocross #5 at US 131 Motorsports Park ..... July 1
- Autocross #6 at Grand Valley State University - Allendalee ..... July 14
- Autocross #7 at Grand Valley State University - Allendalee ..... July 15
- Autocross #8 at Michigan State University ..... August 4
- Autocross #9 at Michigan State University ..... August 5
- Charity Autocross #10 at US 131 w/March of Dimes ..... September 9
- Autocross #11 at My Auto Import Center ..... TBA

## CRUISING MICHIGAN INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY!

CLUB EVENT (BMWCCA MEMBERS ONLY)

Limited 30 cars. Sunday, June 3, 2012. Drive a few fast laps on the track. This is part of drive and dine event. Leaving Okemos Auto Collection BMW Dealership. I-96 Exit 110 at 8 a.m. For more information contact Barbara Hack, 3860 Mulliken Rd, Charlotte, MI 48813. 517-543-6002 or 517-541-6451. \$20.00 track reservation require per car and number attending lunch.

## MICHIANA CHAPTER MONTHLY GTG (GET-TOGETHER)

If you were looking for a more regular opportunity to connect with other members in your area, the Michiana Chapter BMWCCA holds monthly GTG meetings in our major cities Michigan and Indiana.

GTG's will take place on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH**. These are informal gatherings just to socialize and meet other member, enthusiasts.

The monthly meetings will take place year round in South Bend, Indiana.

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In Michigan they will run from May to September at the Gilmore Museum at their Wednesday night Cruise in on the first Wednesday of every month from about 5:30pm until 7pm or so. (We started doing this last year and it has been growing in popularity.)

*From October to April they will take place in the major cities as listed below:*

**Grand Rapids MI:** October Through April only  
El Barrio Mexican Grill - 545 Michigan St Grand Rapids  
Just east of College Ave. Tel 616 301 0010 Plenty of parking next to the restaurant in their parking lot. El Barrio has excellent Burritos full menu listing available on their website [www.elbarriomexicangrill.com](http://www.elbarriomexicangrill.com)

**Kalamazoo MI:** October Through April Only  
Theo & Stacy's Restaurant Portage - 5225 Portage Road Portage, Michigan 49002 Tel: (269) 345-3000 <http://theoandstacys.com/portage.php>

**South Bend, Niles, Elkhart IN:** YEAR ROUND  
Giannetto's Family Italian Restaurant -14020 Cleveland Road, Granger, IN 46530.

Corner of Cleveland and 331 North. If you are coming from the Toll Road, it is just about a mile south on 331 where the Toll Road dumps out at the Mishawaka, Indiana exit.

*If someone would like to host this event in other areas such as Traverse City MI or Fort Wayne IN please contact Harvey Nuttall at [bmwnutt@att.net](mailto:bmwnutt@att.net) with restaurant details.*

*Event details will be posted on our Facebook Page and on our website.*



## AUTOCROSS 2012

Building on the success on last year's Autocross program, we are expanding our Autocross program in 2012. We will have five events – one a month from May through September.

**THE DATES ARE: May 19, June 16, July 14, August 11, September 8**

Autocross is a great way to enjoy your car and improve your driving skills. Carl's course designs are challenging for experts, yet easy to follow for novices. If you haven't tried it yet, consider joining us for a Saturday of fun competition this year. Our Auto-x crowd is a very friendly, helpful bunch. We'll do all we can to make sure you have a great time!

Novices are encouraged and we have instructors and loaner helmets available. Our events are family friendly and

several folks brought sons or daughters, husbands or wives along to participate. We all enjoyed watching the household rivalries!

There are a few significant rule changes this year. National has issued a new rule that limits us to receiving income from members only (to maintain our non-profit status). You can still bring a guest, but you have to pay for your guest (how you settle up is between the two of you!) Helmets must be Snell 2005 or newer. The website contains all the updated rules, tech form and sample waivers.

To expedite on-site registration, we're going to try optional pre-registration this year. If we can enter most drivers into the computer the day before the event, we can complete registration much faster and get everyone on the course on time. See the website for details.

The cost remains a very affordable \$30 per person, including lunch. All events are held at The Tire Rack in South Bend, Indiana. In addition to support from the Tire Rack, we also receive support from BimmerWorld. Please consider supporting these companies that support us.

If you have questions, please contact Eve Dolenski ([evedolenski@att.net](mailto:evedolenski@att.net), 269-969-7492) or Carl Zmijewski ([carl.zmijewski@gmail.com](mailto:carl.zmijewski@gmail.com))

## GERMAN CAR OWNERS DON'T MISS THIS EVENT!

*The Inaugural Deutsche Marques Event at the Gilmore Museum. All German Auto Owners and Clubs are invited. Strong Dealer Support from German Car Dealers locally. Great prizes to be awarded for many different categories, not just cleanest or shiniest!! Museum will be open and you can show your car for less than the price of admission. Gilmore Museum Entry is \$10, entry for participants who display a German Auto is \$7. Deutsche Marques is a new event for our calendar this year but it is shaping up to be a great fixture for the club. The event is being organized by a committee of Michiana Chapter Members but is open to all German Autos, so if you know someone with a German Auto please invite them to come along. The Gilmore will host the Mad Dogs and Englishmen event the following day, where all the cars will be of British Descent, you could make a weekend of it.*

**GILMORE MUSEUM:** 6865 Hickory Road, Hickory Corners, Michigan 49060.

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