

**BMW Car Club  
of America  
North Star Chapter**



# North Star Bavarian

## February 2012





The BMW M Coupe shown was modified and built exclusively at BMW of Minnetonka.

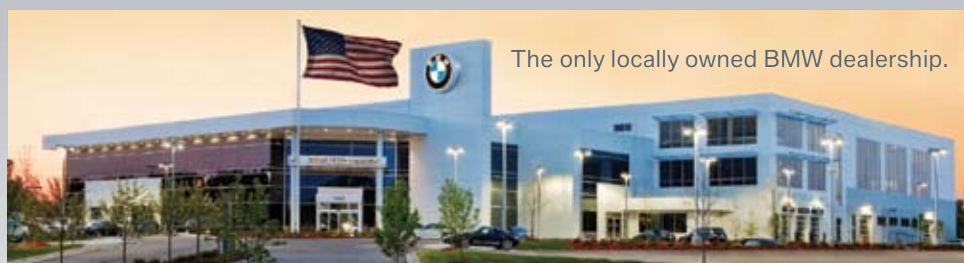


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At BMW of Minnetonka, wrenching on Bimmers is our passion – on the clock, off the clock. That’s why we have the expertise to handle everything from the standard BMW lineup to the mod-stuffed racer you see here. Thinking about what we can do for your BMW? So are we.

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## **On The Cover**

No, kids. It's not summer yet.  
Not even close, really. But we  
can all dream, can't we?



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A Message From Our Board Members Dale Olson

Membership Perspective

Around 1980 I joined the BMWCCA – no space at the time – for several very basic reasons. I had bought a car I didn’t know very much about. I was paying more than I should for maintenance and repairs at the dealership that, quite frankly, I should be able to do myself. Finally, I thought it would be neat to hang around with people who appreciated the same BMW qualities I did.

That was the beginning. I have continuously maintained my membership over the years and now have boxes of Roundels stacked up in the basement, along with chapter newsletters and E3 (Bavaria) special interest group information. What can I say? I just have a hard time getting rid of some stuff.

The local chapter went through a life cycle. It was quite active for a long time but eventually fell out of compliance and thus became inactive. Resurrected under a new moniker and philosophy, the North Star Chapter has continued providing a variety of activities and services for the membership.

Over the last several years the things we all have in common, BMW and its culture, have been evolving. No longer able to be simply classified as just a high-performance sedan company, the product offerings have broadened to the point where there is a BMW built to accommodate a wide variety of lifestyles, needs and wants.

The BMW CCA – there is now a space – is starting to see membership numbers decline. While this may be due to any number of factors, one point stands out: A person will not spend money to belong to an organization which does not provide commensurate value.

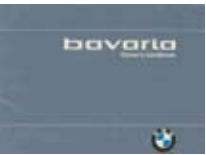
For some the Roundel alone is sufficient compensation. For others, and this is particularly true of our Chapter, the club is one of only a handful of avenues where you can put your daily driver on a race track and really experience some of its capabilities. Others enjoy personal interaction through social events such as our tours, the Garage Door Opener and our new member picnic.

None of these events happen without an individual or three taking the time to actually make calls, push buttons and put it all together. If you have ever said to yourself, “You know, the North Star Chapter should really think about doing...” think about it for a moment: Are you interested in putting that something together?

Though you may find it challenging to spearhead an event, the North Star Chapter has a talented membership and an experienced board who are more than willing to provide support.

It has been said time is the most precious commodity today. A person only has so much time to manage, and spending it in a way that provides a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, as well as the appreciation of fellow club members, can be a real boost to all involved.

Won’t you join us?



Carmudgeon Chronicles Ken Kamstra



Can Minnesota Create a Car-Hating Child?

Think about this: This may be the world’s first breed of “hybrid” youngsters. Kids not giving a damn about cars. While lesser states are enmeshed in a fruitless struggle to save the planet with gas-sipping hybrid cars, along comes Minnesota to conjure up a whole new breed of hybrid people!

It would put Minnesota on the world map! Dare we think that this might overshadow even Al Gore’s fame?

Hybrid people who have no interest in cars? Zombie-like creatures who prefer bikes, busses or trains? “Get real and go easy on the Scotch, Ken,” you say. Well, read on, because some very serious people are working long hours to make it happen.

Minnesota’s very own ex-Governor Tim Pawlenty came up with the idea. He put

together a panel called the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group. The group of more than fifty business, environmental and community leaders had already been hard at work for months. One member calls the task “a really big and complicated puzzle.”

Rumor had it that to create this hybrid child, they had come to a painful conclusion. Toy cars, trucks and any other “zoom, zoom” toys we all remember from our childhood will have to go. No word on how the hapless child will be pacified as his or her car toys are wrestled away from him or her.

Could said child learn to play with Barbie Dolls? What punishment would have to be meted out if s kid or a parent resists? It’s frightening.

The whole sticky mess will be brought

before the state legislature. There, still another group, Transit For Livable Communities, had found a magic formula for quick legislative approval: tax revenue! Drivers would have to start paying to use roads.

I wish they had asked me about all this. I could have saved them a lot of grief. After all, I wrote a book on the subject: It’s Okay To Love Your Car. In it, I quote the famous professor, Dr Erhart Von Geernoggin. He is credited with identifying people who carry the “Auto Immune” gene. It renders them totally indifferent to cars except as appliances to take them from Point A to Point B. I fear Minnesota’s Climate Change Advisory Group was over-populated with Auto Immunes.

Otherwise, possibly they would have known better.

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# 2012 BMW 650i Convertible *Words and Photos by Jim Carlson*

The new 650i Convertible is BMW’s grandest of touring cars. It’s big, comfortable and fast, the three essential qualities of any grand tourer. The 650i is also packed full of technology, luxurious appointments, and a good dose of style. Let’s take a closer look.

The driving experience is what one would expect. The considerable size of the new 650i makes it feel rather wide and imposing on the road, a feeling accentuated by the vast windshield. Lowering the power seats helped alleviate this feeling, but the windshield remained uncomfortably near. Visibility was compromised slightly by the thick A-pillars, likely a necessity in the event of a roll over. Top down, the view behind and to the sides was excellent. Top up, the view straight back was reduced considerably but the over-the-shoulder view was decent, better even than BMW’s 550i Grand Turismo. The 650i’s decreased visibility, however, was somewhat alleviated by electronic blind spot detection. With this feature activated, little amber triangles illuminate on the inner edges of the outside rearview mirrors alerting you of a vehicle along side of you. While such a feature should never replace attentive driving, it is genuinely useful and unobtrusive.

The big 6 is also very comfortable. For the front occupants, anyway. The seats are adjustable in more directions than would seem necessary. Our test vehicle was also equipped with the Cold Weather package which includes heaters for the seats and steering wheel, just the ticket for a top down cruise on a brisk winter Minnesota Sunday morning.

A 6-foot tall human can sit in one of the rear seats while another 6-foot tall human sits in front of him or her. However, they fit together in much the same way a wedge fits under a door. If passengers are smaller in stature and everyone can compromise a little, the rear seats could be used for short

trips, say to dinner or the movie theater. Road trips with more than two should be discouraged.

The suspension is nicely tuned. One of multiple electronic suspension settings, comfort mode allows for relaxed cruising. It does a good job of absorbing road imperfections while still informing the driver of what’s going on. Even in the Sport+ setting the suspension, while firm, remains compliant, disallowing some body roll. Befitting a vehicle of this size, the 650i prefers sweeping corners and long on-ramps to switchbacks and hairpins. The sharp looking 20-inch wheels with performance rubber (optional) allow for impressive grip.

Speed is also on the menu. The now familiar twin-turbo 4.4-liter V8 uses all 400 of the available horsepower to move this big convertible. Acceleration is definitely brisk, with 60 mph arriving in less than 5 seconds. The 8-speed automatic transmission responds quickly and shifts smoothly, ensuring the engine is always ready. Under full-throttle the engine sings a nice, if slightly muted, song. One oddity showed up at low speeds: The exhaust occasionally emits a deep baritone burp, like a phantom bass note played through the speakers.

The driver will not be left wanting in the technology department. Myriad features and settings are controlled through iDrive. Navigation, premium sound, and a heads-up display are just a few of the offerings and should be familiar to many BMW fans. A new piece of technology is the lane departure warning. When activated, the steering wheel shakes if you start to drift out of line. The sensation is similar driving over a rumble strip and provides a gentle reminder to pay attention.

There is also a host of cameras. One in the rear, hidden under the roundel, activates when in reverse and gives a graphical

*more:*







representation of the cars current trajectory on the large dashboard screen. There is also a camera mounted ahead of each front wheel providing a view around corners, presumably to lessen the chance of curbing a wheel.

The interior is trimmed in supple leather and polished aluminum. The design, while a little somber in all black, is inviting and attractive. The instrument panel is a combination of analog needles in front of a digital display, displaying information with crisp graphics rather than traditional gauge faces. The display not only indicates road and engine speeds, but also provides helpful alerts; when popping the hood, for example, the 650i will remind you the engine may be hot. I'm not sure if I should be insulted or thankful.

*more:*





The exterior design is borderline striking. While not as alluring as a Maserati, it is less controversial than the previous generation 6-Series and is a great example of BMW’s post-Bangle styling themes. The look is aggressive and forceful, but handsome. Putting the top up maintains a nice coupe profile, looking slightly awkward only when viewed from the rear.

Unfortunately, all this wonderfulness comes with a few drawbacks. I’ve already mentioned the lack a people capacity. Given the car’s overall size, the trunk is downright puny. It’s not much more useful or voluminous than a Z4’s trunk. Then there is the fuel economy. Despite BMW’s best efforts to increase efficiency of the engine and transmission, weight takes its toll and limits it to an EPA estimated 24 mpg on the highway. In the real world, the onboard computer displayed an average of just over 13 mpg. The driving experience is not overly involving. It is without a doubt a competent machine, but does little to engage the soul. On top of all that, the price can easily break into six digits.

The 650i Convertible’s purpose is not to be a sports car. Spend some time behind the wheel and that much is obvious. It has more tech than one could want, solid performance, all mixed with comfort and luxury. It serves as BMW’s grand touring convertible and excels beautifully in its mission.

Meanwhile, Back at the Wrench... Jonathan Bush

Where Cars Go To Die

Living in California had its advantages when it came to spotting near-extinct species of interesting cars; classics like BMW’s iconic 2002 were almost commonplace. Fiats littered Craigslist and the local strip-mall shopping centers. Less common were the vastly superior Datsun 510s, but they could still be spotted if you knew where to look. Residents can and do use classics as daily transportation. I once lived near a guy in Sausalito with a Jaguar XKE coupe, for example, and by now we’ve all heard about the nut in San Diego with the Lamborghini 400GT sporting over 250,000 miles.

But I don’t live in California any more. I live in Minnesota. Still, there are plenty of classics roaming around, albeit only six months of the year. Cars and Café, the local iteration of the Irvine, California original—Cars and Coffee—brings out all manner of vintage and not-so-vintage iron, from a gaggle of Austin-Healeys to a pride of Magnum P.I.-era Ferraris to a murder of DeLoreans.

How many DeLoreans does it take to make a murder? Four, actually.

But what about cars which are not really classics, but are just, well, older? And what if they were at least somewhat interesting back then, but are only so today due their mere existence? I’m talking about the cars that will probably never be actual classics, but draw the eye because they are still schlepping their way around town. What happened to all of those?

They came to Minnesota to die.

When was the last time you saw a first-generation Ford Escort? I’ve seen two lately. And not rusty, horrible road warts, either; these examples were probably as nice as they were 30 years ago. Which may not be saying much. Except here, it is — the land where plastic can rust.

One of my favorite endangered species is the General Motors A-body from the early 1980s through the middle 1990s. These cars are hardly plentiful, and I’m not as big a fan of the Chevrolet Celebrities and Buick Regals I most often spot. Occasionally I run across a Pontiac 6000, and I consider myself lucky if it’s an uprated SE or STE model.

The 6000SE/STE was the car designed to compete with BMW during the height of the “We Build Excitement” 1980s. A high-output (ahem) 2.8-liter or 3.1-liter V6 motivated the front wheels. Manual transmissions were a little-known special-order item. Tacked-on body kits, alloy wheels (not actually directional, but looking the part) wrapped with Goodyear Eagle GT+4 meats and LED digital dashboards ensured that Pontiac would always come in third or fourth to BMW’s *numero uno* status in a Car and Driver comparison test.

When my parents had an Audi 5000S with a wheezy 110-horsepower five-banger, my friend Reed’s parents had a 6000SE station wagon that would roast those Goodyears all day long. It didn’t have the digital dashboard or the steering-wheel buttons, but it did have a center console and bucket seats — flat, horrible, wobbly bucket seats with less bolstering than a sidewalk.

But I don’t care. I’m a child of the 1980s. The soft spot that makes me crank up the Psychedelic Furs and wistfully recall my crush on Ally Sheedy has a spot for cars which, quite frankly, are just trash — but cool trash. And some of this coolness lives on in Minnesota. True, most of the examples have rust holes big enough to put your head through, and many have shed most, if not all, of their body kits. But the fact that they exist at all makes me warm inside.

Ofcourse,forscientificresearchpurposes, I quickly scanned the local Craigslist to



see how many Pontiac 6000s showed up. We have a 1991 6000 LE sedan, a boring example with a front bench seat and those non-directional directional alloy wheels. But we also have a 1991 SE with the very rare all-wheel-drive package. This one sports the cheeseball STE-style body kit as well as the bucket seats and center console. \$2,000 and it could be your winter-beater, a poor-man’s poor-taste E30 325ix.

Strange examples of cars you don’t really care about, but whose existence is strangely calming, abound in these parts. A circa-1983 Dodge Diplomat I recently spotted landed somewhere between octogenarian cruiser and ex-cop car; it sported neither a vinyl-covered roof nor dog-dish hubcaps. The 1968-ish Lincoln Continental Mark III certainly had a vinyl top; I’d have been disappointed if it didn’t. It also had the scabs and scars of a car that had seen many a cold season.

Why do I bring up any of these cars? Because at this time of year, I am not able to drive my classic BMWs. Sadly, I still have to get to work, and daycare, and our friends’ garages on cold winter nights, where we huddle around our adult beverages reminiscing about our warm drives in the country while summoning brief moments of clarity to adjust valves and refurbish interiors.

BMW rustproofing began sometime around late 2005, and so we hope our beloved Bavarians don’t come here to die. If they happen to live in Minnesota and venture out year-round, however, they do die slow, painful deaths from the bottom of the doors on up. Strangely, E30s and E28s seem to rust less, as a species, than the later E34 Fivers, or E32 and E38 7 Series. E36 3 Series dissolve if you salt your French fries at McDonald’s.

That’s why the real BMW enthusiast will use a Mercedes-Benz, with seat heaters, for a winter beater.



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## The June 2012 North Star BMW Performance Driving School at BIR is right around the corner!

The club will have our annual Spring Performance Driving School Friday, June 1st through Sunday, June 3rd. We will be spending the entire weekend driving the competition short configuration.

Friday will be reserved for instructors and advanced drivers (with approval); Saturday and Sunday will be available to all drivers.

There are several additions and changes to our BIR program this year. Instructors will have a new pricing plan beginning with this event. Please see the registration website for details.

Complete detailed event information is available on our homepage and via the mass e-mail sent out to club members. A North Star BMW CCA Performance Driving School is a fantastic way to learn about and experience your prized car on the track with experienced instruction provided. We hope you join us this May for the fun!

**Registration will be open soon!**  
**<http://www.northstarbmw.org>**

### *Common questions about our program:*

1. Do I need a BMW to drive at this event?

No. We accept all makes of cars but cannot allow certain body styles such as convertibles, targas, vans, and most sport utility vehicles. We do have a list of specific SUVs allowed at the school – check our website for the list or contact one of us.

2. What can my under-18 kids do at the event?

We do not allow persons under 18 years old to participate in instructor rides on the track. Conditions and time permitting, we do offer lunchtime low-speed touring laps during which we do allow children to ride along. Children may enter the classroom, paddock areas and surrounding areas of the site. Our hotel, the Comfort Inn & Suites Rapid River Lodge, has a water park available to hotel guests. This year there will be no additional charge for hotel guests who wish to use the water park.

3. Does my car insurance policy cover me driving on the track and is there additional insurance I can purchase to cover me for the event?

Each insurance company may have different policies towards driving events at race tracks. Our driving event is designed to be a performance driving school, which means there is no competition, no in-car timing and no racing. We make it clear on our website our program is a driving school; instructors are in the car with students, there is a classroom component and we drive at our current abilities. Our goal is improvement of driving abilities through classroom education and in-car instruction. Insurance companies treat driving events on race tracks differently, and some insurance companies will look at any event at a track as non-qualifying. You may examine your policy for any provisions against using your car at a racetrack.

You may buy event insurance for the weekend you go to the track. Motorsportreg.com, our online event registration partner, offers track event insurance. Essentially, you choose a value of your car (plus any aftermarket add-ons) and depending at what level you want to be insured, there is a corresponding premium. For example, if the stated value of your car is \$30,000, you can pay a single-event premium of \$198. It is a very good way to protect yourself and not worry about your regular insurance company.

4. What kinds of volunteering opportunities are available at the Performance Driving School?

The Driving Events Committee can always use assistance with driver registration on Friday and Saturday morning, as well as being on-call to help out with tasks as needed during the weekend.

5. Is there a one-day option for the driving school?

We do offer limited Saturday-only spots in our driving school. We do strongly recommend the standard Saturday and Sunday school package as there is much to learn. Most drivers become comfortable driving on the track after they have completed the first day and the instruction to set in.



Classifieds

Cars For Sale



**1999 M3, VIN WBSBG9337XEY82126**  
Silver exterior, black leather. This car is great fun to drive! Extremely competent and neutral handling. Very clean non-smoker interior with new floor mats. Two sets of wheels and tires included: Performance tires for summer, winter tires for winter on separate wheels. The aluminum radiator and Stewart water pump are some of the best available. X-brace and strut tower brace enhance rigid body structure. Lightweight UUC flywheel and 5-series clutch make for a quick feel. Carbotech brake pads and slotted cryo-treated rotors stop the car very quickly. Note that the car has some rust above the rear bumper and under the spoiler mounting points. 151,000 miles \$5750. Tony Turenne (651) 734-1645, bmw99m3@aol.com

**2004 Mini Cooper S**  
Original owner. 93M mainly highway miles - 30mpg regularly. Pepper white with two tone Black and Tan heated Leather. 6 sp Supercharged, Quick and stable. Big sunroof! All options available except GPS "big screen" in dash. Harmon Kardon sound/CD. Rain sensing wipers. Fresh brakes in last year (1st replacement) as well as replaced power steering pump and fan - know issue to BMW, no recall. 17" wheels with 2 summers old Goodyear Eagle all seasons Plus one winter used Yokohama snows included. Asking \$11,475 or BO. Michael Stenquist 612.735.6321

**1995 Porsche 993 WPOAA299XSS320853**  
2dr cpe, aventurine green / gray with motorized sunroof, A/C, cruise, original books and toolkit, one owner since 1998 with light DT/DE and street use for sale. Original 3.6l engine with 72.5K miles well-maintained. Mods include lightweight flywheel kit, Fabspeed modular bypass cats, carbon fiber cup airbox, lowered with Bilstein HD shocks/coilovers, and brushed aluminum race floorboard/pedals, Autopower rollbar, Corbeau seats, and Simpson harnesses. \$28K obo. Matt Jones (612) 751-5641

Parts for Sale

**E30 Roll Cage**  
Bolt in roll cage for E30 any year or model. Legal for Chumpcar & Lemons & SCCA 2- Door Bars plus \$100 of grade 8 Bolts for legal installation. \$575 OBO, Lee Jacobsohn Lee.Jacobsohn@gmail.com (612)669-5053

**4 Michelin Alpin Pilot (PA2) Snow Tires 215/55R16**  
Used one season on a RWD 5 series BMW. Amazing performance in snow and ice. Retail approx. \$250/ tire. Selling all four for only \$350. Contact Andy at (612)770-4196

**Peake R5/SRS-16 airbag scan & reset tool, 2001-02**  
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Parts Wanted

**WTB: Set of OEM BMW 20" 214Y Wheels.**  
Looking for a complete set of 214Y wheels for my '08 X5 4.8i. (20" x 10" FRT & 20" x 11" RR.) Must be in excellent condition. With or without tires & TPMS sensors. Please email me at DBERGEMA111@YAHOO.COM . Located near Mankato, MN.

**E30 rear taillight bulb housing**  
Looking for for my 89 325iX. I really just need the inner part of the driver side taillight (the housing that holds the bulbs that is in the trunk). If you have anything let me know, trying to get my iX back on the road. Please email or call and leave a message. THANKS! Michael Peterson barnaclejive@gmail.com 763-234-6848

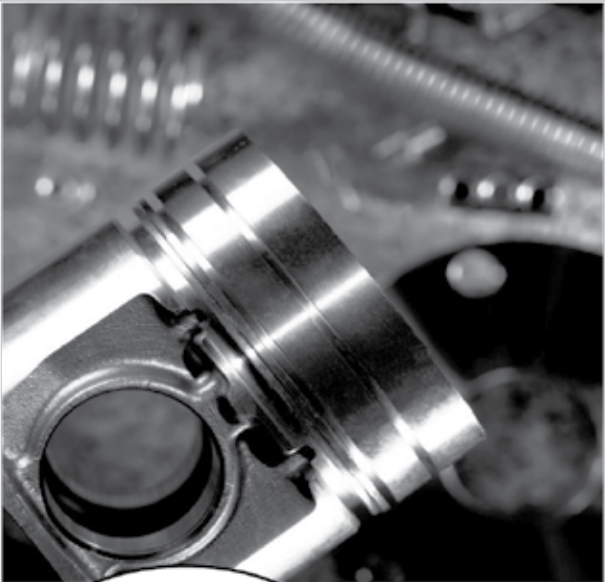


Finally, Some Swag To Call Our Own!

North Star BMW CCA is proud to announce our new line of high quality merchandise. Since we now have a brand new logo designed by club member Brian Thull, we decided now was a good time to bring out our first round of clothing including t-shirts, hats and polos. There are many items perfect for both women and men. And remember that each purchase provides a portion of the price back to our club. Thank you for your support!

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