

PATROON CHAPTER

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

# HALF

# MOON

*New York's Capital District*

*August-September-October 2010*

**The very late  
again edition!**

*Where did the summer  
go???*



*Scott Stowell prepares  
one of his famed  
Bloody Marys at the  
Bavarian Autosport  
Show n' Shine*





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*The secret password to get the Half Moon on line is "Guptils"!*



*The Half Moon, after which this newsletter is named, was the ship Henry Hudson used to explore the Hudson River, including what is now know as Albany and the Capital District of New York*

**SUBMISSIONS**

Deadline for any submissions, ads, or articles is approximately five days before I send this thing to the printer, which could be at any time. All submissions should be via e-mail, but we'll take anything from paper to stone tablets if you must! Send to:

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**Southern Tier Representative**  
 Vacant  
*See club officers  
 for appropriate bribes*

**Western Tier Representative**  
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*See club officers  
 for appropriate bribes*



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# THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

**Brian Bailey**  
**President**



*Last issue's was SO good, the President thought he's repeat it!*

I never thought that I would be hoping for rain for quite so long. The only plus has been having the top down on the convertible for 44 of the last 45 days. Convenient, yes - but not so good for the desert wasteland that is our front yard. I am sure that any second now "50% chance" will actually result in 100% rain. As proof of the drought, our Patroon evening out at Funplex Funpark was marked by temperate and dry conditions. This event has often been a reliable predictor for a nor'easter. This year it was fun and dry!

We had some fantastic events going on in July. A contingent of members celebrated Vintage at Saratoga with great success. Beautifully preserved cars from throughout the Northeast converged to make for a very special inaugural event. No "Dirty Dog" in this bunch. Fifty-five entries represented a remarkably diverse collection of BMW History. The committee did a great job of spreading the word, gathering sponsors, and running a top-notch vintage fest.

While Saratoga was in full swing, another contingent of Patroon members was in Calabogie, Ontario. Kate and I were among this merry band and we had a great time. Although it was seven hours each way, the drive was pleasant with nice scenery. After having driven eight hours to Virginia earlier in July, I would gladly drive to Calabogie 50 times with a smile on my face. I hate I-95! The weather in Calabogie was perfect, and I got to enjoy three wonderful days on the track. My hard-working, 21 year-old car, the "Blue Baron," gave up on the third day. What a perfect chance to begin some upgrades.

Here is a picture of most of the Patroon members at Calabogie 2010 gathered around Bob Martin's race prepared E30 M3. There are some members that were in class or elsewhere when we took this shot: Jamie and Dan Ipsen, Jeff Kanetzky, Matt Zacharewicz and perhaps a few more. The Calabogie event is definitely the ultimate "drive and dine" as a many of us caravanned up and we broke bread together on multiple occasions. Many thanks to our driving school committee and the folks from the Ottawa Chapter for their partnership with organizing and running this event.



I am proud to say that I begin my new job as Principal of Ravenna-Coeymans-Selkirk High School at the end of August and am excited to begin this new adventure. I hope to see you at Gup-tills for our regular August ice-cream feast. Enjoy the rest of your summer.

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# '02nd IN COMMAND

**Frank Greppo**  
**Vice President**



## The Disease is Spreading

In past issues of the Halfmoon this column has concerned itself with my “adventures” in the world of vintage BMWs. I am at home driving the 1975 2002 with its carbureted four cylinder engine. Back in the 70s my car was a Fiat 124 spider. When Denise and I married the little roadster was replaced by a more practical Chevy Vega. Boy was that a mistake (the car, not the marriage), but that is a whole different story. Often since that time Denise and I have reminisced about driving around with the top down in the little Fiat. Family responsibilities and practicality in the years that followed ruled out the purchase of another roadster. Recently however the empty nest and retirement have led us to start looking at E30 convertibles and Z3s. I was really interested in the four cylinder versions of these cars, and took many opportunities to check out those that came up for sale.

About six years ago my daughter called to tell me her boyfriend had just purchased an M Roadster. When I saw this car for the first time I was impressed. So impressed that I asked for first refusal if it was ever going to be sold. That time came about a month ago and now I am the owner of a 2002 Estoril Blue M Roadster. This car is not anything like a 1975 2002, 318 E30, or a Fiat 124. It is not a car I ever believed I would own. Cars from BMWs M division were never on my radar. It is a very tough job but I am going to have to learn to love an M.

My experience with BMWs high performance cars was less than minimal. I had never even driven an M before. That is unless you count parking Madame Secretaries’ M3 at a Patroon concours a few years ago. So I was a bit apprehensive when Denise and I left Atlanta, where I picked the car up, and drove out on the interstate headed for New York. As we got up to speed on one of Atlanta’s eight lane highways I saw that the hood was not latched properly and I had to pull off to the shoulder and correct the problem. Merging back out into the morning rush of traffic would have been problematic with the 2002. The

roadster made it a piece of cake. It was then I came to realize that this adjustment might be easier than I thought.

My passion has always been for older automobiles and I don’t think this will change with the acquisition of the roadster. My 2002 will always be special to me. What seems to be happening however is that my affliction with cars is expanding to another dimension. It is curious that the son-in-law from whom I purchased this M Roadster is the same guy who sold me my 2002. I asked him to be very selective about the next car he buys.

## Vintage at Saratoga 2011 Save the Date

Vintage at Saratoga 2011 has been set for the weekend of July 16. We look forward to expanding on the success of this years event and hope all Patroon members join in the fun at the Saratoga Automobile Museum next summer.

*Not actually Frank*



# THE EDITORIUM

Everett A. Mayhew, Jr.  
Editor

## Pushing Hard

“Don’t you have to go all the way to North Carolina?”

“Sure.” He balled up a gray fleece sweat-shirt and used it to brace one leg of his easel. “But I have three days to do it, and I can make it in two if I push hard.” *The Swan Thieves*, Elizabeth Kostova.

The character in this novel, who had to go all the way to North Carolina in two days if he “pushed hard”, was driving from Maine. I tend to be a slow reader for someone who does a fair bit of it, and one reason is that I’ll be plugging right along, immersed in the story, and then some sentence will send my brain off on its own tangent while my eyes freeze, unseeing, on the page. This can go on for some minutes until I realize I’m supposed to be running the author’s story through my brain, not my own.

That happened with the “North Carolina” remark. I started thinking...this guy thinks he is pushing hard if he takes two days to get from Maine to North Carolina? True, he would be driving a Honda, but still...

I’m a driver of the iron-posterior persuasion. To me the ever-changing scenery as I drive down the highway is a show of its own, and I rarely tire of it. Even at night it can be pleasant in the cockpit of a fast Bavarian machine, my own world, lit orange by the utilitarian dials of my BMW. Just me and the radio and random thought tangents. It’s something that’s hard to capture in words. The highway has an almost hypnotic fascination for me, but on paper it’s more likely to be just hypnotic. Ever notice how the travelogs in Roundel tend to be more about the places visited with the car parked, than driving the car itself? I mean, after you’ve said the car is fast, comfortable, etc. etc., what can you say? Much easier to wax poetic about the fairy tale Alpine castle and the gourmet meal you ate there, while the car was... PARKED.

Many people, maybe most, are more of that “smell the roses” philosophy of travel...the value of a trip is measured by how many times you stop. I can understand that. I even sympathize with it! It’s just that it’s a different kind of pleasure than the constant-motion pleasure of actually driving. It’s nice to visit interesting places, but my feeling is that it interrupts my other pleasure. So up to now, I’ve liked to keep the two experiences separate...the drive, and then the fun-while-parked experience at the end of the drive.

I think I came closest to capturing the enjoyment of the drive itself in an article I wrote in ‘04. I drove from Albany to Los Angeles (Pasadena, if you want to be technical) for the Oktoberfest. The first day, leaving from Albany, I had managed to cross the Mississippi, landing in Davenport, Iowa. The next morning there was a light rain as I headed west towards Nebraska under gray skies, seas of Iowa corn all around me. My Z3, “Zelda”, is



cozy with the top up, and I felt like I was in my own little cocoon with the orange glow from the gauges, and the soft jazz sax of Stanley Turrentine playing on the satellite radio, the windshield wipers in a lazy tempo. I had a feeling of peace that is rarely achieved on this earth. My little cocoon was quick and light of course, and that added to the separation between my in-car existence and rolling Iowa before me, seeming to be in it but not of it, the occasional pickup or semi just something to pass, and the movie through the windshield ever-changing.

I made it into the Rockies that second day, and would have made it to LA on the third, if I had not stopped for a planned visit to my brother in Las Vegas. When I got to Pasadena, I *did* “smell the roses,” and what better place do it? I’ve heard they have parades based on those things.

So the idea that you would be “pushing hard” to make it from Maine to North Carolina in two days, is pretty wimpy to me. By the way, I’ve also driven to Florida four or five times, and all but once the first day’s drive ended in Florence, SOUTH Carolina. The other time, it ended in *Jacksonville, Florida!*

I’ll admit that on some of these marathon trips, once I got out of the car at the end of the day, I felt like the rose-smellers would smugly expect. But like an astronaut coming back to earth after a long time in orbit, it wasn’t until my feet touched the earth that I realized my knees were shaky, my body was as heavy as a piano, and I had a general sensation of being slightly medicated by a near-hallucinogenic drug. Before I had emerged from the leather seat of my BMW space capsule I had been fine! In Davenport I was really semi-delirious when, after picking up dinner at a McDonald’s window, I crawled out of the Z3 and wearily slogged to my hotel. The Z3 top had been down for 11 hours and I had been driving for about 18 hours. Driving a roadster with the top down is a lot of fun, but after 11 hours the sun and wind make you feel like you were left too long in a clothes dryer. There was a residual tiredness, so after “only” twelve hours the next day I was even more tired when I stopped in the Rockies, and was checked into the 6 & 40 Motel in Idaho Springs by a guy who looked like Roy Rogers.

The longest one-shot trip I ever took was an accident of sorts. Zelda had been giving me cooling problems on the way back from Pasadena... I would have to coast to lower the temperature ever few miles (it turned out to be a blown fuse for the high speed fan). The planned itinerary was Amarillo, Texas to Great Bend, Indiana. Ambitious enough. But when the sun went down in Indiana, the cooling problem went away, and I no longer had to baby the engine with periodic coasting. So I decided to drive a few more miles. At one of my “fluids into Zelda and fluids out of me” stops I had my first Red Bull ever (don’t shake it, it’s carbonated). I kept going, albeit with a slightly sticky steering wheel. With supplemental help from large coffees in Columbus,



Ohio and outside Buffalo, I ended up driving straight through from Amarillo, Texas to Albany. I was hallucinating around Erie, Pennsylvania at 3:30 in the morning, but when the sun came up just past Buffalo, it was almost easy. Took me a couple of days to recover, though.

Iron-posterior driving could be considered an efficient use of limited time, and limited time has been on my mind lately as friends, colleagues and relatives have been reaching the end of their mortality with alarming frequency. Old Man River time tends to flow in exactly the reverse way of those rivers made of actual water. The latter start in fast-moving mountain streams, like the boulder-strewn brooks of my native Granite State's White Mountains. The mountain rivulets gradually congregate into rivers, attain girth, and slow to a more stately pace until, like lesser Mississippiis, they reach the sea at a lazy, barely perceptible, flow.

Time, on the other hand, flows unbearably slow when we are little kids incarcerated in elementary school. It slowly gains speed as we reach major milestones: getting a driver's license, sipping the first legal drink, and voting (the latter two should be done together). My own first 20 years from 1952 to 1972 seemed like a "lifetime" in and of itself. Then time sped up while I was busy with the major things of life: marriage, children, Air Force, college, law school and career. The nearly two decades since seem as quick as an afterthought, even though it includes my "BMW period" and all of the manic driving described above.

I mention this only because I noticed earlier this month that if I gave up BMWs, for, say, a 3-cylinder Kia Crapola, I could retire, sell my house, and live a block away from my brother, happily ensconced in southwest Las Vegas. (So far have property values in Sin City plummeted.) I could live there contentedly until I dried up like a raisin from too much sun. Yet the thing that sets my heart aflutter is the possibility of trading-in or selling my jet black 135i next year and flying off to Germany to buy a Valencia Orange Metallic version of the same car, albeit one over which the wizards of the M Division have waved their magic wand. This, of course, would require remaining gainfully employed for at least another half-decade. The decision was easy...I have my little weakenss.

I've often compared a love of cars to a gambling addiction... it's not something you would normally recommend to persons you liked. A car starts draining your wallet almost before you touch it. By the time you drive it off the lot your future income might as well be spewing out the tailpipe. It continues to lose you money until you get rid of it and find another car to empty your wallet. But you don't care, because somehow it gives you something you *need!* And you make converts in spite of yourself, because even though you know the money would be better put in real estate or IRA's, you can't help but rhapsodize about your little weakness. Welcome to the BMW Club.



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# I've Looked at Life From Both Sides Now...

*Bill Dosch*

I've seen the club from both sides now because finally I got my day at the track. Now that I have been to the fast side of the chapter, I see that they are very much in control and I like what I've seen. Marcia and I are the sort of Patrooners that joined the club for the camaraderie of the monthly chapter meetings and social outings. We have never been let down by the serious socializing, German beer and BMW networking that precedes our business meetings. I was content with making believe that far off in the distant future I might join the other part of the club that takes their BMW to driving school, but I was not in any hurry. But this all changed during the last December Banquet meeting when I won the holy grail of door prizes; "One Free Track Day". I had time to think about it during the ski season and Bruce K. took me under wing and we struck a friendly arrangement so I could take my lesson in his track-ready car.

Six months later, the snow had melted off of Watkins Glen and, as I was packing up my kit bag, I was informed that WG had cancelled the school day. Possibly they heard that I was on my way and were trying to tell me to stick with the brats and beer. But the good news was that a substitute track was found a month later and a mile longer at Monticello Motor Club.

The day was beautiful, the track was impeccable, the classroom time was spot-on and the in-car instruction, from Jeff of the Jersey Club, was right at the level I needed. By afternoon, I was talking "apex" and "run-out" like an ace and I was relishing every minute of track time. No jitters or nervous moments; just relaxing high performance fun. There were many familiar faces and more friendly new faces to meet; all smiling of course. Leaving the track at the end of the day, I realized that this may have been a priority altering moment. Given the opportunity, I would pick a track day over brats and beer every time.



Photo from tracktimephotos.com

# AutoXing: My experience



## Prepare to experience joy – story by Mark Dudek

I spent the last three years of my life saving up for my first car: I had just graduated college, started my first real job and had one goal in mind – to buy a car and race. I didn't care what I had to give up to do it and do it right. Pasta and cereal became the staples of my diet and if it wasn't a mandatory expense, it wasn't an expense at all.

*Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles written by first year Autocross drivers. The Boston Chapter of BMW CCA offers some of the premier track activities in the U.S. At social events we often hear from people who have always wanted to try one, but have been a little reluctant. Over the next few months, we hope you'll get some insight into autocross that will encourage you to get involved in one of our many track events.*

### Finding the right car

I found myself religiously scrolling through online listings, researching prices and pumping myself up for a moment that seemed to never come. But then, this past winter, it happened. I felt like Ralphie with his Red Ryder BB gun with a compass in the stock and this thing which tells time! It was mine, a 2006 BMW Z4 3.0i! It has 215hp of pure adrenaline, and there was only one thing left to do ... RACE!

### "Nice car!"

April 18th marked the first BMW CCA Autocross event school of the season. Never before had I been so excited or willing to wake up at 5:00 a.m. I was scheduled to run check-in as "early gate" (everyone



receives their worker assignments through email before each event), I had to make sure I was among the first to arrive. I grabbed the sign-in sheets from the event coordinators and watched in awe as the cars I dreamt about as a kid roll in – E36 M3s, a Lotus Elise and my personal favorite, a bright green Porsche GT3 RS. I repeated, “Nice car!” like a broken record as they stopped to sign in. I soon realized I had found my second home at an old airstrip in Ayer, Massachusetts.



### Advice from veterans

At other events, where I was not able to run morning gate, I found the downtime before the event to offer a great opportunity to mingle, talk about cars, and most especially, prepare my vehicle for the day (i.e. checking tire pressures, applying my racing numbers, emptying out my car, etc...). I am amazed by the wealth of experience at these events, and it is rare to find someone who is not willing to help you get the most out of your driving experience. Many people have done it all, be it upgrading suspension, adding engine modifications, or even rebuilding their car from the ground up. Since this was my first event, I used my fellow drivers as a resource to troubleshoot a few “rookie” mistakes I have made, thereby saving me from several very expensive trips to the mechanic.

### Nailing the rules

After all the entrants arrived, I called my friend Andrew, the event registrar, to replace me before the driver’s meeting. At this point, the Autocross Chairs reviewed how to stay safe on course while “shagging” cones, how to respond to red flags and to maintain all speed limits to and from these events – a topic that can not be stressed enough for obvious reasons. We were released for the course walk through and immediately my excitement began to peak. Being the typical new guy, I walked from cone to cone, completely avoiding

the actual racing line in an attempt to just see what was around the next corner. However, despite having watched countless videos of autocross runs, I found the layout of the course intimidating. Fortunately, BMW CCA events offer the opportunity to walk with an instructor and discuss the various ways to approach optional slaloms, offset gates and pivots. I listened

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Top of prior page: Mark Dudek poses with his 2006 BMW Z4 3.0i at Fort Devens Airport before a run in a 2010 Autocross event.

Top of this page: Mark and his 2006 BMW Z4 3.0i wait for a signal at the line to start the first of many Autocross runs with the Boston BMW CCA Chapter.

# MEETING MINUTES

## (All of “THIS” Could be YOURS....)

*Beverly Stowell, Madame Secretary*

This is the space reserved for Madame Secretary’s version of the minutes of past chapter business meetings. I sat down to ready my notes for publication in the Half Moon and realized that I have nothing to write. For various reasons, I missed August’s Ice Cream Social at Guptil’s and September’s visit to the Auto Haus in Burnt Hills, although I heard both were well attended. I already know that I will be absent for the holiday party in December. However, I did attend shows in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and New Hampshire this summer and fall. Hmmm. Something doesn’t seem right.

We have been having some discussions about the sharing of club information. Which information should be protected to give our members their privacy? What type of information should be available to all online in the interest of increasing the membership and therefore the health of the Patroon Chapter? My personal reaction to the discussion was, “Whatever; I don’t care.” Hmmm. Something doesn’t seem right.

I’m currently the longest serving officer in the Patroon Chapter. [*The Editor isn’t an officer, he’s an enlisted man. -Ed.*] There was a time when I was “new” and deeply cared about everything that had to do with our Club. I could easily hold this enjoyable office for the rest of my life, but, this somehow doesn’t seem fair. Our Chapter could greatly benefit from putting somebody into the position who has a fresh outlook.

Have YOU been looking for a way to get more involved in shaping the future of the Club? The position of Secretary is a fairly low stress way to have a big say in the direction of the club while doing very little actual hard work. The primary duty is to take minutes at meetings and get them ready for publication. Depending upon what is going on in the Club or how much the President wants to do him/herself, there might be the need to write some formal correspondence. I don’t think I’ve written anything official on behalf of the club in over five years. It’s a pretty easy job. I could continue to sleepwalk through it indefinitely, but that doesn’t seem fair or right.

If you would like to step up to the plate and be the next secretary of the Patroon Chapter, I will not run against you.

Planning on submitting minutes for October and November.....

Beverly Lyn Stowell -Madame Secretary  
The Patroon Chapter of the BMW CCA



*A Man and his Machine*





Mark and his 2006 BMW Z4 3.0i shown here finessing the cones on the Autocross track at Fort Devens, MA.

carefully and tried to absorb as much racing wisdom as I could.

### Group #1 to the starting grid

I finished my walk and an announcement over the speakers noted that "Group 1" should start to grid and "Group 2" drivers should head to their assigned loca-

tions – all entrants are broken down into two run groups, Group 1 and Group 2. Each group completes one set of runs in the morning and one set in the afternoon. Being in run Group 1, I felt a sudden rush of adrenaline as I anticipated the opportunity to thrash my Bimmer around the circuit. I jumped in my car, drove to the grid and waited. Attempting to stay relaxed, I visualized as much of the course as I could remember. Suddenly, "The course is hot!" I reveled in the acoustic joy emanating from the cars before me as I was waved out of grid to pull up to the starting line. As I rolled up, I did my checks: Seat in position? Check. Seatbelt tight? Check. Traction control off? Not yet ... Check. Just a few more seconds, then ...

Go! I bolted out of the starting gate and did my best to look ahead.

### Engaging the brain

I could barely think as fast as the turns were approaching. "Ok. Apex early and POWER! Now turn in, look ahead, LOOK AHEAD!" I soon became aware of my

*cont. page 17*

## **MAC Motorwerks**

**Michael A. Camann**

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### Your Man at the Auction

Hi All,

I'm a Patroon Chapter member from Germantown, NY and started a small used car dealership as a retirement business. I often come across great used BMW's that Bimmer Heads would appreciate. Recent examples:

- 2001 325xi, black with tan leather, manual 5-speed...high highway mileage but in great shape inside and out.
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Looking forward to meeting you...Mike



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# Membership Corner

## Scott Stowell

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**Total Members on 07/22/10 761**

**Total Members on 09/22/10 772**



### New Members in July

Jeff Bachta	Troy	04 545i
Sylvia Rooney	Troy	
Rich Van Deusen	Claverack	
Stephen Jeselson	Old Chatham	11 X5 35i
William Evans	Scotia	
Catherine Evans	Schenectady	

### New Members in August

Frederick Moore	Hopewell Jct.	06 330ci
Anna De Sorbo	Albany	
Philip Reece	Schenectady	87 325is
Matthew Tessitore	Fallsburg	
Christopher Taft	Clinton	10 X5
Tim Bergeron	Clinton	08 535xi
Joe Paone	Malta	
Dave Jones	Albany	07 525xi
Andrew Fahrney	Albany	
Robert Graham	Massena	11 328xi
Betty Graham	Massena	
Norman Romanoff	Delmar	11 328ci

### New Members in September

Steven Brewer	Clifton Park	03 325xi
John Ellis	Potsdam	11 328xi
Gerhard Beckmann	Altamont	98 M3
William Leblanc	Wappingers Fls.	02 325xi
Kathleen Saiano	Wallkill	
Franco Saiano	Wallkill	07 650i
David Wetsel	Gansevoort	06 Z4
John Endres	Schenectady	06 MZ4
Chris McAllister	Cohoes	97 840
Joshua Cassell	Fly Creek	02 Mini
Francis Felts	Schenectady	09 328xi

### Five Year Anniversaries

Jeff Coffin	Maryland
Don Hurley	Northville
Kimberly Miller	Waterford
Sharon Yaple	Newfield
Art Yaple	Newfield
Karl Schnitzer	Clifton Park
Daniel Gestwick	Schenectady

### Ten Year Anniversaries

Phillip Weisburgh	Glenmont
Francesco Rossi	Marlboro
Daniel Cipollone	Yonkers

### Fifteen Year Anniversaries

Benjamin Weston	Andes
Richard Whittemore	Schroon Lake



***Welcome to all new members!!***



## Just a Little Whine With Dinner

*Jamie and Dan Ipsen*

Yup it's true. A second Mini has come into my life. Not because I didn't like the first. I loved it. But unfortunate things happen and now a new Mini is on my payroll. When I ordered the new car, I kept many of the same options – the turbo, the Chili Red color with a white roof and mirrors, the interior - checkerboard, cloth seats (which are very hard to come by on the lot), the cold weather package (never go back on heated seats), and the sport suspension. A few things weren't available any longer (limited slip) and a few things were now standard (cruise control). I know nothing ever stays the same. The sunroof was 'weigh' too heavy to keep for the track. Racing stripes and a fun roof graphic gave VIVACE2 its own personality.

We had a good start together with many trips to the River this summer and three days at Calabogie. The Drive-In movie night, Monticello at the end of August, the Poker Run in September were fabulous play days.

Daily driving always sported happy motoring. So, why am I dreaming of a Miata? [*Rear wheel drive? - Ed.*] The frustrations of recent mechanical upsets have me swaying. How silly is that? Cars are cars. As much as we'd like them to be perfect, they aren't. Many of us have sorrowed car issues this summer. Their failure is a common topic for sincere commiseration and therefore, friendship forming. VIVACE's ailments also give the dealer a chance to prove their exceptional service. My knowledge of fuel injectors and cylinders is growing vaster by the day. I am absolutely confident that AAA is the best roadside service company available and their "Plus" plan with 100 miles of towing is a bargain. Who could be swayed by such positive outcomes?

Not me, really. How many years have you been with a BMW – running or otherwise? Some things just fit into your life, regardless.

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### 2nd Annual Mini Cooper Poker Run

Congratulations to Tom Whittaker who won this year's Mini Cooper Poker Run! Tom held the winning flush worth \$300. \$150 was the take home prize and the other \$150 was given to The Dana Faber Cancer Center, a charity Tom and his wife Vicki have been actively supporting. Seventeen Minis and thirty-five miniacs drove a 120 mile loop, stopping at five cool locations (and lots of other optional neat places) along the way to pick up a playing card. At the end of the day, participants met at the Albany Pump Station for a fabulous buffet dinner and the revealing of the best poker hand. The day was picture perfect and happy motoring was had by all!



## Get a Free Nifty Little Tool And Check that Belt!

by: David Harrison (White Mtn. Chapter)

Sometimes I show my age and use the somewhat antiquated term “service station” to refer to any business where I can purchase gasoline for my car. For those of you without grey hair, the service station predated

mini-marts and convenience stores as the place to top off your gas tank. The biggest benefit of the service station was an employee (often a teenage boy) who would greet you and man the pump. Ladies and gentlemen would never pump gas. Not only would he pump your gas while you waited in the car, he would also wash the windshield and check under the hood. The latter involved a look at the oil dipstick, coolant level, and visually inspect the accessory belts. All this service was expected free of charge believe it or not. After all, who wanted to get oil on your suit or dress

and arrive at work smelling like a member of a pit crew. Servicing your own car was comparable to asking a restaurant patron to cook his own steak in the kitchen.

Now back to the twenty-first century where most cars have their hoods opened once a year for an oil change or a state inspection. After all what can go wrong under there? BMW tells us everything is

going to be just fine and any service is free to the owner. Hell, there isn't even a dipstick or visible widow wash reservoir now. Idiot lights will tell you if fluids should run low. Belts are designed to last 100,000 miles and outlive the warranty. All is well, do not worry. Yeah right!

First of all, my driveway has always had at least one vehicle using all six digits on the odometer. I am also a fan of preventive maintenance. My Air Force training never included “just wait till the engine stops and then fix it”. At 30,000 feet, coasting into the breakdown lane was not an option. Typically I take a look under the hood myself when I fill up at the local Hess station. It takes literally two minutes to check fluids, belts, and general condition of the engine for leaks and such.

On my 1994 525i I check the multi-ribbed serpentine belts for cracks and chunks of missing material. I must be on my fifth set

of belts on this car. These belts seem to last longer than the old style V-belts on my previous 1989 325ix. (The only V-belts I check now are on my John Deere mower.) Anyway, these types of belts all crack and show obvious deterioration. Stevie Wonder could inspect these belts for damage without any special skills or tools.

Since the late 1990s, BMW along with other manufactures has phased out Neoprene belts and begun installing EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer) belts on new models. This material wears better than anything which came before. The belts often last up to 100,000 miles. The biggest advantage is that the belts do not crack or chunk-out. They simply wear out by losing material due to friction, just like your tires.

Checking belt wear just became a little more involved. The change is that now you need a belt wear gauge. The gauge has a small toothpick like extension or pin to check the depth of the valleys between the ribs. You simply insert the pin into a valley on a straight section of belt. If the pin falls completely into the rib, it is time to replace the belt since accessory pulleys will not grip the belt efficiently.

Where can you get a belt wear gauge? The Gates Company will give you a free gauge if you would like your very own tool. They figure if you have a gauge, you will eventually find a worn belt and head off to parts store to buy another Gates belt. Just log on to [www.gatesbeltwear.com](http://www.gatesbeltwear.com). The site gives a wealth of information and even an instructional video. My free tool took six weeks to arrive and came with basic instructions so I could check the belt on my wife's X3. So check out the Gates site and service your own vehicle like a pro.



The nifty little Gates belt gauge.



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# Upcoming Events

*We have looked into our crystal ball and foreseen the following:*

Scott Stowell, Fortune Teller

518-899-5940

StowellBMW@aol.com



## **Wednesday October 13th Membership Meeting at the Albany German American Club**

Drinks start at 6:30, dinner starts at 7:00, and the fun is continuous at these meetings. Join us as we chat about our latest repairs and plans for the fall. There will be a \$15 buffet available for dinner, although members attending their first meeting eat for free.

## **Saturday October 23rd Lime Rock Park Drivers School**

We finish off the season at Lime Rock. There will be no novice group this time around. The Instructor group is full, but lots of space is still left for students. Sign up at [www.patroom.motorsportreg.com](http://www.patroom.motorsportreg.com).

## **Saturday October 30th Drive and Dine to the Beardslee Castle Restaurant**

For three years we have driven to this haunted castle located just east of Little Falls NY, but have yet to see a ghost. The weather has been raw and hostile, the food spectacular, and the company spellbinding, but no ghosts. We have reservations at 6:00, and plan on leaving Jumping Jacks parking lot at 4:15. Please contact the Stowells if you will be joining us for dinner so we can make appropriate reservations. Central NY folks should join us for this spooktacular dinner!

## **November 14th Membership Meeting at the Albany German American Club**

This meeting and dinner will be held at the German American Club on Cherry St in Albany. Dinner starts around 7:00pm with socializing beginning at 6:30pm in the bar. Remember, the club picks up the \$15 charge for dinner for members attending their first meeting. As always, guests are always welcome.

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heavy breathing and just told myself, "Calm down!" I skated past the last few cones and through the timing lights. Hard on the brakes, I listened carefully to hear my time. Unfortunately, it seemed I hit a cone, but if anyone asks, my policy is, "If you're not hitting cones, you're not going fast enough!" No matter how much you try to prepare, applying the tactics you've heard for how to attack an autocross course take on a whole new meaning when cones are flying past you, and hopefully not under you, at sixty miles per hour.

### **Realizing a Dream**

After the event was over, I reflected back on one of the best days in my life. I had finally realized a childhood dream which was every bit as exciting as I imagined it would be. Whether you are driving a M3 or a Camry, considering autocross to fuel your competitive spirit or just trying to become a better driver, I can guarantee you will have the time of your life. ♦

## **December 12th December Holiday Party**

This is the biggie! Along with the Concours, this is the best attended event of the year. We will be at the German American Club with the event officially starting at 7:00pm, but keep an eye on the web site for further details. We will be asking people to pre-register for this event so we can give our hosts an idea of how many to expect.



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\*NYS Tax & DMV Fees Extra.

**2011 128i Coupe**  
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**2011 328i Convertible**  
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**All New 2011 528i Sedan**  
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- 06 325xia 4DR AWD** Auto, Moonroof, Pwr Seats, Black w/Belge Int. N06744, 52,955 MI. **\$22,980\***
- 07 328i Convertible** Auto, Premium Pkgs., Htd Seats, Montego Blue/Belge Leather, PXI 4152, 27,295 MI. **\$35,988\***
- 07 328x 4DR AWD** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Navigation, Alpine White/Terra, KP36789, 49,463 MI. **\$26,980\***
- 07 328xi 4DR AWD** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Black Sapphire/Belge Leather, KP31045, 53,908 MI. **\$25,980\***
- 07 328xi 4DR AWD** 6 Speed, Moonroof, Heated Seats, Alpine White/Belge Int., K271462, 21,329 MI. **\$28,980\***
- 07 328xi 4 DR AWD** 6 Speed, Cold Pkg., Xenons, Alpine White/Belge Int., AC79782, 32,969 MI. **\$25,980\***
- 07 328xia 4DR AWD** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., KP32711, 48,278 MI. **\$27,980\***
- 07 328xi Coupe AWD Sport** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Navigation, Space Gray/Red, P077648, 39,803 MI. **\$31,980\***
- 08 328xi 4DR AWD** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Jet Black/Belge Leather, N038274, 42,725 MI. **\$29,980\***
- 06 330i 4DR** Auto, Premium, Cold & Sport Pkgs., Xenons, Graphite/Black Lthr, NR79329, 64,944 MI. **\$21,980\***
- 07 335i Hardtop Convertible** Twin Turbo, 6Spd, Cold Weather Pkg., Logic 7 Sound, Arica/Creme Leather, PX43157, 30k MI. **\$33,980\***
- 08 335i 4DR Sport** Automatic, Twin Turbo, Black on Black, N480929, 23,915 MI. **\$32,980\***
- 08 528ia 4DR** Automatic, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Space Gray/Black Leather, CT05430, 36,155 MI. **\$30,980\***
- 08 528xi 4DR** Auto, Blk Sapphire/Blk Lthr, AT, Pwr & Cld Pkgs., Split Rld Down, Xenons, Rhd/18"Adp, 37594MI C290215 **\$34,480\***
- 08 535xi 4DR AWD** Twin Turbo, AT, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Navigation Platinum Gray/Gray Leather, C268928, 40k MI. **\$38,980\***
- 07 750Li 4DR** V8, Auto, Luxury Seating, Rear Ent. & more, Black Sapphire/Black Leather, DT73072, 36,619 MI. **\$43,988\***
- 06 X5 xDrive30i** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Alpine White/Belge Leather, LY46287, 59,802 MI. **\$25,980\***
- 07 X5 xDrive30i** Auto, Premium & Cold Pkgs., Space Gray/Gray Leather, L017292, 49,615 MI. **\$36,980\***
- 07 X5 xDrive AWD 3.0** AT, Cold & Pwr & Tech Pkgs., 18" Wheels, Xenons, Nav, 24,709 MI., Platinum Bronze/Blk. **\$41,980\***

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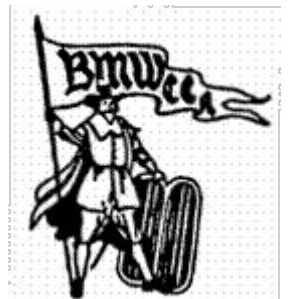
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