

Magazine of the National Capital Chapter BMW Car Club of America

March/April 2017

der Bayerische



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Cover: Silver Bullet - Marc Caden, a frequent *dB* author and contributor, autocrossing at FedEx Field. Read the article on page 14. Photo: Jaclyn Heck

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



President's Message

As I write this column, it's currently one of the mildest winters ever. I know I just jinxed us, and by the time this *dB* hits your mailbox, there will probably be several feet of snow encasing your home. If not, you can thank me because after the huge snow storm last year, guess who received a brand new snow blower!

Well, I'm truly excited for the upcoming warmer weather, and if you've caught a glimpse of our calendar, you know that's its chock full of stuff to do. Our HPDE and autocross dates are now posted, as well as our DIY schedule, so make sure you sign up for those events early to guarantee your spot before the waitlist begins. We have also booked our first BIG event of the year in May, as we return to BMW of Sterling for Cars & Coffee, DIY, and New Member Open House! For those who have attended in the past, you know that BMW of Sterling really rolls out the red carpet for us, so hopefully we pack the house and show the support that only hardcore BMW enthusiasts can. Mark your calendar for this one and don't forget to bring your friends and family!

Finally, I would like to announce our 2016 Program and Volunteer of the Year. For those who attended the Annual Meeting in February, you know about their outstanding contributions. And while there are so many others who are just as deserving, this pair of long time members really signifies what it is to be a volunteer.

Marc Caden's love for cars truly stands out if you ever speak with him. He loves to be around cars, fix them, drive them, snap pictures of them, and write about them. He regularly wrenches at our DIY sessions and competes in concours. Marc is one of the few NCC members who participates in several different programs because of his love for BMWs. As a volunteer, he's always willing to be our 'resident' photographer and *dB* contributor, at a moment's notice. You've read his articles in this newsletter and he is always informative, funny, but most of all, passionate about this club, the cars, and the people. He's also making sure that his son, Andrew, has a proper upbringing, as many of us have seen him grow up just as fanatical about cars as his Dad. Congrats Marc on another great year for the club and your dedication is truly appreciated!

Doug Verner has worn many hats over the years for this chapter such as HPDE registrar, MotorsportReg guru, and whatever other project I give him. But currently, his //M Club Day program has really taken off. It's pretty tough to convince 32 people to spend \$1K for a weekend by traveling 1K miles. Now granted, it's an unbelievably fun weekend of driving someone else's BMW as hard as possible, but a lot goes into planning these multiple trips several times a year. Detailed driving routes, hotels booked, afternoon excursions planned, multiple dinner reservations made and lots of promoting. But Doug is able to pull it all off with ease, as his relationship with the BMW Performance Center has blossomed tremendously. Doug has even starred in the world famous 'So, Why Don't You' BMW Performance School commercial shot last year in Spartanburg. Finally, the most remarkable accomplishment is that this program has sold out for five straight years! Doug's devotion to CCA is truly unquestioned, 'so why don't you' congratulate Doug on a job well done.

der Bayerische

We have two new members of the *der Bayerische* staff, Mr. Orlando Taylor as Chief Marketing Officer and Ms. Abby Gonzalez as Director of Marketing. They are responsible for advertising, sponsorships, social media and marketing communications.

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Abby Gonzalez, 703.789.4113, agonzalez@nccbmwcca.org

Please welcome them to the club. They are open to ideas and suggestions on improving our outreach.

I was hoping for a report from the Detroit Auto Show. Electronics was a dominant theme. The use of electronics in vehicles is accelerating. The questions this raises are those of safety, reliability and unmanned operation.

My vehicle, a 2016 BMW, does not have adaptive cruise control, a surprise, since it is one of the “talked about” innovations, and likely will reduce crashes. I suppose the BMW engineers decided there was too much chance of failure and didn’t want the liability. Think Tesla Autopilot.

The second is the much maligned “auto stop/start” or in colloquial usage, “auto stall.” Works well in my car. Indeed, as a traffic-light changes from red to green, lifting off the brake allows just enough time for the engine to get up to speed before heading out. I suppose for those anxious to get going, it may be too long, but I think for the average driver in traffic, it works just fine. A friend commented that it seemed to add complexity, but it is just a few lines of code for the ECU.

With my previous car, I did this manually. It worked but I had to pay close attention to the traffic lights, whereas now it is automatic. My efforts Improved gas mileage by about 0.2 to 0.3 mpg. Not huge, but over the life of the car it implies significant savings. My current engine has about 50% more horsepower, and the mileage is better so I think the concept has proved itself.

Coming along, and certainly much in the

news are autonomous vehicles and ride-hailing. Those are certainly connected but not synonymous.

As Tesla has demonstrated, words matter. Calling their system Autopilot downplays the remaining issues. However, I think the time is coming. I made a bet when I bought my new car: autonomous vehicles will be the norm in ten years. So in my mind the daily-driver roll of my car is 15 years. It will then be reduced to outings, leaving inner-city driving to the robots. Since I find the tedium of driving in city traffic fraught and tiring, let the robots do it. It does not diminish the fun of outings with the windows open and the wind blowing in my face. (The original phrase is wind blowing through my hair, but I have none so I have to adapt.)

Ride-hailing will require a whole lot more infrastructure. Much like the hump in the road for electric cars.

A third issue is security. There has been much talk recently about whether vehicles can be “hacked.” There are two methods currently on offer. The first is to have a scanner which can read the transmission from a key-fob. With my current car ’16, the fob only works within ten feet so there is not too much concern. In any case I do not use it for opening/closing the car, rather using the near-field effect by grabbing the door handle which works well. With my prior ’02, though, the fob works at about 20 feet, so there is some concern with older vehicles. To effect a

theft requires having an appropriate scanner and standing close when someone is opening the doors. The caution here is the same with any parking-lot, be aware of who is around.

The fourth issue is the use of Bluetooth. Since my phone is connected to my car through Bluetooth, there is a security hole. Not directly but if someone could hack my phone, then there you go. I use a passcode, but this is yet another common problem: often phones are not locked, and once again there is an entry point. I am too long out of the field to know how difficult it would be, or how much can be done. I was hoping some enterprising reporter would query BMW in Detroit. I am sure that this is not going to be widely discussed for security reasons, but I would feel better knowing BMW is taking the issue seriously. Actually, I am sure they are, but would like assurance.

We (the NCC) just had an outing which included a tour of the Collectors Car Corral. What a line-up of cars. My favorite non-BMW is the Maserati. Maybe I couldn’t afford one in any case, but it is good looking vehicle and worth dreaming about.

Along this line, visiting the car museum in Sacramento is now on my bucket list. Read the article in this issue. Sounds like a whole lot of fun, and a cut above the usual collection of cars.

Happy driving!

To the Membership of the National Capital Chapter:

The Club bylaws were recently changed to improve readability and flow of language. The functional changes that were made had to do with the language regarding the Drivers’ School Steering Committee. Please see below for the revised language.

“The DSSC shall be composed of five individuals with a reasonable level of drivers’ school expertise and organizational experience, as follows:

Old Language:

A chairperson, who shall be an elected officer and who shall be appointed by the other elected officers of the board of directors and who shall take direction from the board of directors.

New Language:

A chairperson who shall be nominated by the current DSSC committee and agreed by a majority of the board of directors and who shall take direction from the board of directors (“Committee Chair”).

The revised bylaws will be available on the NCC website effective February 1, 2017. Members will have the opportunity to vote yay or nay to approve the revised language of the bylaws.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 5 NoVa Social @ Jaleo, Crystal City
- 11 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 12 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 19 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
- 28 3rd Annual NCC Cars & Chili Competition

February

- 2 NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City
- 8 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 11 2017 NCC Annual Membership Meeting & Holiday Celebration
- 16 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD

March

- 2 NoVa Social @ Jaleo in Crystal City
- 4 Live Tech Talk w/ Mike Miller @ RPR Automotive
- 8 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD
- 16 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD
- 18 New 5 Series (G30) Launch Event
- 25 Just a Tour to Brush off Dust

April

- 6 NoVa Social - Greene Turtle, Springfield
- 8 BMW CCA Cars & Coffee, Aktiv Automotive, Gaithersburg, MD
- 8 DIY @ AKTIV Automotive

- 12 Board Meeting/Social - Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 13 Columbia Social- Corner Stable, Columbia, MD
- 20 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 22 DIY @ Benchmark Motors
- 22-23 Spring 2017 ///M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center

May

- 4 NoVa Social- Greene Turtle, Springfield
- 6 DIY @ BMW of Sterling
- 6 BMW CCA New Member/Cars & Coffee/DIY - BMW of Sterling
- 7 34th Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance, Vienna, VA
- 10 Board Meeting/Social - Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 11 Columbia Social- Corner Stable, Columbia, MD
- 13-14 NCC May 2017 Summit Point, Main Circuit HPDE
- 18 May MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

June

- 1 NoVa Social- Greene Turtle, Springfield
- 3 DIY @ Chapman Auto Werks
- 8 Columbia Social- Corner Stable, Columbia, MD
- 10-11 NCC June 2017 Summit Point, Jefferson Circuit HPDE
- 14 Board Meeting/Social - Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 15 MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD



COMING EVENTS

There are always three social events each month that occur on Thursdays. They are socials for each distinctive geographic area covered by the NCC: Northern Virginia, Montgomery County and Columbia (the Baltimore area).

NoVa Social - Greene Turtle, Springfield

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Live Tech Talk w/ Mike Miller @ RPR Automotive

Saturday March 4, 2017

This event is a true Tech Session with Mike Miller, Technical Editor for *Roundel* Magazine. Attendees will be able to ask questions and get answers for issues regarding their BMW Ultimate Driving Machine!

9:30 - 10:00 AM Meet and greet

10:00 AM to Noon Mike Miller

Noon - 12:45 PM Lunch

12:45 to 2:45 PM Question & Answer Session with John Behe

Board Meeting/Social - Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Columbia Social- Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City, MD

Thursday, March 9, 2017

MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

Thursday, March 16, 2017

New 5 Series (G30) Launch Event

Saturday, March 18, 2017

Just a Tour to Brush off the Dust

Saturday, March 25, 2017

Burn the dust off the tires. We will meander to lunch in Berkeley Springs, W. Va., then on to ice cream.

Autocross Novice School

Saturday, March 25, 2017

NoVa Social - Greene Turtle, Springfield

Thursday, April 6, 2017

BMW CCA Cars & Coffee and DIY @ Aktiv Automotive, Gaithersburg, MD

Saturday, April 8, 2017

Board Meeting/Social - Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Columbia Social- Corner Stable, Columbia, MD

Thursday, April 13, 2017

MoCo Social- Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

Thursday, April 20, 2017

DIY @ Benchmark Motors & Earth Day

Saturday, April 22, 2017

Spring 2017 ///M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center

Saturday, April 22, 2017 to Sunday, April, 23, 2017

Looking Ahead

The National Capital Chapter will be hosting a Swap Meet with the Benchmark Motors DIY and Cars and Coffee event scheduled for Saturday July 15th, 2017.

34th Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance

Sunday, May 7, 2017 (Rain Date: Sunday, May 21, 2017)

Nottoway Park, 9601 Courthouse Rd., Vienna, VA 22181

One of the highlights of our event schedule, and an annual rite of spring for German car fans, is the Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance. This year marks the 34th time that we have gathered with our friends from the Greater Washington Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America (MBCA) and the Potomac Region of the Porsche Club of America (PCA) for this terrific show. Once again, we have reserved Nottoway Park in Vienna, easily reached via Route 66. The park entrance will be marked with large car club banners so that you cannot miss it.



class (not judged - winner selected by people's choice balloting). Judges scoring cars in the Street and Meister classes will only judge the tops of the cars, including the exterior, interior, engine bay, storage compartments and chrome, but not the chassis. Street class cars are generally divided into several groups based upon BMW CCA national concours rules.

There is no charge to attend the concours as a spectator. In order to allow us to plan appropriately for the number of guests, please register in advance using the registration form that at MotorsportReg.com.

In the Deutsche Marque Concours, vehicles are judged by their condition, appearance, and cleanliness. There will be three classes at this event - Street (judged), Meister class (judged - consisting of first-place category winners from the 2016 concours), and Display

Contact John McWilliams at john.mcwilliams@gmail.com if you have any questions.

THE JOYCE & THOMAS MOOREHEAD FOUNDATION 2017 BMW Dream Car Raffle

The National Capital Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America has been presented with an opportunity to assist a local foundation with its goal of serving the community, while providing an additional source of funding for the chapter, and possibly having a member win a 2017 BMW.

Thomas Moorehead is the owner of BMW of Sterling, among other premier automobile dealerships in the Washington Metropolitan area. BMW of Sterling has been a strong supporter of our chapter, providing us time and space for DIY sessions, meetings, and Cars and Coffee events.

One of Mr. and Mrs. Moorehead's philanthropic endeavors is the Joyce and Thomas Moorehead Foundation (JTMF), founded in 2004. It has provided more than \$400,000 in charitable assistance to students, working families, and non-profit organizations in Northern Virginia.

The JTMF 2017 raffle is offering a 2017 BMW sedan as a grand prize. There be a monthly drawings for a \$250 prize. The winner of the \$250 prize remains eligible for the grand prize drawing. The grand prize drawing will be held on December 31, 2017.

Raffle tickets are available for a cost of \$100 each, and will be limited to a total of 5,000 tickets.

Twenty-five dollars of each ticket sold goes directly to the chapter treasury, with the remaining funds to the JTMF for the drawing.

For ticket purchases please contact James Laws at membership@nccbmwcca.org or 240.424.5380.

Information regarding the JTMF or the raffle may be found at www.themooreheadfoundation.org and www.jtmbmwaffle.com respectively.



A Do-It-Yourself (DIY) at BMW of Annapolis

By Marc Caden

Prior to the advent of the modern automobile, the horse was still the primary means of personal transportation. In late 19th century America there was roughly one horse for every three people. When a coach or carriage was harnessed to the horse, it became a vehicle that functioned much like a family car. After a house, a carriage was typically the second most valuable possession owned and a good one typically lasted at least 15 years or longer. Even well built carriages required frequent repairs and they were often passed down from one generation to the next.

Fast-forward a hundred and fifty years and the modern automobile has many of the same attributes of yesterday's horse-drawn carriage. There are some obvious physical similarities, such as wheels, lights, fenders, and leaf springs. And of course, modern cars need horsepower too (albeit not the 4-legged variety). Like a carriage, cars are costly and intended to last many years – with the average age of an automobile now around

12 years old. The modern automobile also requires a fair bit of maintenance to stay roadworthy.

Fortunately, our club's DIY program can help one keep the carriage on the road. For example, I brought my well used, but new to me, 2002 BMW 325xi (the "t" stands for touring which in BMW speak means a station wagon), to the first DIY of the new year, an event held in January at BMW of Annapolis. At 15 years old and with over 160,000 miles, my "carriage"

periodically will need maintenance and repairs to stay in tip top shape. I choose to undertake these repairs because my car, although older, still has all of the modern attributes and practicality I need, such as all-wheel drive, heated seats, power windows, a sunroof, airbags, keyless entry, and a rare manual transmission.

I decided to take a stab at repairing my car's broken sunshade panel, which no longer moved in unison with the sunroof glass when opening and closing. This is the telltale sign that the plastic clips



(Above) The author first removed the sunroof glass and then replaced the broken clips on the sliding headliner panel of his 2002 325xi.



attached to the sunroof's inner panel have broken, a common malady well known to E46 owners. I called BMW of Annapolis' Parts Department and ordered a new set of sunshade clips, which were waiting for me on the day of the event. With my BMW CCA discount applied (see more on this below), the four sunshade panel clips came to \$45 and I already knew the cost of labor for me to complete the repair would be free.

Removing the glass sunroof took no more than 10 minutes and involved removing 6 small torx head screws. After that one has full access to the sunshade panel and broken clips. If any of the sunshade's headliner fabric is either loose or peeling away, now is a good time to use some 3M adhesive spray to tack it back down. After replacing the clips, the only tricky part is making sure that upon re-installation that the sunroof glass is properly leveled with the roof of the car. Fortunately, shop foreman Eric Fischer volunteered to help me level the glass sunroof, while I carefully tightened the torx screws. He also instructed me to push and hold the sunroof



(Above) Even though BMW of Annapolis' service department was open for business on the Saturday of our DIY event, they graciously provided the club with six lifts to perform tasks.

button for about 30 seconds to reset and re-initialize its operation. Overall, this is a pretty straightforward job that can be done without a lift and within an hour or two at one of our DIY events. I saved myself some money while also learning how to fix something new on my

carriage.

Shop foremen Bob Hoffman and Eric Fischer have been our longstanding hosts for DIY events held at BMW of Annapolis. Even though the service department remains open on Saturdays, BMW of Annapolis graciously provided

the club with six lifts for DIY repairs. So on a miserable cold and wet January day, club members escaped the foul weather and enjoyed all the benefits that a nice heated garage with lifts can offer.

As noted above, I bought the parts for my project at BMW of



(Above Left) Although Mike Vilardo's 328d touring is just one year old and covered by the factory warranty, he rotated the wheels himself and installed some rear mudflaps just in time for winter. (Middle) Chapter Vice President James Laws finishes up an oil change on his 2000 740i. (Right) Wearing a smudge of oil on his cheek as a badge of honor, Brian Lovecchio feeds some fresh oil to his 2007 335i.



(Above) The father and son duo of James and David Churbuck swapped their stock E30's airbag steering wheel for a quick disconnect wheel.

Annapolis because all BMW CCA members receive a 15% discount from the parts department with proof of membership. This is a good deal considering you are receiving BMW original equipment that comes with a two year unlimited-mile warranty. So if you

purchase a part from them and install it yourself and a year later the part fails (note: the warranty is for a defect in the part and does not cover improper installation), simply bring your vehicle in, show the receipt, and they will replace the same part free of charge to you.

I know many of you have been affected by BMW's Takata airbag recall. Both of the front airbags in my 3 Series needed replacement under the recall, but the dealers located closest to me didn't have the steering wheel airbag in stock. I called BMW of Annapolis one day

and to my surprise they had them in stock and replaced them this past fall. If you are affected by an airbag recall and want to schedule an appointment, please call ahead and verify that the parts are in stock for your model vehicle, as some airbags still are not available.

Our club leaders got into the act at this DIY event – Chapter President Paul Seto was in the house and changed the oil on his first lady's 2011 328xi. In the next bay over, Chapter Vice President James Laws replaced oxygen sensors and did an oil change on his 2000 740i. Jeff Isakson replaced the rear brake pads and rotors on the 2003 Z4 2.5 that he presented to his wife for her 50th birthday. Michael Cammill replaced the oil filter housing gasket and tightened the power steering on his 1992 M5. Brian Lovecchio did a complete brake job and changed the oil on his 2007 335i.

One of the more challenging tasks of the day was done by John Walker, who replaced the driver's side window regulator on his 2005 745Li. David Churbuck and his Dad James installed a quick disconnect steering wheel and

(Below from Left) Using an instructional video displayed on a tablet, John Walker replaced the driver's side window regulator on his 2005 745Li. (Middle) Chris Wootten kindly helped out a few club members by reading diagnostic information and unlocking special codes using the MyCarly app on his phone. (Right) The rotors on Michael Cammill's Z4 were rusted in place, but with the persuasion of a hammer, they were set free.



replaced the drive belt on David's classic 1990 325i. Mike Vilardo installed rear mud flaps and rotated the wheels on his 2016 328d touring. Zoran Stojanovic replaced the driveline fluids on his 2007 335i. Dennis Last replaced the spark plugs, coils, VANOS solenoids, and did an oil change on his 2009 335i xDrive. Bradley Jansen replaced a tie rod on his 2000 528i.

As always, Phillip Cummings and Chris Wootten did a terrific job making sure the event ran smoothly. Doughnuts and coffee were served in the morning and the club provided a nice pizza lunch in the afternoon. We hope to see you and your "carriage" at an upcoming event this spring. Many thanks to BMW of Annapolis for hosting another successful club DIY event!



(Above) Joseph Concaugh replaced the steering wheel angle sensor on his 2003cic.

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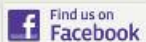
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3rd Annual NCC Chili Cook-off at Collectors Car Corral

By Anna Maripuu | Photos by Anna Maripuu & Walter Jones



It seems only fitting that we hold our traditional club chili cook-off at a car corral. What better way to sample chili and commune with fellow club members than among a collection of amazing cars? This year the snow held off. Two years ago at the 2nd annual cook-off, those present will remember how hard the snow started to fall right around the time to depart. One club member, Phil Cummings, even had to stay until midnight before he could make it home. And last year, there was no cook-off due to renovations being made to the locale of the Collectors Car Corral.



|(Opposite page) Prizes, including the trophies. (Above) Homestyle lineup.

So we were long overdue for a really good cook-off event. About 40 people were registered and gathered in a small conference room to socialize over coffee and donuts. The chili recipes were in one of two categories: homestyle and traditional. There were three entrants in the traditional category and six in the homestyle category.

Traditional chili meant the purist's form of chili – a strict definition with meat, tomatoes and sauce and spices, but no fillers such as beans or pasta. In the homestyle category, anything goes, and one

could essentially add any ingredients one thought would be a yummy addition to the chili.

Kendra Seto did an amazing job wrangling the chili chefs and making sure the crockpots were neatly lined up and labeled, ready for judging. Gina Hector was in charge of tallying the results. Small groups of people came into the tasting area and judged the nine chili recipes on the basis of various measures, such as taste, texture, looks, originality, and so on.

Lest you think this event was all about chili, think again, Randy

Moss, Consultant for Collectors Car Corral (CCC), gave attendees a tour of the facility. He explained that we were in a brand new building, the old one was just next door, and he even explained in painstaking detail how the floor of the new car corral had been finished in order to gleam beautifully with the perfect finish. Everywhere, it was evident that there was a meticulous attention to detail.

The new building was completed at the end of May this past spring and opened in June of 2017. Randy explained that CCC was one

part of the DAS group, which also comprised a detailing business called Diamond Detail and a body shop called SDR, Small Damage Repair and Certified Collision Center. Half of the building next door that used to house the car corral had been turned into a center for detailing, and also served as training center to learn how to detail cars. The other half was a car storage warehouse. Altogether between the two buildings, CCC housed about 120 cars. There was also a classroom type room that car clubs could use for any kind of

|(Below from Left) The oldest car in the collection, a 1922 Buick. Tagline for the Collectors Car Corral. A 1969 Corvette – one of the originals.





training or event.

After I had judged the nine chilis, I wandered around the main building looking at the cars that were housed there. Access was limited as some cars were up on lifts, or in plastic tents, or behind other cars. But from what I could see, there was an impressive lineup including some Ferraris, Porsches, Maseratis, Lamborghinis, a Rolls Royce, a couple of incredibly tricked out off road vehicles, at least one McLaren, vintage Corvettes, an off the hook Dodge Charger, among others.

I had the pleasure of talking to Chuck Visconage, a long-time client at CCC. At this time, he was storing two of his cars at CCC: a red 1987 Porsche 911 Turbo with a tan interior, and a red 1985 Ferrari 355 with a tan interior. His third car, which he kept at home, was a Porsche 944, which coincidentally, is red with a tan interior! I sensed a certain theme going on with Chuck and his cars though he said this was pure happenstance. He explained that the Ferrari was incredibly easy to drive compared to the Porsche and let me sit in the

(Top) Club members gather for a tour of CCC led by Randy Moss, consultant for CCC. (Above Left) Randy Moss and Jeremy Anderson chat about engines. (Above Middle) CCC houses an impressive array of all sorts of cars, Porsches, Ferraris, and even some race cars, in a fully climate controlled environment. (Above Right) Chuck Visconage, CCC client, with his 1987 Porsche 911 Turbo. (Right) John Francis enjoys a cup of coffee while perusing the CCC car collection.





place went to Marty Etzel for his Finish Line Chili and 2nd place went to Phil Cummings, with his excellent Basic Bimmer Chili, which tasted far from basic. This was Phil's first time ever cooking chili, and he did such a great job that Paul remarked he'll surely be appointed full time chef in the Cummings household from now on.

In the Traditional category, in a huge upset from the past two cook-offs, Paul Seto won with his Bacon Bimmer Bomb (that's triple B) displacing our reigning champion, Abheek Sen, who had to be content with 2nd place with his SubAtomic M3 chili.

For the Most Creative category,

Paul Seto won with his triple B chili, and the Most Unusual chili category went to Abheek Sen's SubAtomic M3 chili.

After people had eaten their fill of the yummy offerings, many stayed in the conference room to watch the opening laps of the 24 hour Rolex IMSA race, being held at Daytona, Florida. The snow held off this time, and all in all, it was a great day for chili, camaraderie and cars at CCC!

(Top left) Marty Etzel, winner of homestyle. (Top right) Abheek Sen, 2nd place traditional style (Left) Phil Cummings, 2nd place homestyle. (Below) Paul Seto, winner of the traditional style.

driver's seat for a spell. I tested the clutch, brake and gas pedal. All were short and responsive. He explained that the clutch was very smooth and easy.

The Ferrari was definitely very low, with a wide threshold, and it was one of those cars that you had to swing your body and legs in and out of – not exactly easy for the inflexible. Chuck showed me the engine, in the back, pointing out how very low the valve cover sat.

After Randy's tour of the two buildings, it was time to announce the winners of the chili cook-off and

actually eat an amount of chili that was more than a small sample! John Walker had provided the crew with cheese, corn chips, and sour cream to adorn the chilis, after the tasting and judging. He also provided dessert in the form of brownies and cookies and pastries. It was definitely a well executed feast, and a group effort. Not least of which we have to thank Paul Seto for all he did to coordinate this event.

But let me announce the winners...

In the Homestyle category, 1st



The Motorsport for the Cone Head and “Average Joe” Alike

By Jaclyn Heck | Photos by Jaclyn Heck & Fraser Dachille

Once again, the Autocross season is upon us. For those of you who are unfamiliar (as I was just a short time ago,) let me draw you in.

Autocross is a timed competition in which drivers navigate a course, laid out with a sea of cones on a parking lot, to compete against themselves and others in their class. You are racing against the clock, rather than against another car, wheel to wheel.

It is beneficial for all levels, from those who view driving as a means to an end to those who like to drive for the hobby. For those who are experienced, autocross is about precision driving at a higher speed; for those new to the sport, autocross is a way to dip your toes into competitive driving in a safe and welcoming environment.

Are you worried you do not have the proper car, equipment or experience to take a spin (figuratively...or literally)? It's not a problem; experience is not necessary. If you can you drive your car to and from the event safely, you can participate in an autocross. Do you have a working vehicle with operable brakes, non-bald tires, and free from leaks? (Or can you service your car to assure the above?) You can autocross. Does your car have working turn signals?

It does not matter, because you will not need them for autocross. Basically, if you have a vehicle fit for the roadways, it can be autocrossed.

No matter what type of car you have: two or four door, automatic or manual, two or four wheel drive: You can autocross. My father drives an Acura TL as his daily driver, and actively competes with it in autocross events. You, too, can autocross.

BMW builds the Ultimate Driving Machine. Why not let them prove it in a safe and controlled environment: autocross?

With NCC Autocross, we are happy to help you if you are new to the sport.

We host a Novice School at the beginning of the season for those new to the driving event. We have experienced and seasoned autocross drivers explaining the rules, ins and outs, and how to read a course, as well as seat time to give you a hands-on approach to learning. Before every regular season event, we offer a walk-through for those who are new, or who just want some refreshers. If you need a helping hand for your first few runs, our seasoned committee members are happy to hop in the car with you, instruct, and provide feedback.

Built on good-natured competition,



(Above) **Pop Goes the Wheelie** - Navigating the course at high speeds, you may occasionally go three-wheeling. (Below) Cone Eater NCC Autocross member & S2 Class Champion, Eric Core, crushing a cone at FedEx Field.



fun, and an interest in driving, autocross is a great event to enjoy yourself, meet other car enthusiasts of all sorts, test your driving ability and improve your connection with your car. Develop better car handling skills and become more comfortable (and confident) in your vehicle.

Whether you are a first-timer, seasoned driver, or just want to check out an event before you take the plunge to drive yourself, the NCC Autocross team and I invite you to join us at our events.

If I have piqued your interest, but you have more questions, please

look at NCCAutocross.com for more information (and suggestions on how to further prepare for an event.)

For more information, go to www.nccautocross.com. You can register for any of the events at <https://www.motorsportreg.com/orgs/bmwcca/national-capital/autocross>.

And in case you did not know, new BMW CCA members automatically receive a free autocross event with their membership.

When and Where:

3/25	Novice School	Bowie Baysox Stadium, Bowie, MD
4/15	Test & Tune #1	Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD
4/22	Points Event #1	FedEx Field, Landover, MD
5/20	Points Event #2	FedEx Field, Landover, MD
5/27	Test & Tune #2	Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD
6/3	Points Event #3	FedEx Field, Landover, MD
7/22	Points Event #4	Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD
8/12	Points Event #5	FedEx Field, Landover, MD
9/3	Points Event #6	Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD
10/8	Points Event #7	Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD

Meet the NCC BMW CCA's Autocross Committee:

- Committee Chairman – Phil Yates
- Co-Chairman – Collin Smith
- Co-Chairman and Sponsor Relations Coordinator – Sarah Abernethy
- Course Design and Safety Coordinators– AJ Aviles, Jeff Noyes, Kamran Bakhtian
- Classing Coordinator – Bob Esser
- New Member and NCC Board Liaison – Abheek Sen
- Novice Coordinator and Registration Coordinator – Fraser Dachille
- Registration Coordinator – Melissa Brun
- Social Media/PR/derBayerische – Cedric Hope, Jaclyn Heck
- Timing Coordinators – Jeremiah Anderson, Jack Raymond, Mike McKee
- Event Check-In – John Lattanzio
- School Coordinators – Okas Elam, Adam Chelikowsky



(Above) **The Maledivenblau** - A Z4 speeds past at the 2016 Novice School.



(Above from left) **Platinum Menace** - A beautiful Platinum Bronze E93 at Bowie Baysox Stadium. **White Lightning** - Last season's Novice Class Champion, Joey Hutchinson, and his E92 M3. (Below) **Mean Muggin'** - Participants waiting for Tech Inspection to open before the morning session.



The Club Store is Back!

We have a new online store with quality items for our members.

The BMW store is the perfect place to get Chapter gear from \$14 to \$30 for ladies and gentlemen. Since the store is online you can order, purchase and have the merchandise delivered to your home. There is also a new item, a chapter umbrella.

The variety of merchandise will increase and we will be able to provide both logos as you, the members take advantage of the current inventory. All items will come with the NCC BMW Car Club logo on the front left chest. On dark apparel, please be aware that the logo will come as a mandatory heat-

pressed patch with a white background per BMW national standards. On all light apparel, you may opt to have the logo embroidered. When choosing this option, the logo will not come with a white background.

Look for the new store on our website <http://forum.nccbmwcca.org/store.php>



N C C C L U B S T O R E N C C C L U B S T O R E N C C C L U B S T O R E

Chapter Utility Vehicle (CUV)

By James Laws

Work continues as we ready the CUV for its Virginia safety inspection and subsequent chapter support activities. It is our plan to sell advertising space on the CUV to our sponsors and supporters to offset the operating costs of the vehicle.

Since the last issue of the *dB* the following activities have taken place.

- A set of E36 Style 23 wheels were donated by chapter member Mike Painter
- A car cover was donated by chapter member Mike Noble
- New tires were purchased from, and installed by longtime chapter supporter and sponsor Radial Tire Company in Silver Spring, MD
- The vehicle's ABS controller was identified as defective at the BMW of Sterling DIY in November by chapter member Chris Wooten using the chapter's diagnostic equipment
- A replacement ABS controller was sourced from chapter member Adam Bajrak of

Man Cave Motorworks (E39 M5 Specialists) in Dayton, MD and installed by member James Laws

- Vehicle programming for the replacement ABS controller was performed by chapter member Ethan Ware of Ethan's Automotive (BMW Specialists) in Capital Heights, MD
- Rear brake pads and rotors were installed by yours truly
- One rear sway bar end link was discovered to be broken while the rear brake and rotors were being installed
- New rear sway bar end links were installed by chapter members Marlon Spencer and this author utilizing facilities at Ethan's Automotive
- In a totally unexpected turn of events the upper radiator suffered a catastrophic failure and was replaced with an OEM piece from BMW of Silver Spring

Everyone is aware that our cars demand constant care and attention. To that end if you

happen to have any E39 parts that are no longer needed, please consider a donation to the chapter for use on the CUV.



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It's Driving Season! Spring Cleaning

By James Chew

My mid-Atlantic and California BMW friends are facing the chore of "Spring Cleaning" their BMWs.

For those of us living in the mid-Atlantic, we need to wash off the road salt, road dirt, and beet juice (yes, beet juice) stains from winter driving. We also need to remove the fall leaves, twigs, mulch and other organic debris from the various drain ports and cracks and crevices.

The heavy California rain storms have not only covered the normally dry and clean California roads with mud and organic debris, but may also have revealed water leaks, either due to clogged sunroof drain ports and detached door vapor barriers.

And in both locations, the BMW owners face the task of cleaning

the engine compartment as well as the interior. Coffee and other hot beverages will heavily stain the vehicle's floor mats and upholstery.

While hackneyed, it's true — a clean car runs better and drives better. And if, God forbid, you're ever in an accident, insurance companies tend to add value to cars that have been obviously well maintained and well groomed.

Whether you're living in the Washington, D.C. metro area or in California, you quickly find that those who wash and detail their vehicles themselves are an anomaly. High-end car wash/detail centers as well as mobile wash/detailing services (they come to your job location!) have become big business. While they do a decent job, especially with under-

carriage cleaning, owners gain a certain healthy attachment to their vehicle by cleaning and detailing the vehicle.

I must do a fairly decent job on my vehicles — I've had several neighbors offer me dinner and alcohol if I do the same for them! My answer is always the same — "no, unless you have a BMW."

I've always used Mother's car care products on my vehicles. Started by a guy in Huntington Beach, who developed a proprietary polish for high-end wheels, Mothers is a family owned business and a true American Success Story. Yes my misguided liberal friends, the Halloway family BUILT that business!

I became a Mothers enthusiast when I worked with them on SEMA

show vehicles when I was working for Exide batteries. Starting with a mag wheel and aluminum polish in the 1970's by an Southern California car enthusiast, Mothe's has grown to be come a globally known company with over 70 car care products.

Mothers has developed products that have helped car enthusiasts maintain the "show quality" shine to their vehicles. The pure California Gold Carnuba Wax, the clay bar, their "power ball" polisher, and their headlight restoration kit that includes a mini power ball, are quite popular among car enthusiasts. I can vouch for all three products having used them on all my vehicles. In fact, I've used the clay bar on my daughter's 2001 325i and my wife's 2007 X5, and I used the headlight restoration

kit on my daughter's 2001 325i. While they may exist, I have yet to find a BMW that uses the much more expensive Zymol products that look better than my "Mothers" vehicles.

I use the following Mothers products: California Gold Brazilian Cleaner Wax (comes in paste and liquid), Foaming Wheel & Tire Cleaner, Polished Aluminum Wheel Cleaner, Back-to-Black Trim Care, California Gold Clay Bar System, Mothers Window Cleaner, and Back-to-Black Tire Renew (this is a tire cleaner, not a dressing; leaves a new look). I'll use their new California Gold Spray wax for weekly touch ups, as needed. I also use the BMW-branded leather cleaner and conditioner – it seems to work best with the newer BMW Dakota leather upholstery.

I'm always amazed at the amount of dirty/black "stuff" the clay bar and cleaner wax removes from even a well-maintained paint finish. The amount of black "stuff" removed by both the clay bar and the cleaner wax was eye opening – even more so considering that this was recently washed following service by my BMW dealer. These Mothers products are much easier to use than their famous "3-step" exterior finish products and the results are just as good. Using these products on your vehicle after a winter immediately debunks the myth of "lifetime" paint finish treatments. My 135i and X3 look better than showroom new – actually "auto-show quality" – after these treatments.

I may even be more anal than the typical BMW enthusiast in that I wash my wheels daily. I simply can't stand the black dust build up. If BMW brakes accumulate such large amounts of brake dust during "dry" driving, one can only imagine the amount of road salt, road dirt, and other road debris that gets trapped. All one needs is a garden hose and high-pressure nozzle to clean four wheels and brakes.

BMW must have changed the material used on their new products

because my 2012 135i and 2017 X3 do not generate the same amount of brake dust as my older BMWs. The braking performance is just as good – so perhaps the BMW engineers have finally heeded the complaints from generations of BMW owners! The Mothers tire and wheel products are most effective on wheels that have a fair amount of brake dust build up. On a friend's BMW, we found that application immediately restored the wheels to the factory shine.

BMW's "Nevada" leather on the new products seems to be following an industry trend of processing leather car upholstery to within an inch of vinyl. It's to the point where it's nearly impossible to tell the difference between Nevada leather and the BMW leatherette. BMW does benchmark Mercedes products when designing new products, but trying to offer an "MB Tex" upholstery for the interiors seems to be a bad direction. That being said, the BMW-branded leather products were quite effective, especially in removing dirt from the steering wheel and the driver's seat. The added bonuses are the lack of the "sticky" finish that's typical after using the Lexol conditioner as well as an infusion of "new BMW leather" smell.

And don't forget to wash ALL INTERIOR windows. While I use the Mothers Glass Cleaner, any reputable brand of glass cleaner will do. If you can, go to your local Harbor Freight and buy some micro-fiber towels to use for the window cleaner. They are much more effective than paper towels. Be forewarned – you'll be surprised by the amount of dirt and grime you'll remove, especially from your windshield and rear windows.

Use furniture polish on the wood trim and give all interior surfaces a good dusting and, if needed, wash with a mild detergent solution. I highly recommend that you DON'T use Armor All. Not only have I found treated surfaces to be very slippery, but it collects dust.

And don't forget the carpets, floor mats, and trunk area. Your local Home Depot sells a variety of carpet

and cloth upholstery cleaners, but I do recommend applying Scotchguard following the cleaning.

After eleven years, the headlights on my daughter's 2007 X5 were beginning to develop that dreaded plastic haze. Fortunately, Mothers offers a headlight restoration kit that is quite effective. By the way, heed the instructions about using a cordless drill and the Mothers Powerball to apply the headlight restoration lotion. You won't believe the mess created when using a corded drill and buffing wheel! And I'm proud to say that all three vehicles look showroom new. Because my daughter's car is parked outside, I'm trying the Mothers California Gold Synthetic wax to see if the shine will last longer than their Carnauba wax.

Another benefit from using Mothers products is that they are available at the popular auto parts chains. That being said, I would encourage you to visit Mothers web site to review some of their "web site only" products.

One last thing – DON'T FORGET TO CLEAN THE SUNROOF AND THE ENGINE COWL DRAIN PORTS. Because most BMW owners (and dealers) never clean the sunroof drain ports, they clog from an accumulation of pollen and dirt. This results in water from the sunroof area draining directly in to their trucks or cargo areas. Unfortunately the only time BMW owners discover this problem is when they have electrical issues. Why BMW has not issued a service bulletin to their detailers to check these drains during the oil service is beyond me. If you don't know where your sunroof drains are located, ask your BMW dealer or go to the internet.

The same goes with the engine cowl area. There are two removable screened trays on either side that prevent debris from clogging the engine drains. If those trays aren't cleaned, water will eventually accumulate and drain in to the front passenger compartment.

As for your door vapor barriers,

I suggest you discuss with your local BMW dealer or independent mechanic about having them inspected. If you've experienced rear passenger compartment water leaks during the recent wet weather, chances are they need to be re-installed.

While the focus of this article is on detailing, I did not neglect the mechanical inspection on my three BMWs. "Fast times" from Bavarian Autosport prints an outstanding Spring mechanical inspection for any BMW. As a BMW enthusiast and a "car guy" I worry that BMW's free maintenance, use of "lifetime" fluids (seriously?) and computer based vehicle monitoring system is creating a generation of BMW enthusiasts that have no idea how to open the hood of their BMWs (by the way, that's TWO pulls of the inside hood release for you new 3 and 4 Series owners). And BMW's increased use of run-flat tires and tire pressure monitoring systems is creating a generation of BMW owners that have no clue as to how to check tire pressure, inflate a tire, or change a tire.

A big part of the joy of owning an "Ultimate Driving Machine" is understanding how your vehicle works and performing some of the basic maintenance inspections to prevent major problem from occurring. It helps one "know" the vehicle's behavior and builds an "instinctive" relationship between the owner and the vehicle. These people can "feel" the condition of their vehicle – when it needs maintenance and when it needs repairs. It will up to the regional BMW Car Club of America clubs to continue to conduct regular "DIY" clinics in order to educate the new BMW owner – transforming them from BMW owners to BMW enthusiasts.



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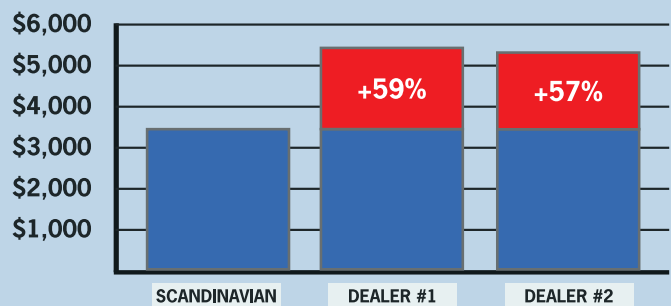
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California Auto Museum, Sacramento

Legends of the Autobahn Side Trip

By James Chew

For the car enthusiast, August is “the” time to be in Monterey. The Historic Races at Laguna Seca, the Pebble Beach Concours, and the Legends of the Autobahn has car enthusiast thinking of clever ways to save vacation time (and money) in order to spend two to three weeks in Monterey.

After attending a number of them, one still will appreciate the beauty, pageantry, and camaraderie from these events. Last year’s event was pure BMW nirvana – with the annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest AND the 100 year BMW North American celebration also being held.

While I was initially not happy, I have come to appreciate the increased



(Top) The FIRST BMW – the Austin Seven design was licensed to become the BMW “Dixi”. (Above) The “other” BMW in the museum – a classic BMW motorcycle.

attendance, press, and manufacturer participation. Having them at these events is the BEST way to de-bunk the “anti-car” Sandinista myth that the millennials are shunning cars. During this event it is fun to see the “Prius-hugging” members of the mainstream media receive rides in the many classic and modern performance cars – and watch them suddenly understand the allure of driving a vehicle with a soul.

And while being immersed in this environment is wonderful, the car enthusiasts do themselves a disservice if they did not venture outside the confines of Monterey and visit some of the local car museums in the area. One such museum is the California Auto Museum

in Sacramento.

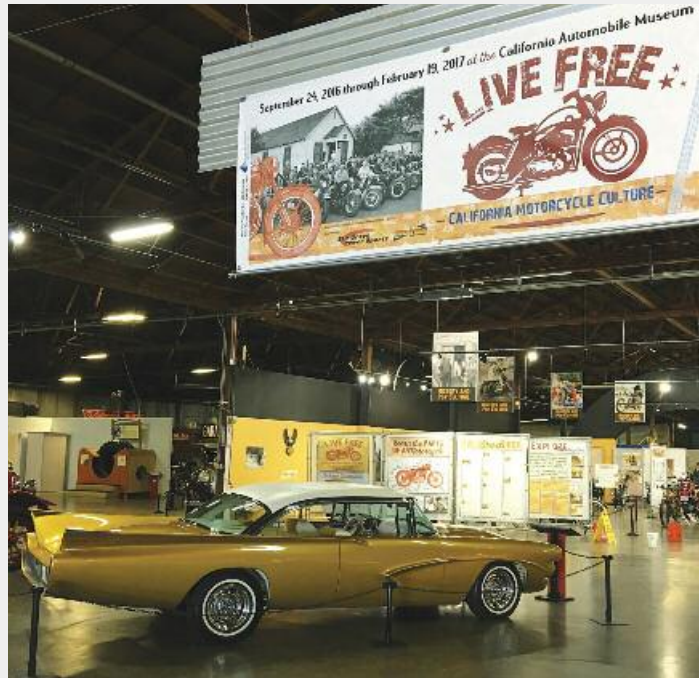
This is NOT a professionally curated museum that features an impressive classic car mausoleum. Rather, the California Auto Museum is staffed and run by fellow car enthusiasts who want to educate people on California's unique car culture.

Because of the volunteer staffs' enthusiasm and knowledge, I highly recommend a tour this museum with one of their outstanding tour guides, or docents, as they are rightfully named.

With the docent, our tour started with an "automobile 101" exhibit. The element of an automotive chassis, the inner workings of an internal combustion car engine, and the inner workings of a differential were displayed. They also have an interesting display on how treaded tires were marketed to the early auto owner. I must admit, I've never before seen tire treads that spelled out "non skid!" Apparently, this museum is popular destination for school field trips. This will ensure a new generation of car enthusiasts.

The museum started as a classic-car museum, so most of the early vehicles are Fords. But you'll also see a Benz, a Peerless (barn find, no less), and a Metz.

One of the more interesting



Lincolns was one that was owned by A.P. Giannini, the founder of Bank of America. Apparently, he wanted a car with a big back seat, where he conducted banking business with a number of Northern California ranchers and farmers when he drove to their locations. This must be how he earned his reputation for being the banker for the little guy.

The focused period displays are delightful – depicting the California car culture through the decades

The museum also has a "classic" alternative vehicle display. Not only was there a Saturn EV, but also a classic Nissan electric vehicle as well as a Honda fuel-cell vehicle. But there were much earlier examples of electric vehicles – one that was introduced in the 1920's that achieved much better range with their lead acid battery pack than most of today's electric vehicles!

One of the more interesting vehicles was Governor Jerry Brown's Plymouth Satellite – his car during his first two terms as Governor of California. Parked next to it was (his then girlfriend) Linda Ronstadt's, Porsche. Another interesting vehicle was a Ford Mustang that belonged to Ricky Nelson. Apparently, that was the car he used to teach his kids to drive!

There were two "BMW's" on

(Top) The museum had the vibe that it's run by motoring enthusiasts. (Above) Tailfins galore – a once familiar California sight. (Below left) There's even a Mercedes (actually a Benz) in this museum. (Below right) For me, the Yosemite display brought back childhood memories.





(Above) The outstanding period displays immerse you into the evolving California Era culture. (Below left) The period garage displays show how auto repair and maintenance has evolved through the years.

display. One was a classic BMW motorcycle. The other was a 1926 Austin Seven. This vehicle design was licensed to BMW, and resulted in the Dixie, the first production

BMW vehicle.

One section of the museum is reserved for the local car clubs. During our visit, the local British Sports Car club had a number of

their members' vehicles on display. After a review of the signs of all the past club participants, I noticed that there was no BMW CCA sign. I'm not sure who leads the BMW CCA

(Below) This classic electric vehicle achieved a better range (using lead-acid batteries) than most of today's electric vehicles!





(Above) Ever wonder how the easy traded tires were marketed? Look at the tree design.

chapter that includes Sacramento, but they need to fix this!

Three other sections of note were the racing section, the motorcycle section, and a consignment sales lot.

Four hours later, the tour was complete. We were quite surprised that we spent so much time in what had initially appeared to be a small museum. And if it had not been for the fact that we were hungry, we could have spent much more time.

From my perspective, there's only one museum that exceeds the California Auto Museum in terms of interesting displays of products and the American car culture. That would be the Petersen Museum in Beverly Hills. While the displays may be more polished and the vehicle collection larger, I doubt one will find a more knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff than those at the California Auto Museum.

So if you're again attending the August Monterey area car events, do yourself a huge favor and expand your car horizons by visiting the California Auto Museum. In addition to a wonderful displays and conversations, you'll again be with "salt of the earth" car enthusiasts – who ironically were the ones that STARTED the Monterey August car events.

Be forewarned – one of the



(Above) The "How a car works" display is a popular section for the kids. Notice how the basics haven't changed much throughout the years.

routes from Monterey to Sacramento takes you by a Ghirardelli Chocolate Outlet Store. Not only are you treated to free samples, but there are chocolate bargains galore!

The California Auto Museum is located at 2200 Front Street in



Sacramento. Their web site address is www.calautomuseum.org.

Many of us fly, rather than drive, to this wonderful annual car event. As I wrote earlier, securing nearby lodging accommodations is darn near impossible, so, we're

sometimes driving daily from San Jose to attend.

Spending that much time in a rental car requires planning. Based on experience, if you see a Kia Forte 5 in the fleet – get it.

There are many reasons to seek

out this vehicle when you're traveling. First is its 5-door "road warrior" design. Those of us who have owned hatchbacks appreciate how the rear hatch opened to reveal a large, cue-like cargo area. Even if you're traveling with three other people, you won't be spending much time at the rental car lot trying to determine a clever way to load your entire luggage.

All four doors are large and they open wide to allow for easy entry and exit – even with you're loaded down with "stuff". In terms of room, passenger comfort, and driver's convenience, the Kia Forte 5 seems to have been designed by the same team that designed the wonderful Kia Soul interior. Kia seems to have found the right balance between design refinement, material fit and finish, and durability. There are plenty of areas to place "stuff" and clean up was quite easy.

While the reviews sounds

somewhat like our review for the equally wonderful VW Golf, the 2017 Kia Forte isn't simply a VW Golf clone. It has its own driving "soul" that will make the driver want to conquer the twisty, curvy roads in and out of Monterey. It has the smooth boulevard ride and outstanding vision for those that decide to drive Highway 1 in to the event. The Kia Forte 5 is such a pleasure to drive that the two-hour drive from the San Jose area to the California Auto Museum in Sacramento will go by quickly for both the driver and the passengers.

Until BMW NA convinces BMW AG to bring the 1 Series 5 door to North America, the Kia Forte 5 is a wonderful affordable alternative. I encourage you all to rent one and tell me your opinions.



(Above) This period display reminds of the gas station outside of Laguna Seca. (Below left) The Kia Forte 5 – the closest you'll get in North America to the BMW 1 Series 5-door. (Below) Linda Ronstadt's 1970's era Porsche is parked next to Governor Jerry Brown's 1970's era Plymouth.



(Below) In this section, the vehicles are arranged to show the evolving American car design.



BMW 320i and Dodge Charger SXT Lone Survivors

By James Chew



The end of the mass-market rear-wheel-drive sedan has been predicted since the late 1970's. Both the OEMs and buyers were favoring front-wheel-drive sedans. For the OEMs, these vehicles were easier to engineer and much less expensive to assemble. For the buyers, the space efficiency and bad weather handling benefits were quite attractive.

But for the driving enthusiast, front-wheel-drive sedans don't have the desirable 50/50 weight distribution and exhibited an alarming amount of torque steer. Some still believe there are two types of vehicles – rear-wheel drive and “wrong”-wheel drive. Because life is too short to drive boring cars, many enthusiasts embark on a quest



(Top) Chicken Soul for the BMW enthusiast Soul – the 3 Series.
(Above) The 2.0 standard “Twin Power Turbo” 4-cylinder engine has proven itself to be a fine successor to the once-standard in-line six.

to find an affordable “enthusiast” rear-wheel-drive sedan for daily driver duty.

In my humble opinion there are now only two choices in this category – the BMW 320i and the Dodge Charger SXT.

Both sedans are very well designed, engineered, and assembled. Whether in their “volume” (320i, SXT) or in their “ultimate” (M3, Hellcat) form, the BMW 3 Series and Dodge Charger are rated at the top of their respective markets.

Being the backbone of any vehicle, the importance of an outstanding chassis cannot be overlooked. In addition to providing the foundation for the vehicle's steering, suspension, braking, wheels, and tires, the amount of chassis stiffness

(especially torsional stiffness) impact the vehicle's handling as well as its assembly quality. A stiff chassis allows for tighter dimensional tolerance, which leads to a higher

chassis development, it's no wonder that the 3/4-series continues to be the benchmark vehicle in its class.

Designed and engineered by Chrysler engineers during Daimler

ownership, the famous "LX" chassis was being developed as part of a very quiet Corporate transition to rear wheel drive platforms. At that time, Chrysler was determined to further

the Chrysler brand "affordable Mercedes" and the Dodge brand "affordable BMW" market position by producing benchmark affordable rear-wheel-drive sedans with a



quality of assembly as well as a better handling vehicle.

The timeless benchmark driving quality of a BMW can be traced directly to their engineers focusing on chassis engineering during the development of the 1600/2002. To distinguish them from the competition, Bob Lutz entered BMW into the European sedan racing circuit. The lessons the chassis engineers learned from the track were incorporated into the 3 Series. Soon, BMWs earned the reputation as "the Ultimate Driving Machine".

This laser focus on chassis engineering continues today. By using the famous Nürburgring track and their various factory sponsored motorsports activities for their



(Top) Something borrowed, something blue – the DoD Charger design incorporates popular cues from the '60s and '70s. (Above) The V-6, more horsepower and torque than most of the popular V-8s from the "muscle car" era.

strong European influence. In short, Chrysler was developing the ultimate "anti CamCord" family sedans.

The "LX" chassis was initially based on the famous "LH" chassis, which produced the popular front-wheel-drive Chrysler 300 and Dodge Intrepid sedans. Unknown to most, the "LH" chassis was extremely versatile, allowing for rear-wheel drive and all-wheel-drive configurations. When the Chrysler and Daimler chassis engineering teams review the "LX," the Daimler engineers provided the E-class 5-link rear suspension and the S Class control arm front suspension. Coupled with their Hemi V-8 engine, the resulting Chrysler 300s and Dodge Chargers flew off the dealer lots. Immediately, police depart-



(Top) Even from the rear 3/4 view, one immediately knows that this is a BMW. (Above) The 3 Series continues to set the standard for a driving enthusiast's "cockpit".

ments from around the country wanted to switch to Dodge Charger patrol vehicles. A trivial fact – then Senator Obama drove a Chrysler 300C.

Perhaps one of the signs that I'm getting wiser with age and experience is that when I look at the 3 Series or the Charger, I don't immediately gravitate to the M and Hellcat. In my humble opinion, the E36 M3 (which some more fanatical BMW enthusiast will argue that the US version was not a real M) was the last M that I would consider for daily driving duties, while the Charger R/T has 80% of the Hellcat's performance with MUCH better fuel economy. Whether in driving in Southern California or the Washington DC metro area rush hour traffic, I've felt the frustration coming from the current generation of M and SRT/Hellcat vehicles.

Enthusiasts know that driving enjoyment isn't an exclusive trait to "ultimate" sports cars. Balance, responsiveness, and predictability are much more important factors, traits in which both the 320i and Charger SXT excel.

Using the "Peter Carroll halftime" approach to freshening, the 320i has exorcised the demons that plagued this generation 3 series when it was first launched. Specifically, the electronic steering feels much better, the "auto stop" is much smoother, and

the suspension has been retuned to act like a BMW, not a Lexus.

Equipped with a minimal amount of equipment and the six-speed manual transmission, the 320i is simply a blast to drive. Whether I'm driving the back roads to Charlottesville or the Angeles Crest Highway, the 320i brings the best out of any driver. When driving the Interstate highways, the BMW's "autobahn cruiser" characteristics shine. The car is very easy to park, easy to drive in above- and under-ground parking structures, and will not exhaust the driver in stop-and-go traffic. Best of all, the outstanding "real world" fuel economy from the 320i's turbocharged 4-cylinder engine will make any "CamCord" owner envious.

The Charger SXT was also a pleasure to drive. While a manual transmission is not available, we found that the new 8-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters allowed for some rather spirited back road driving.

As if one needed more proof of the Dodge Charger's daily driving prowess, the California Highway Patrol recently ordered close to 600 and the Los Angeles Police Department another 100 to replace their older patrol vehicles.

Closely examining the police vehicle purchases, you'll notice that the vast majority of the Dodge Chargers are equipped with the 292 horsepower V6. As we found the performance as well as the observed average fuel economy from this engine is quite outstanding.

An interesting point is that while the EPA classifies the 3 Series as a compact luxury sedan and the Charger as a full size sedan, the two vehicles are surprisingly close in size and interior volume. Only in cargo space does the Charger show its larger size, though both can be equipped for folding rear seats. Both vehicles transported four full-size American adults in comfort and the large, practical trunk volumes will easily accommodate four golf bags.

One of the best reasons for the enthusiast to consider both the BMW 3 Series and the Dodge Charger, as a daily drivers is the ability to purchase both under the respective certified pre-owned programs. Having the ability to purchase low-mileage vehicles with a factory warranty without having to absorb the new car vehicle depreciation allows the enthusiast to be both car- and financial-savvy.

We've written about BMW's move toward front-wheel-drive vehicles and have been quite impressed with the resulting product the 2016 BMW X1. The BMW Supervisory Board has been less than impressed with the sales performance of



(Top) With a nod to the 1970 Charger, the Charger is one of the most handsome scans on the road. (Above) Enthusiasts will find themselves at home behind the wheel of the Charger.

the i-Series, which has diverted valuable product development resources. And while the 3 Series continues to be BMW's crown jewel, the popularity (and margins) from the X-vehicles continues to impress the Supervisory Board.

The current owners of Chrysler brands continue the trend of poor ownership since Chrysler "partnered" with Daimler. Milking as much as money from the minivan, Jeep, and Ram Truck cash cows, FCA is diverting most of the product development resources to an ill-advised North American re-launch of Alfa Romeo. With the new Fiat 124 (e.g., "Fiata") and the recently announced 20% price reduction to all 2017 Fiat models, FCA has already shown that they will re-badge competitive products to fill out their product line. And slash prices to generate sales

People buy daily drivers for the long run. And both the BMW 3 Series and Dodge Charger reliability have been quite good. With the anticipated tsunami of off-lease 3 Series and Charger coming to the certified pre-owned market in 2017, it may soon be the ideal time to purchase one. Based on recent business decisions by both BMW and FCA, it's not clear how much longer these lone survivors will be on the market.



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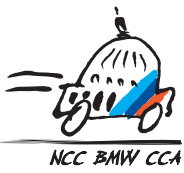


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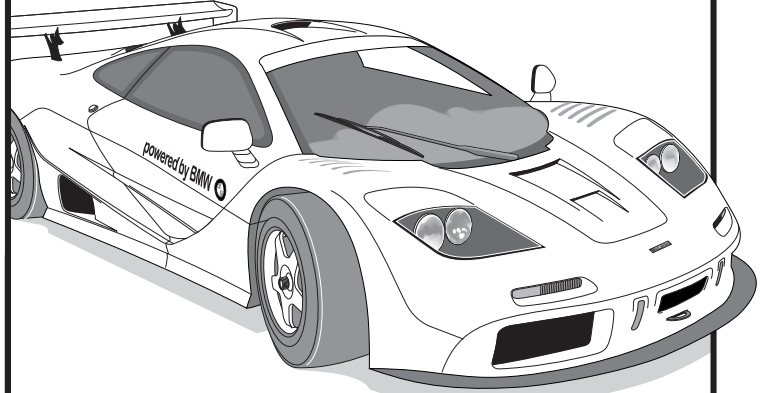


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