

D R I V I N G

BMW Car Club
of America
Buckeye Chapter



News, Views and
BMW Stuff to Do

WINTER 2015-16



Have a Classic Christmas

Sometimes at a certain age you think that perhaps you can be social recluse. Having met a lot of people already and having a small circle of friends, you may ask – “What else do I need?”

Then you attend a BMW event and you meet more interesting people. We have new faces at our monthly area meetings all the time. And, the opportunity to train teen drivers really brings out great people. Such was the case with the recent Street Survival School in Columbus.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

by **George Saylor**

There are the volunteers – Buckeye Chapter members, Porsche Club members, and spouses. We could not have run an effective class without the assistance of the Porsche Club. They're a great group of guys with a lot of cool cars. Buckeye Chapter members regularly and reliably come out to provide in-car coaching, or merely chasing cones. Spouses, the unsung heroes (heroines?), maintain registration and coordinate meals, and the much-needed coffee, first thing in the morning. They are also in-car coaches (which is just so cool!).

There are the parents – seemingly just as apprehensive as their children, but quick to recognize that This Is a Good Thing. I engaged several parents during the course of the training, and they are simply amazing, and interesting. Kudos to them for getting their children out to the training site soooo early in the morning!

Business owners and sponsors – these are the proprietors who open their property and business so that we may conduct a proper school. Having good facilities is absolutely essential. Others are sponsors providing much-needed financial assistance. We are fortunate to have local and corporate sponsors who understand the investment they are making will pay huge dividends in the years ahead.

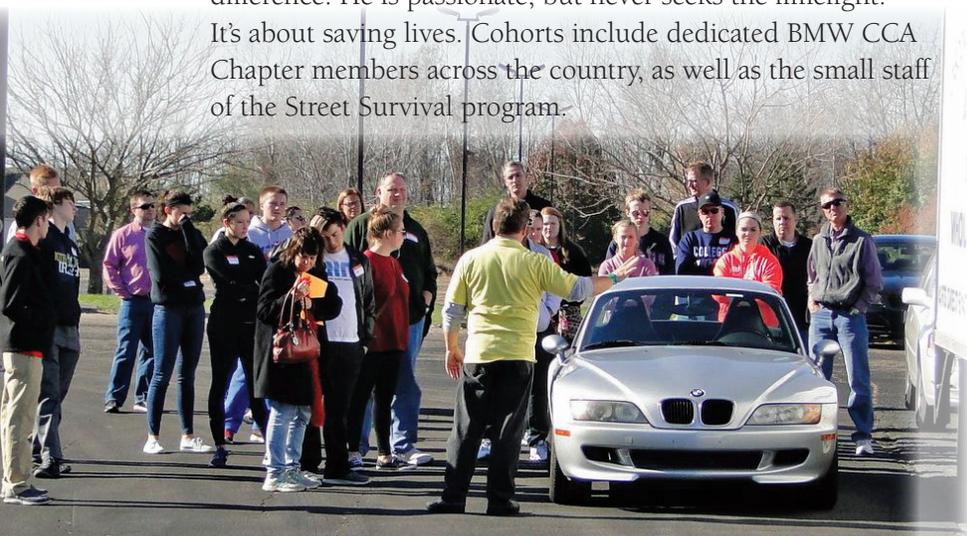
Street Survival – Bill Wade and his cohorts. I call out Bill by name, as he is the backbone of this effort to make a difference. He is passionate, but never seeks the limelight. It's about saving lives. Cohorts include dedicated BMW CCA Chapter members across the country, as well as the small staff of the Street Survival program.

“We are enriched by your selfless efforts.”

Volunteers, parents, businesses, sponsors, and the Street Survival folks – you know who you are. You know what you are doing. We are enriched by your selfless efforts. I thank you all for that, and the opportunity to remain un-recluse.

This newsletter will take us into a new year. That means the National office and all of the Chapters once again begin the annual dance involving the submittal of various forms, the search for local leaders, and taking care of financial matters (taxes). For the Buckeye Chapter, January is typically the month we ask our local groups to nominate and elect Area Governors and Vice-Governors. The election results carry forward to a March meeting of the Board. The Board approves the local elections and then sets about to elect its Officers. The designated Officers are the President and the Secretary-Treasurer. These positions are required the National Bylaws.

With over 1,100 members in the Buckeye Chapter, one would think that there is an endless pool of candidates for chapter leadership. I believe there are many qualified individuals who can contribute to the Chapter through participating as an Officer, Board member (Gov's and Vice-Gov's), Vice-President, or one of several Committee Chairs. It is just so difficult to get them to realize they can do the job. For those of us who have held various positions in the Chapter over the years, it's not that we don't relish the long-term stability of being actively involved – we believe new blood can bring fresh ideas and help the Chapter improve. Is the Buckeye Chapter the only one with many years of experience by a core group? Actually, not at all, as this seems to be a somewhat common issue amongst the chapters nationwide. We will continue to move the Buckeye Chapter forward. However, we can certainly provide opportunities for those who want to make a difference or have their voice heard. If you are interested in a position within the Chapter leadership, simply let us know as soon as possible. ■





SO TIRED

by **Tim Beechuk**

Every once in a while, a completely undeserving Joe gets the opportunity to sit in with the big kids and go to an event that is really fun and teaches you some interesting stuff.

I'm the undeserving Joe who, with along with 23 of my Tire Rack Street Survival friends, were invited to Michelin's Tire University near Greenville, South Carolina. The participants came from across the country, and were the hard-working school organizers who were able to take three days off from their real jobs to come to Michelin's U.S. home. Michelin is one of our strong sponsors of the Tire Rack Street Survival program and they wanted to reward a group of long-serving school organizers with a trip to their development facilities in South Carolina. Bill Wade and I came along to try and keep the others in line for a few days. You know how car people get when they are told they can come to a neat testing facility and play with cars and not have to worry about paying for the tires. And tires was what this adventure was all about. Michelin knew that if they taught us what is good and bad about putting tires on our cars, we'd pass this along to the Street Survival students, their parents, and also our friends.

We all arrived on a Wednesday and got together for dinner so our hosts could let us in on the plan for the next couple of days. Basically it was we are going to feed you, make you sit in class for a bit to learn some stuff, and then we get to play on their myriad track set-ups at the Laurens proving ground. Sounded good to me.

Thursday started off at the Michelin Development Center with some education provided by our host, Johnny Valencia, who is also our Michelin/ Street Survival connection, and a very knowledgeable guy. More than just knowing tires, Johnny is a confirmed car guy who not only sees our point of view, he lives it. The morning was filled with information about what we should know about picking tires, tire pressures, caring for tires and swapping and

storing summer and winter tires. And, yes, if the temps where you live drop below 35 degrees you should have winter tires. This was followed by a good round of discussion to answer any odd questions we might have.

Then lunch kept the energy up, and we moved into the afternoon with a tour of US 1, their main production plant on our side of the "pond". They even had loaner steel-toed boots to keep us from having to hobble home at the end of the day. In smaller groups we started out into the plant. This was fascinating. They don't make the rubber sheets there, but get them from another of their plants. Then they slit them into the right width to start mating them with the other strips of rubber, the cords for strength, the bead and whatever magical parts that get molded together. Now we have a round black thing that looks pretty much like a tire, but without the tread. These go into big, hot molds to form the tread and a bit of writing on the side. Interestingly, if the tire is one that would have white lettering on the side, this has been molded in and then the tire buffed to make it appear. Then the finished tire is conveyed off to be inspected. Now here's the wowie part: Every tire is hand-touched for inspection, and then mounted on a two-piece wheel so it can be inflated and spun at speed. Every tire. And they produce 12,000 a day in this plant. Just that fact was

Every tire is hand-touched for inspection... Every tire.



SO TIRED

continued

Fun, but... we all wanted to be in the left seat.

awe-inspiring. Sadly, at the end of the tour we had to return the boots and wear our own shoes home. Dinner was another opportunity to talk over the day and ask any other questions. Friday began with a mini bus trip south to the Michelin Proving grounds in Lauren, SC. What a place. We have done Street Survival schools here on an enormous piece of asphalt they call the black lake, but today we would get to see a number of their other tracks and testing facilities. The first hint that this was a special place was when they put stickers over the lenses of our phones so that there would be no picture taking. They split us into four groups to attack four different tire situations. My group headed first to their new off-road course, to try out the latest mud-and-ditch offering on a Jeep Renegade. It was a blast, and the tires performed well, getting us through some tricky situations with confidence and little drama. Our group decided that if we had a back yard like this, we'd need a Jeep and a set of these tires.

From here we were off to the wet-road course. This was an eye opener. One of us set off in a new BMW 3-series shod with Michelin's cheap, off-shore import. Then another of us followed in a minivan with the new Premier tire, made for wet traction. The minivan could easily catch the BMW, which was squirrely, at best. The minivan was stable and sure-footed. Big news which carried through the day; don't cheap-out on tires.

Next learning, wet braking. This time Toyota Camrys; one with half-worn Michelin Premier tires and the other with a competitor's new, full-tread tires. Each car had a device that would measure the distance needed to come to a full stop from 40 mph. You took the car to 45 mph, hit the brakes in the wet lane, and the measuring device started when you reached 40 mph. No worry about reaction time, purely braking distance. Again, the Michelin product was impressive. Usually around 20 feet difference in stopping distance. Enough to miss that car who unreasonably stopped in front of you.

Our last learning was what to do if you are only buying two new tires. Do you put them on the front or rear? Most people figured on the front for steering effect, especially with a front-drive car. Well, wrong again. We were on a half-mile circular wet skid pad, in Ford Fusions. Front-wheel-drive in all of its glory. We had an instructor in the right seat to keep us from any real fun. First, with the new tires on the rear, we were instructed to enter the pad at a reasonable entrance ramp speed and do a lap or two at around 50 mph. Not too dramatic, a little loose if you got the speed up, but pretty stable. Then the same with the new tires on the front. A quarter lap, give or take, was the average that anyone in the group could manage. Wow, what a difference doing the right thing makes! At the end of the day we each got a couple lap ride in a prepared Mustang with Pilot Sport Cup tires. Fun, but with this crowd, we all wanted to be in the left seat.

This was a really informative and fun two days. We all walked away talking about the information we picked up, and that we would pass this on to students and friends. The Michelin folks were great, and entertaining to be with. I think the instructors at Laurens probably were happy to have a group of car people for the day, versus tire salesmen that were maybe a little less comfortable on the track.

After all of this information, I'm sure that Michelin tires will be at the top of my list for the next tire purchase, but more than that, I appreciate that they are a sponsor of the Street Survival program, because I know they care. And that's what matters. ■

You are invited to the annual Buckeye Chapter

Holiday Party

6:30-9 pm, Saturday, January 16

At the home, garage and art studio of Margie and Jim McCullough
2764 Ater Drive, Beavercreek, Ohio 45434

Not to be missed!
Casual Attire • BYOB



Well, the weekend began on an interesting note. Tim off to the airport to spend time with the CCA board in Santa Barbara, California, planning the next five years for the Club. Sunshine, palm trees, and lapping waves. I, on the other hand, in a Chevy Suburban with Marshall Garrison, the back end loaded with cones, shirts and an air bag. We were headed for snow flurries and sleet in Cleveland and Columbus. But, the upside was that we were planning on saving a number of teen lives. We were headed to do two Tire Rack Street Survivals on back-to-back days.

Because of strong local support, we decided to do a second Columbus school for this year. The next real opportunity would be early November, so that was the plan. Not always the best of Ohio weather, but all was ready to go with the help of coaches from the Mid-Ohio Porsche Club of America region and great sponsorship from Lindsay Honda. Our only downside was that Mark Jeanmougin, our energetic classroom instructor, had a family event conflict that might pose a timing problem. It



happened that Bill Wade was doing a school in Cleveland the prior day and could use some additional coaches. A deal was struck: Marshall and I would go to Cleveland to help out if Bill would stop in Columbus on his way home and do classroom for us. It seemed to provide benefits for both of us. We could all stand out in an icy parking lot for two days straight.



left with smiles on their faces and a lot more car control knowledge in their heads. I'd like to thank all of our coaches from Buckeye and Mid-Ohio PCA, also Lindsay Honda, and especially Marshall for his course setup on both days.

As usual, no matter what difficulties the venue or the weather threw at us, the students got an excellent school and learned a lot. They all



This truly is the best thing we do as a club. If you haven't had a chance to be a part of a school, never fear, we'll be back at it again next year. ■



TRSS photos courtesy of Mark S. Borrer



by **Mike Trevor**

Winter Care Care - *Caring for the paint and interior of your vehicle during the Winter is just as important as during the warm Spring, Summer and Fall months. I have outlined a few steps on how to best maintain your vehicle's finish and interior during the cold temps, salt, and snow we may encounter in the coming weeks and months.*

THE SHINING

1. Exterior: Make sure you keep your paint, windows, plastics and rubber surfaces clean and protected. Aside from looking great, by keeping the surfaces clean it'll be easier to remove snow and other debris that may obstruct your view, and the surface will be less prone to damage.

- Make sure you wash your vehicle using a two- or three-bucket method. Select the appropriate car wash solution (such as Optimum No Rinse, Chemical Guys HoneyDew Snow Foam or Meguiar's Shampoo Plus) for the paint protectant you have chosen for your vehicle. Some coatings and sealants require specific washing agents to prolong the protective and gloss-enhancing properties so be sure to choose the most suitable solution.
- After the wash, a product like IronX can be used to remove any contaminants after the wash process. This step is essential in removing iron deposits and other contaminants that may have embedded into the paint, wheels and protectant surface solution you applied earlier in the year.
- Follow up with a paint, glass and wheel enhancement product such as Blackfire Midnight Sun Instant Detailer or CarPro Hydro2 to keep a slick, glossy and protected surface throughout the Winter months.

2. Interior: Should you drive your vehicle during the Winter, I highly recommend rubber Winter mats, specifically Weather Tech, as they have the largest footprint, with specific designs that allow the water and debris to run away from the soles of your shoes. Should you opt to continue with your carpeted mats, please make sure you clean your carpets, and often.

- Vacuum your interior often; be sure to get underneath all carpeted and rubber floor mats.
- Should you be using rubber floor mats, pull them out and use an appropriate rubber floor mat cleaner such as WeatherTech TechCare FloorLiner and FloorMat Cleaner or 3D LVP (Leather/Vinyl/Plastic) Cleaner. 3D LVP is versatile and can be diluted more or less concentrated depending on your specific needs (1:4 for rubber mats and heavily soiled rubber and plastic surfaces; 1:10 for cleaning and maintaining leather seating areas).
- For carpeting that has become soiled from salt, sand, and other winter weather related debris, I recommend choosing Zep High Traffic Carpet Cleaner (Home Depot cleaning

BMW E39 Passenger Window Regulator

REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT

by **George Saylor**

Editor's Note: *George was kind enough to document the steps necessary to replace a passenger-side window regulator on an E39. Unfortunately the process is sufficiently involved so as to create an article that would have filled this entire issue of the Driving Light! Rather than break the article into multiple parts, forcing the reader to wait until late next year to get the whole story, this article will be posted in its entirety on the chapter web site, www.buckeyebmwcca.org.*

Like they say – "It's not a matter of if, but when."

I've had three front window regulators replaced. Two on the passenger side, one for the driver side. The passenger side regulator depicted in this procedure was the first one. It failed in less than a year. It was a cheap aftermarket unit. I'll pass along some wise words – use BMW parts. You can buy the front regulators without the motors, but the rear door regulators only come with the motor from BMW. They're not great, but they are much better than cheap knock-offs.

If possible, lower the window as far as possible before starting work. Then disconnect the negative cable from the battery terminal. Wait at least 30 minutes for any electrical components to drain before starting work on the door,

aisle) or Chemical Guys Lightning Fast Carpet Clean & Stain Remover. Both products are easy to use and can be agitated with an interior brush such as the Tuf Shine Tire Brush (black handle with white bristles) which, believe it or not, works amazingly well on carpets. The handle is easy to grip, and it is just the right size to get into most carpet areas.

3. General Car Care: Other recommended areas that need attention include wipers, tires and general auto maintenance.

- Check tire pressures at least once per week, especially when the temperature changes from warm to cold or vice versa (there's no recommended specific change in temperature that would warrant an extra check of tire pressures, but I always check when outside temperatures have changed more than 10 degrees from one day to the next). Make sure the tire is cold when checking your pressure, and use the label on the inside of the driver's door jamb for reference. I typically add a few extra PSI for better fuel economy, and depending on what tires I'm running, slightly better steering response for my local Kentucky back roads. *Note:* Buy a good tire pressure gauge. The pen-style tire pressure gauges are difficult to read, and break easily. Spend at least \$10 on a decent gauge at your local auto parts store, and choose one with a handy pressure-release valve.
- Your wipers should be changed every 6 to 12 months, though some brands may last a bit longer. If your wipers are streaking across your windshield, clean the blades with an appropriate glass or rubber cleaner. If they're still streaking, replace them immediately. Not only will the streaks compromise your visibility, but the wipers can also damage your windshield by scratching the surface. I prefer to treat all my exterior windows with RainX, applying three to four layers, in order to avoid using the wipers as much as possible. In doing so it also makes snow and ice removal that much easier. However, if you're using your winter vehicle for any track days that require window chalk, avoid using RainX in the areas you'll be writing on, as the window chalk will not stick to the window with RainX treatment.
- Check all your vital engine fluids such as engine oil, coolant and power steering fluid. Some BMW models may benefit from a slightly different oil or coolant during the winter months, consult your BMW technician to learn which is best for your specific BMW model.

We all love our BMWs and are passionate about driving. The last thing we want to do is end up stuck on the side of the road, especially in the cold Winter weather, with a dirty version of The Ultimate Driving Machine. Keep up under the hood, inside the car and on the surface and you'll have a wonderful driving experience this Winter. ■



(especially if equipped with a door air bag). Some folks leave the battery connected – your choice. I just don't like taking chances, and the costly experience of having to have the dealer reset the SRS.

◀ Door panel before removal

There is a screw in the vent ▶

Continued on www.buckeyebmwcca.org, or <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B2c4iTmtE4MPUTlqS3pFNmR6U2c&usp=sharing>



CINCINNATI AREA NEWS

Mark Jeanmougin, Cincinnati Area Governor

Another year is winding to a close. This is the typical time to sit back, reflect on what we did well, and what we can improve for next year.

2015 was a calmer year for me, personally, which was a very good thing. 2014 brought three CPO purchases; one got returned.

Returning a car wasn't much fun at all. Buying an E90 & E92 was pretty awesome, though!

This year, we tried some new things; I'm real happy about that. We scheduled the Hack Mechanic to do a presentation

From the Chili Party...
courtesy of Mark Jeanmougin



Top: Eat up, boys.

Middle: Host Scott Ontjes with some lovely parting gifts.

Right: Bob modeling his birthday sweatshirt. He's 70...ish.



at a wonderful hotel/car museum in Canton, OH. It would've been a wonderful event, had anyone signed up. So, that was a bust. But, we're trying new things. We're never going to find something new to like if we don't try stuff.

Speaking of trying stuff, anyone want to organize a trip to a Bed & Breakfast? We've been trying/talking about/discussing/not actually doing anything, for years now. Lots of people seem interested, we just can't quite get over the hill to make it happen.

Cincinnati did our August meeting at a park, being outside, doing some grilling, and enjoying the view of some freshly polished Bimmers across the lot. Turnout was on the low side, but I did get to hear the story of Bud melting the brake caliper on a Cadillac at Mid-Ohio and then trying to get the dealer to replace it, under warranty! :)

Would anyone be interested in a "Bimmer Profiles" section of the newsletter? Maybe pick a member, talk about how they got involved, what they like about their car, the club, etc? If so, hit me up at markjx@gmail.com.

A huge thanks to everyone that came to the Chili Party up in Dayton in November. It is quickly becoming a favorite day of mine. Neat people, good food, great fun! 2014 had some real "set-your-mouth-on-fire" chilis. This year was more tame. It was a delicious break from tradition to be able to actually, you know, EAT the food. :)

Plug: I'd like to plug two companies: Michelin and Tire Discounters.

We were returning home after a 1000-mile weekend (to see my niece's wedding!). On that last stretch, we were getting antsy and opened the windows, only to hear a ping, ping, ping from the passenger side. Six miles later, we arrived at home and I found what I expected: a bolt in a Michelin Pilot Sport. Bummer. I took it to Tire Discounters the next morning, where they quickly (and cheaply!) plugged it for me and got me on my way. I have no idea how long my Michelin was holding air AND a bolt. But things were safe and controlled.

Those who know me well, or that have spent time with me in the Summer, know that I am not a "hot weather" kinda person. In fact,

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800.535.2002 | BavAuto.com

I'm more of an "indoorsy" guy. If Full Throttle had a track for full-size cars, I'd have no real reason to ever go into the "big blue room". Today I was running late and didn't bring a coat. My wife's E90 told me it was 35 outside. I was a little chilly. I may be the only Club member happier when the Blizzaks go on. :) Safe Driving! ■

COLUMBUS AREA NEWS

Mark Borrer, Columbus Area Governor

It has been a busy quarter in the Columbus Area, and I want to thank all the volunteers who came out and helped with the Tire Rack Street Survival. I would also like to thank Jaynee Beechuk, Mike Laci, FrontRoom Furnishings, Lindsay Honda and the Columbus Fire Department for their involvement. I also need to thank my wife, Christy, and Mike's wife, Danielle, for the hours of volunteer work they put in throughout this process.

Our fall touring drive of Hocking Hills had some spitting rain, but it did not put a damper of our event. Thanks to Tom Scott and his wife for planning the route and leading the drive! Thanks to Mark, Sandra, Mike, Danielle, Steven, Jeff, Christy and two Dayton members, Kevin and Dave, for coming out. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

Our monthly meeting location is back in business. The Winking Lizard was shut down for a six-month renovation, and I must say it's better than ever. The food and beer selection is still great. Our core group of members that consistently come out for laughs is the driving force behind our car club.

I decided to pick up a copy of Rob Siegel's *Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic*. I've got to say I'm truly enjoying reading his book. He is just an average guy who enjoys working on cars, and his stories give you an insight of the sticky situations you can get into. I had a smile on my face the whole time, telling myself, "that has happened to me". The rusty bolt you can't remove. The screwdriver that is just not long enough. The clothing you choose to wear knowing you're getting dirty. The way you lay out the parts on the work bench. I guess

all mechanics think alike? I could tell some of my stories to the group. My installment of the Bavsound speakers for my E60. The time I changed the transmission fluid in my wife's X3. My first Vanos rebuild. I could go on and on...

So if you have some stories, we would love for you to come out to a monthly meeting and share them. We meet every third Wednesday at the Winking Lizard, located off Bethel Road, at 7:30pm. If you would like to be on our email distribution list for meeting notices, please contact me at mborrer.cols.bmwcca@gmail.com. As always you can check the Buckeye Chapter calendar for event days and times! Happy Holidays! ■

DAYTON AREA NEWS

Nick Schumacher, Dayton Area Governor

Greetings from the Dayton crowd!

Mother Nature has been nice to us so far, but the colder weather is undoubtedly approaching. The ice skating rink in downtown Dayton is now open, so you can tell it will not be getting warmer outside any time soon. I am sure that some of us will learn to love xDrive, especially if we get snow and ice like we did last year. For people like me who have an old rear wheel drive BMW, it just makes driving all that much more interesting. Bring it on!

We had some fun happenings this past fall. Our September meeting was held at Brixx Ice Company, across the street from the Dayton Dragons ballpark. This is our "home base" for meetings, and is a favorite among our members. One of the free appetizers that the Club provides for attendees at Brixx is a huge, delicious pretzel the size of your steering wheel. Despite many of our members having headed to Ofest in New Jersey, we had a large group in attendance.

For our October meeting we made a trip out to Carillon Brewing Company to try some 19th-century inspired eats and libations before heading back to Brixx for the November meeting.

Local BMW dealerships are upgrading their showrooms. Voss Village BMW plans on expanding their showroom, and it should be ready by the time we have the Dayton Area

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meeting there next year. Meanwhile, BMW of Dayton has revamped their showroom, and held a grand re-opening party in November. Among some of the BMW eye candy there was the new X1 and the new 7 Series. The technology on the new 7 is pretty incredible. You can tell the car to park itself via the key fob remote, and the driver can use hand gestures to control features such as hands-free calling and radio volume. The back seat is equally impressive. With a digital notepad you can control the seat position, climate, lighting, and just about anything else you could think of. I am not sure whether I would like to drive the car or take a seat in the back. Though I would not mind having this car in my garage, we did spot a stunning i8 with a protonic blue exterior that, once I win the lottery, I would definitely take over the new 7.

'Tis the season for a Buckeye BMW CCA holiday party. See the announcement in this issue for details about the party.

Remember that there will be no Dayton Area meeting in December, so check the web site for information about the January meeting. You can request to be part of the Buckeye Chapter of the BMW CCA on Facebook. Alternately, subscribe to the Dayton Area e-mail distribution list to get updates on meetings and events. Just e-mail Mark or me and ask to be added to the list. Thanks for a great year, and see you at a future meeting! ■

TOLEDO AREA NEWS

Phil Ross, Toledo Area Governor

I've often wondered how many of us drive our cars in the winter? My first BMW, a 1985 Bronzit Beige 535iA, was our family grocery-getter and school bus through thick and thin. I remember when I bought it as a European Delivery, when I was living in Scotland, and that I could have bought two new big Buicks, or five econoboxes, for the same money. "It better last ten years", I said. I made the right choice; I still have it. I had to get studded snow tires at all four corners to feel safe and

secure in the snow and ice... then it drove like it was on rails.

Oops, this is starting to sound like the beginning of an article for the *Driving Light* newsletter. I've never written an article for the DL, but I know our selfless editor would love to hear from you and have fodder for filling future DLs before the mandated deadline bites. Everyone is eligible for submittals.

Anyway, most of you know that I live in Findlay, near the southern reaches of the Toledo Area. It actually bottoms out geographically around Kenton and Lima. Annual elections of club officers is coming up in January, and I invite/implore you to consider running for Area Governor or Vice Governor. I think Toledo deserves local representation, and now is the time.

Attendance at our monthly meetings hovers around two percent of the membership. Not very good. We meet at Tekela's Mexican Restaurant just south of Levis Commons, in Perrysburg. Trouble is that I'm not always able to attend, since I'm retired and have been seeing the four corners of the world while I still can. As a reminder, the popularly prescribed meeting day is the second Tuesday of the month, rain or shine or snow. We bring our favorite squeeze to boost the attendance. We have even been known to break up into "His" and "Hers" tables to keep the conversation lively and gender-pertinent. Visitors and curiosity seekers are even welcome. Heck, we'd even accept previous BMW owners or closet wannabes.

Which brings me to the question of Area activities. I'm reminded of the chicken and egg question. I'd like to be able to offer popular activities to the local membership, but I haven't seen enough interest to warrant the time, effort and expense of getting something organized for us in NW Ohio, then see it fizzle from lack of attendance. Hence, I've been piggy-backing on the other three Areas, or the Chapter as a whole, to get my BMW fix. What do you think? Are you happy with the Roundel and Driving Light publications only? Or would you like to see and talk with others in the Area about things BMW? Let me know. ■

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Don't miss the Buckeye Chapter

Holiday Party
See page 5 for details

GIRLS GONE DRIVING

by
Nicky Schardt

Girlfriends in Motorsports

Every once in a while when I see that clever t-shirt with something like “Still Plays with Cars,” I think how A) I still play with cars after 20 years, and B) I never played with cars before 1994. In fact I wanted to be a ballerina, just about the furthest thing from race car driver, until I turned 16 and got my first car. And when I first started driving I wasn't setting land speed records in my 1971 Super Beetle Convertible, but I had found “freedom,” albeit slow.

When I joined the BMW CCA, membership wasn't as gender-balanced as I had hoped (I was a single 20-something so there were pros/cons to the roughly 90% male and 10% female group) but I soon found out that female members are by far the most enthusiastic, and typically more involved with the organization. So for this installation of *Girls Gone Driving* I've enlisted a few fellow female enthusiasts and “clubbers” to tell their story, in hopes that you may find motivation to join us, too.

First off let me preface that this “friends and family” study is as scientific as one can be when limited to ten questions in the free version of *Survey Monkey*. And although the sample size is small, just eight invitees out of that ten or so percent membership, these women are the perfect reflection of our BMW CCA community. Most of these women I know personally; two were HPDE students of mine, and the rest I met by instructing with other chapters, or were friends of friends.

Believe it or not, the average age of a BMW CCA club member happens to be about 50 years old. Of the eight respondents to my informal survey, including myself, our average current age is also 50, and although one respondent was born into motorsports, the rest of us were a little older, our average age was 33, when we started. The average number of years that this group of women has been involved in motorsports is just over 12 years – some as little as 7 years, some as many as 22 years. I guess that makes most of us late bloomers?

Not too ironically, we all live within a reasonable drive of a major race track like Road America, Mid-Ohio or VIR – proximity to a track definitely helps our cause! We love sportscar driving/racing the most of all other motorsports, but given the chance I bet we would drive just about anything we could get our hands on (autocross, roundy-rounds, drag racing).

While none of us are independently wealthy, we unanimously responded that we want to stay involved in sports car driving/racing one way or the other, mostly as amateurs participating in HPDEs, club racing and the like. One of the respondents has aspirations as a pro, and knowing her, she'll pull it off sooner than later.

All of us had different reasons why we got involved with the Club and/or sports cars, but suffice it to say that there was generally some spark that set us off. About two-thirds of us were hooked when we went to an HPDE. One of the gals was smitten with the Club and cars after taking her son through Street Survival and volunteering at O'fest. We can't all be born into motorsports, although it did happen to one respondent, and she has definitely enjoyed the ride. Only one-third of us decided to pursue sports cars/the Club as a single woman, but all of us have had some type of tie to Motorsports, like a significant other/spouse or extended family. One respondent reminded me that she was “dragged” into a car at Putnam Park, but I definitely don't remember it quite like that... This same woman is so hooked now that she spends most waking hours managing and coaching Street Survival schools all over the nation.

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When I asked about the hurdles a woman might incur in motorsports, the group agreed that our own perceptions about women's roles are really the thing that holds us back. Women are naturally much better listeners, (Huh? - ed.) so although we may start a little slower from the gate, we learn much quicker overall, squashing that “bad female driver” perception. Women can be just as competitive as men, and, in the case of our survey participants that statement definitely rings true. We all agreed that if you have the slightest interest in motorsports, stop by any road course/race track around the U.S. where the BMW CCA sponsors events and we'll gladly help you get hooked. One responded nailed when she said “Do it!! Trembling if you must, but do it! There are people there to help...”

Whatever your affiliation is with the BMW CCA, please consider this your official invitation to join us at a meeting, at the track, or to participate in one of the many events sponsored by the club throughout the year. If you're not a member, we can fix that! At the end of the day we all have one common thread between us, the admiration of the BMW marque, so let's have fun with it! ■

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