

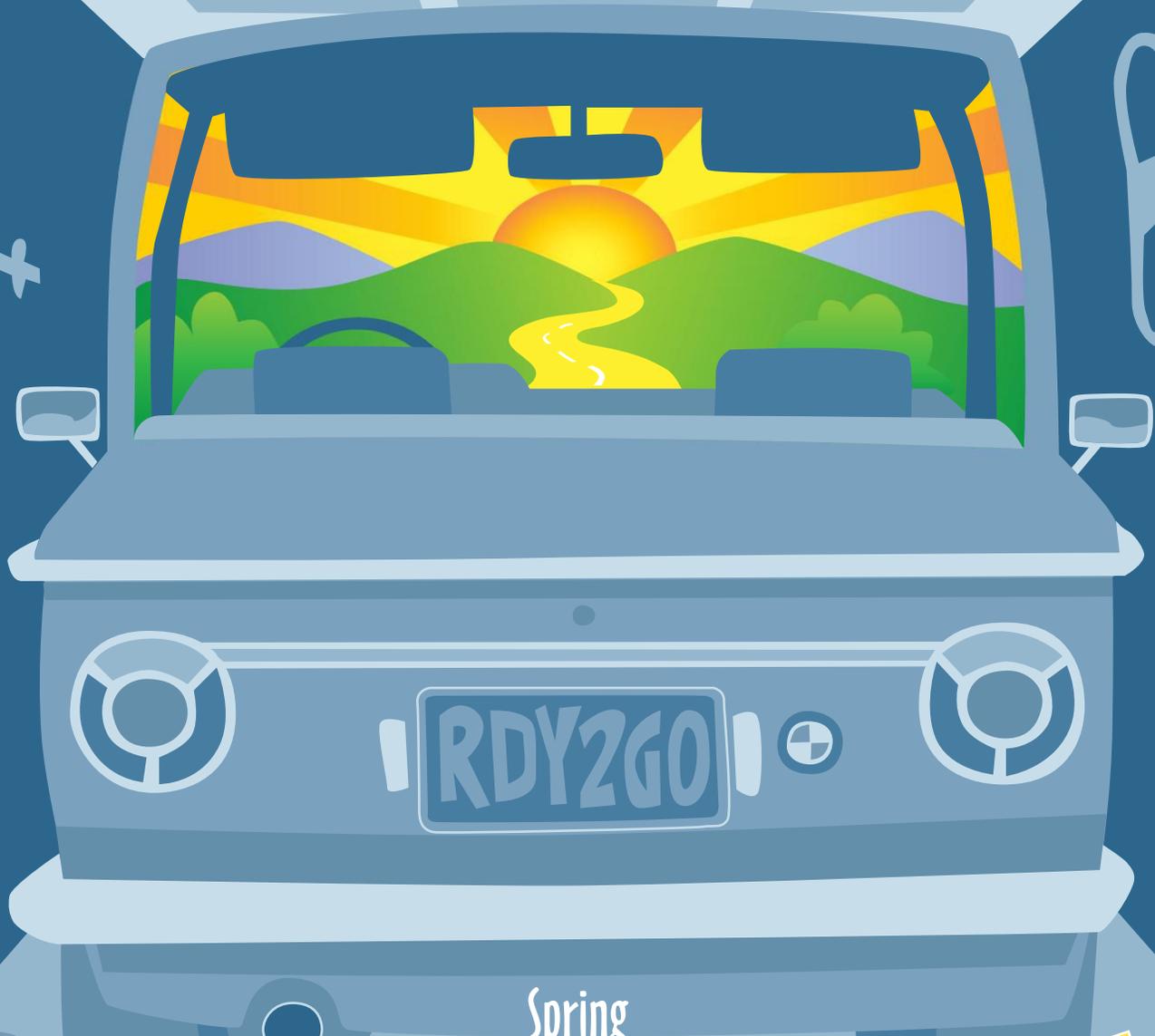
DRIVING

BMW Car Club
of America
Buckeye Chapter



News, Views and
BMW Stuff to Do

SPRING 2019



Spring
is Nature's way of saying,
“LET'S PARTY!”

— Robin Williams —

The Buckeye Holiday party this year was a classic example of blending people, cars, and camaraderie to create a great evening. We also threw in a little food to keep the crowd from getting rowdy. The scene was the multiple collections of Diane and Lance White. I mean we are talking cars, both street and racing types; model cars, enough to keep all of our kids playing in the dirt for a long time; banners, posters and signs, enough to cover a lot of bare walls; and pens, enough to write every word in every printing of this issue with a different instrument, well, maybe I am stretching a bit here, but there are a lot of neat pens. We can't forget the library containing various magazine subscriptions, hardbound books and a complete collection of Roundels. The Whites opened their humble "warehouse" to the

**Party like it's
 1999, or 2002,
 or 3.0 CSL ...**

Buckeye faithful for this year's party. Yes, we had assembled at the White facility to honor the Holidays before, but this time it had been remodeled, and we had a guest speaker that has more BMW and racing stories than you can take in over the span of one night. Our entertainment for the evening, other than the material things, was Eric Wensberg, former BMW North America ///M Brand Manager and manager of their racing team. Eric is also an advisor to the BMW CCA Foundation. We were able to have Eric come to our party due to our Chapter's contribution to the Foundation in honor of The Tire Rack Street Survival program. I think Eric and his charming wife, Molly, being good friends of the Whites, would have come anyway, but the \$5K donation didn't hurt.

The evening came off flawlessly, but that doesn't mean there wasn't a great deal of angst and feverish activity in the preparation leading up to the event. Deciding which cars to display, redoing some of the static displays, Diane selecting some great food, and discussions about where to park all of the arriving cars. All of this included the question of how many enthusiasts could fit in the warehouse comfortably. The event was capped at 200, and a call for RSVP's went out. After the number easily topped 200, and then 50 on the waiting list, Erik graciously agreed to a second, shorter session in the afternoon so that we could let everyone in on the fun.

The Holiday party also includes the yearly presentation of the Glenn Lucas award. This is given to a Buckeye member who exemplifies the enthusiastic and friendly spirit that Glenn showed throughout his work and fun in the Chapter. This year's honoree is none other than Lance White. Lance has always been a strong Buckeye supporter and interested in making this one of the best chapters in the Club.

Along with his enthusiasm and knowledge, Erik brought a BMW racing team jacket from the team's effort at LeMans to auction off, with the proceeds going to the Street Survival program. The bidding was hard fought, with the winning bid coming from Brian Wade, that resulted in Brian having a significant piece of BMW history and a great donation to Street Survival.

Great cars, great people; what more can you ask for when you organize a Club event? We thank Diane and Lance, we thank Erik and a great deal of thanks goes to the people who worked behind the scenes and made it happen. When Buckeye's do a party, they do it right, and the members are better for it. And that's what matters. ■

MCJayBee, er, Jaynee Beechuk



By
Tim Beechuk

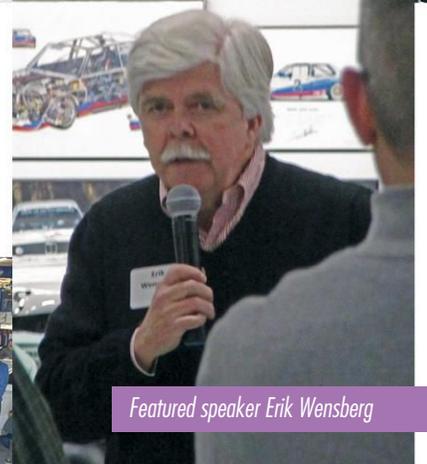
Marshall checking in



The food was as delicious as the view



Featured speaker Erik Wensberg



Getting the inside story on our favorite cars



Think they're talking about cars?



Photos courtesy of
 Chuck Grafton,
 Phil Ross, and ed.

It would take weeks to see everything in Lance's collections





Lance with his richly deserved Glenn Lucas Good Guy Award



The view from the mezzanine is overwhelming



Erik with the auctioned racing team jacket

TECH TOPIC

DIMINISHED RETURNS

By
George Thielen

Has your car been in an accident?

If it wasn't your fault and you live in Ohio, you may very well have a legitimate financial claim against the at-fault party known as inherent diminished value. As a fairly recent legal concept, Diminished Value has the potential to significantly alter the automobile insurance landscape.

Though largely unknown, Diminished Value is simply the amount of loss in a vehicle's fair market value because it has now been involved in an accident. After all, isn't one of the first things you ask a seller, "Has the car ever been in an accident?"

Naturally, vehicles that have been wrecked are worth less than a similar vehicle without accident history. Even repaired vehicles without detectable flaws carry risks to potential buyers. Were the body panels replaced with original factory parts, or aftermarket replacements? Were damaged panels actually replaced, or was excessive body filler used to repair them? Will the new paint crack, craze, fade or peel prematurely? While a proper repair should last for decades, not all repairs are done properly. Think of the number of new cars that are leased. Where is the incentive for the owner

to pay for high-quality repairs when the car will belong to someone else in a couple of years? With today's access to vehicle history reports like Carfax and Autocheck, a larger percentage of buyers have access to accident history that, not too long ago, would have only been determined by hiring a professional to perform a pre-purchase inspection. While vehicle history reports are not infallible, and often fail to report accident history (a topic for another discussion), they have nonetheless significantly altered the purchasing dynamics of the used car marketplace.

So, how much money are we talking about? Naturally, the answer is that it depends... sometimes \$800 and sometimes \$30,000.

Newer and lower mileage cars tend to suffer more, as do higher end and enthusiast models. After all, isn't a late model, BMW M3 buyer likely to be more particular about a prior accident than his or her neighbor shopping for a decade-old Honda for a teenager? Another significant factor in determining Diminished Value is the extent of the accident damage. If your front bumper was replaced, and a fender repaired, you may have a claim

worth pursuing. However, an accident with repairs costing several thousand dollars, or one that results in structural/frame damage or airbag deployment can result in claims of significant dollar amounts. The actual amount is usually determined by hiring a certified appraiser that specializes in this area of valuation. Once you have your appraisal report with a diminished value number, you submit it to the at-fault party and, if your claim is less than two years old in Ohio, you can expect a settlement offer. Sometimes, if the appraisal methodology is flawed or the demand is unrealistic, and neither side can settle, the civil courts will decide.

Do you have questions? Perhaps a case you are considering pursuing? Feel free to contact me to discuss anytime. ■ — George Thielen

George is a 34-year member of the Buckeye chapter and a certified automotive appraiser. He regularly serves as an expert witness in cases of Diminished Value and Lemon Law in the State of Ohio.

He is the founder of Mobile Used Car Inspections (mobileinspections.com) and may be reached at: info@mobileinspections.com

PVGP Virgins



▲ Finding Comfort



▼ Shining the 635 ▲ '02 bath time

▼ Concours by the river



Octoberfest 2018 was held in Pittsburgh, and nicely dovetailed with the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix at Schenley Park. I had never been to O'Fest, and neither had Jim Heckman; nor had I been to the PVGP. So we made the trek to Pittsburgh with Jim's newer 2002 race car, which had only seen some track-time testing during Driver's Schools. After some sorting by Tom Hatem, and installation of a required fire suppression system, the 2002 was ready for its maiden race.

Since Jim had to drive his tow vehicle and trailer, I was left with having to drive Jim's Euro M6 all the way to Pittsburgh and back. Let me tell you — it IS the perfect touring car. We picked a hotel to the southwest of the O'Fest host hotel (which was sold out). It was a decent location, but with the layout of Pittsburgh it somewhat challenging to figure out how to get around without the use of Google Maps. We hit up the host hotel for O'Fest registration and requisite goodies, and also saw many of our Buckeye Chapter brethren. Then it was off to Pittsburgh International Raceway to observe the track events. Now, I think the Pittsburgh International Raceway really ought to be called the Youngstown International Raceway, as we seemed to be closer to Youngstown than Pittsburgh. Track events were cool and well organized (with the help of essential Buckeye Chapter driving school volunteers).

We entered the O'Fest Concours, and got a great spot right under the 'Heinz' sign at Heinz Field. There were many great cars and of course lots of 2002s and many other interesting models. Again we saw many Buckeyes, so we were well represented at the show.

The next day we did a test run over to Schenley Park and took a few wrong turns. There never seems to be a direct route to anywhere in Pennsylvania, but there's always twenty different ways to get there. I grew up in PA, and was accustomed to this, but Pittsburgh is definitely the worst, in my opinion. We did find the paddock area (basically just a road). Spent another day or two at O'Fest, and then went over to Schenley Park on Thursday to see the status of the course and paddock, as Friday was the official day for setting up. Much to our surprise the paddock was at least half-full. So we hustled the M6 back to our hotel and headed back to the track with the race car. Some new friends saved a paddock space for us, so we got a pretty good spot, right next to the lavish restroom facility.

There wasn't much to do on the car, so we checked out everything else in the paddock. Lots of really interesting cars and people. I met one guy who actually knew about the Lotus dealership (probably the smallest franchise in the world) where I worked as a young man. There were a lot of 2002s, as this was the year celebrating the 2002 at the Vintage Grand Prix, in concert with O'Fest. Friday was the mandatory track walk for newbies/rookies/virgins. How can a track be all uphill? At least it seemed that way. Workers were still setting up the course by installing hay bales in front of utility poles, concrete Jersey barriers, and over curb inlets. All of this reinforced the sage advice from experienced racers that "you don't want to go off-track." They were even so kind as to point out the location where a few years ago one unfortunate gentleman exited the course by going over a fairly short stone wall and down into an abyss of trees. OK, we'll remember that. Most of the track walk concerned the proper line through the corners, which was a nice gesture, with lots of advice from experienced drivers. Each description ended with "and you don't want to go off-track."

Saturday morning was practice, and the 2002-exclusive race was in the afternoon, immediately after lunch. Jim successfully navigated the course during practice. I tried to watch some the action, but with the paddock area being outside the track at the southeast corner of the park, my viewing area was limited to just a small portion of the course near the finish line.

Race time came and we went down to the grid. We were near the back, which was fine with Jim. While labeled as a "race", Schenley Park doesn't really present many passing opportunities, due to the racing line and the narrowness of the course. Not to mention the stone curbing, utility poles, concrete barriers, and other hazards marked with hay bales. And, you certainly don't want to make a risky move and "go off-track."

(continued)

By
George Saylor



▲ In the pits

▼ Really in the pits



Since I couldn't really watch much of the race, I wandered around the paddock and grid. At the end of the race I awaited Jim's return. And waited. And waited. At the point where the only vehicles coming back to the paddock were either on rollbacks or tow trucks I started to become alarmed. After my umpteenth trek over to the entry to the paddock, I spotted Jim's car on the back of a tow truck. It looked fine, so maybe it was a mechanical failure. Then I heard it — "I went off-track." A minor excursion behind the low stone curbing ended in a pretty severe impact when the end of a concrete barrier presented itself to block any form of recovery to get back on track.

An initial inspection of the car surprisingly revealed very minor sheet metal damage, although the wheels definitely took some hard hits. We had lots of help, advice, and offers of parts from drivers and pit crews. Alas, it appeared that there was some significant suspension damage. We decided it wasn't worth trying to fix the car on site, and tucked it into the trailer. Jim was understandably disappointed and somewhat discouraged.

We left on Sunday, as it's not much fun watching other people race when you brought your own car. All in all it was a fairly positive experience. I got to attend my first O'Fest, Jim got to race on a new track, and we vowed never to return to Pittsburgh, for our own sanity.

So I drove the M6 back (I wish Pittsburgh was farther away) and it was a treat. Dropped the trailer off at Jim's place, and we took the M6 back to my house. I was leaning against the rear bumper of the M6, talking with Jim, when I felt a weird sensation on my leg. I had been leaning against the tailpipes (wearing shorts) and it left a nice burn on my leg. What a way to cap off our somewhat painful weekend. ■

Don't miss the BMW CCA Buckeye Chapter Spring Kick-off Party and Car Corral

Saturday, May 4 and Sunday, May 5, 2019

MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE



LEXINGTON, OHIO



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Admission includes full paddock access, a box lunch, a live TV feed of the track, and a corral parking area.

We are also working on a visit from the **Rahal/Letterman/Lanigan BMW M8 driver lineup!**

We need a lunch count, so please RSVP to Jaynee at jpbeechuk@gmail.com, then go to midohio.com and click on Buckeye Chapter Car Corral to order your admission tickets.

**Capacity is limited, so don't delay.
We'll see you at the track!**

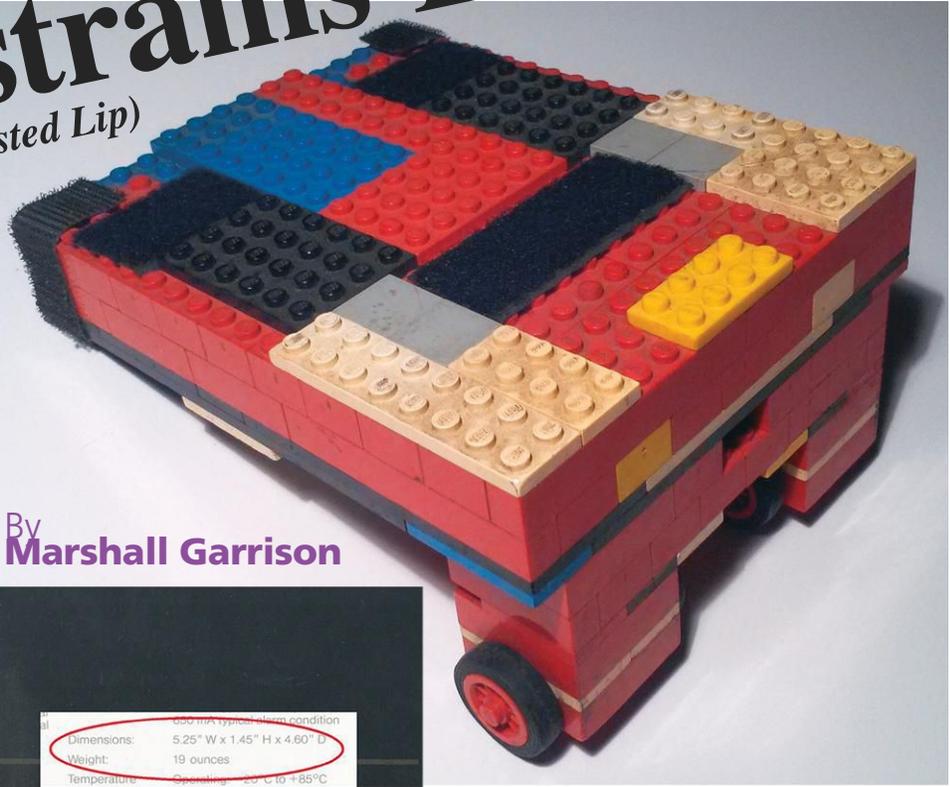




BREAKING NEWS

Man Restrains Escort

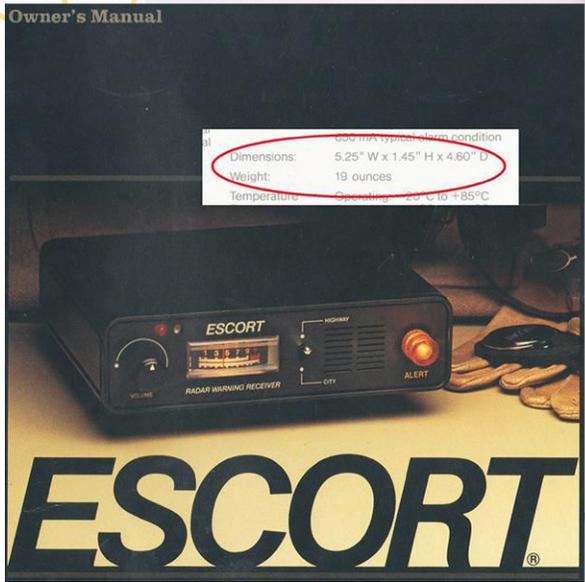
(or, Slick Clip Trick Nixes Busted Lip)



By **Marshall Garrison**

You might be wondering just what-the-heck the pictured assemblage of Legos has to do with BMWs. It's possible some of our long-time members might remember when I had my E21 320i back in the 80's and early 90's (at least until it met its untimely demise on the eve of one of our September Mid-Ohio driver's schools). When I got my first Escort radar detector, the E21's dash and visor design presented a few, uh, challenges for mounting the detector. If you're not familiar with the first-generation Escorts, even though they were the ne-plus-ultra state-of-the-art at the time, that technology came along with some heft and bulk; succeeding generations of detectors are nearly 1/4 the size of the original Escort.

The Escort came with a visor clip mount, but the E21 visors weren't particularly substantial for the mount's spring clip to clamp against. Even worse were the puny visor clips, with their downward-facing clip opening. Today's BMWs have visor clips with the clip opening facing forward or rearward – you might not be able to hang a sack of potatoes from them, but the clip supports the visor, and doesn't rely solely on the clamping force of the plastic. With the Bilstein non-progressive-spring-rate sports suspension I had on the car, besides feeling every single bump in the road, bigger bumps would have the Escort's 1.19 lb. weight popping the visor down from the clip, having it then either falling off the visor entirely, or leaving the visor and detector dangling. Then, of course, there was the



Owner's Manual	
0.50 mA typical alarm condition	
Dimensions:	5.25" W x 1.45" H x 4.60" D
Weight:	19 ounces
Temperature:	Operating: -20°C to +85°C

ESCORT®

completely un-stealthy coiled cord dangling from the detector to the lighter socket as well. Velcroing it to the top of the dash pod wasn't a particularly appealing option; the steering wheel would be in the way to reach the volume control, the cord would be in the way, and the detector would be angled downwards, reducing its detection range. What to do, what to do? So, what you see pictured here is my much-younger-me's solution for mounting up the Escort in the 320i... Legos!

The dash on these cars was a two-tiered affair, with a taller edge at the windshield side containing air vents dropping several inches to a lower-level. I placed a strip of velcro across the center-front edge

of the dashboard, and the matching velcro to the front edge of the Lego mount, which did the bulk of the retention job. The wheels served to keep it from sliding side-to-side at the rear of the mount... at least, up to a point. In retrospect, velcro on all three mounting points would have been more secure vs. the wheels, although the single velcro strip meant quickly removing or putting in place when coming or going.

BMW's 80's-era gloveboxes were capacious by any standard, so the 320i glovebox had no problem fitting this whole Lego/detector thing when stowed, as long as the glovebox latch wasn't broken and stuck shut (a common malady of BMW's up into the 90's even – but that's another story). Some velcro on the underside of the Escort and on top of the Lego platform, and, ta-da, instant radar-detector holder!

This setup did work reasonably well for mounting the detector, but it wasn't without its downsides either. There were at least two times a couple of rapidly-executed left turns also had the detector-mit-Legos pulling free from the velcro and skittering across the dash, right toward an open

passenger window, only to be stopped by flying into the nook of the A-pillar and windshield, instead of straight out the window (much to my relief!). I recall thinking what it would be like trying to reel in the detector by the stretchy coiled cord while trying to get stopped as quickly as possible – eek! Then there's the obvious downsides I didn't happen to think of at that much-younger age, like what might happen if there were to be an accident with the prospect of 2+ lbs. of detector and sharp-edged plastic blocks becoming a potentially skull-cracking projectile hurtling around the inside of the cabin... also eek!

Thankfully that particular scenario never materialized, although the 320i's eventual unfortunate front-end-collision demise did showcase a good reason to secure a garage door opener anyplace other than your visor. Opener-visor-clip 1, my head, 0. Take a look around your car... got anything unsecured, floating free, in a cubby, or on your visor? Do yourself a favor and think about what your prospects are if it goes flying... and stow it someplace! Needless to say, the Lego mount's days were over with those of my 320i.

Smaller detectors, like the original Cincinnati Microwave Passport, had also eclipsed its Escort predecessor in size and convenience by then, and our own Mike Valentine had recently brought to market his first Valentine 1 detector. The V1 sold out immediately upon release, but I believe my Escort soldiered on about another year in the E21's replacement (E30 325is), which had a sun visor and visor clips that could hold the Escort in its visor clip-mount.

My first V1 was initially back-ordered some 6+ months, once I got it sometime late in 1993, the Escort was permanently retired. I think I still have it in its case around somewhere... the Lego mount's been floating around my basement for the last 25 years, I guess... I happened across it while having to look into my land-line junction-box in the basement.

As a side note: eventually there was a suction-cup windshield mount made, or perhaps just marketed and sold, by Vasek Polak for the original Escort. I never bought one when they were made, but years later bought one off ebay to have as a novelty – here it is: (a previous owner added the plexiglas; originally it was just the suction cups and angled bracket.) A cleaner

solution, perhaps, but also far less creative than Lego blocks and velcro. ■



DRIVERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS INVITED!

Join us for the 2019 Buckeye Chapter Mid-Ohio Drivers' School

August 16-18, 2019
Registration is open now!

Go to buckeyebmwcca.org and click on Drivers' Schools, then just select the school to sign up on motorsportreg.com

The terrific *Saturday Night Dinner* is included!

Check-in is Friday, August 16 at our headquarters motel, Quality Inn and Suites, 419-886-7000



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Hello Buckeyes! Once again, our editor has put forth the call to spring to action for the Spring iteration of our newsletter, which for me means some bouncing... of fingers on keys! Although the calendar says Spring is a month away yet, and our winter weather typically breaks after that, the winter here in southwest Ohio has been variable enough to not leave too much to complain about. I'm always happy to see it warm up though, and even the switch-over to daylight saving time isn't too far off. Hopefully everyone has had an enjoyable holiday season and are finding 2019 to be progressing well so far!

Our first area happening in January was our Second Wednesday monthly meeting, once again at Mac's Pizza Pub in Fairfax. As usual, the pizza & salads were delicious, and also as usual for January, it was time for area elections. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 2019 was a repeat of last year's, so I will carry on as Cincinnati Area Governor, Mark Jeanmougin as Vice-Governor, and Jaynee Beechuk as area alternate, to represent us if Mark and I miss any chapter board meetings.

The bigger January happening was the Holiday Party, this time hosted by our very own Lance & Diane White, who so kindly yet again opened the doors to Lance's substantial collection of historic, unique, and special BMW's. Tim Beechuk has more on the party in detail, but with the extra-special feature of having Erik Wensberg, former BMW M-Brand manager, on hand to share his stories and even experiences with a number of the bimmers on display, suffice it to say it all made for a unique and special event. Many thanks to Lance and Diane, and everyone else who volunteered and worked so hard to make a very special day happen!

With Mac's having a conflicting event on our usual meeting night, this time February found us trying a different locale, Ferrari's Little Italy, in Madeira. Fortunately they were able to have us all together in their side alcove with the fireplace. Ferrari's is tucked back off the main drag in the middle of Madeira, but has become a bit of an institution now, after a couple of decades or more of consistently serving up some of the best Italian chow around. This time we also had the great fortune to welcome several area meeting first-timers aboard, too! If you've never been to an area meeting and are interested, check out the Buckeye Chapter Facebook page for events and announcements, or, touch base with me and I'll get you added to the area email list for meeting announcements! Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month (excepting December); 7:00 pm.; locations vary.

Besides monthly area meetings, the couple of notable upcoming events are a Street Survival teen driver clinic April 20th. Stay tuned to the StreetSurvival.org for registration details, and, if you or anyone you know has a teen driver, check out the website to learn more about this most invaluable program!

IMSA will be returning to Mid-Ohio at the beginning of May (titled as the Acura Sports Car Challenge). We're still working out details for setting up another corral, but stay tuned for details on that also.

All the best until next time! ■

area news

Mark Arnold
Columbus
Area
Governor

Hello everyone! With a new year comes a slight change to the Columbus area leadership. Let me start off by introducing myself. My name is Mark Arnold, the new Columbus Area Governor. And yes, there seems to be a lot of Marks in the club – I’m yet another one. I’ve been a CCA member since 2008, when I picked up my first BMW, a ‘99 E36 M3. Back then I used to do a lot of autocrosses, and the occasional track day, which is how I ended up becoming a member. It was, and still is, included in your High Performance Driving Events registration. In case you were wondering how I got into BMWs, I think it all came down to a decision I had to make back in 2008. I was finally in a position where I could buy a fun car, and I had narrowed it down to two, a ‘99 E36 M3 or a ~2000 Chevrolet Corvette C5 Hardtop. In the end, the “practicality” of the E36 and those awesome Vader seats swayed me, and I haven’t looked back since. Oh, and I was born in Germany, and my dad had a 528i while we lived there. Now, I have a 2006 E46 M3 with the competition package that my wife will claim is hers. Don’t believe her! There is way too much camber on it for street driving, and she has yet to join me on-track at an HPDE.

With my history out of the way, I want to take the time to say thanks to Chuck Grafton, who for the second year in a row has agreed to be the Vice Governor of the Columbus area. I have no doubt he will be a great resource for me and everyone else in the club going into the future. Thanks, Chuck!

Now on to the fun stuff! In an effort to continue the awesome work done by previous governors, Mike Laci and Mark Borrer, I want to continue doing as many social events as possible, and I hope to be able to add a few things back into the rotation that we haven’t done in a while. On my to-do list for the Columbus area, and anyone else who is willing to make the drive, is a trip to one of the local go-karting tracks. I’m also talking with several other members about starting an iRacing league, in case the only thing you have time for is motorsports. Then there’s always the fantastic Hocking Hills drive later in the year, as well. For those that like a little variety, how about a night that consists of Blue Jackets hockey or Columbus Clippers baseball?

Lastly, I wanted to make sure I got this out. Don’t be like me and wait 10 years to start coming to the non-track events; it’s a great way to plug into the local community. I have yet to meet anyone that wasn’t instantly a friend. I highly encourage everyone in the area to come to the local meetings at least once to see what it’s all about. It’s free food and great friends. There isn’t much in life that’s better than that. If you have any questions or suggestions, don’t hesitate to send me an email at mark.daniel.arnold@gmail.com. ■

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Editor's Note: Alex Watts has served the Dayton Area admirably, but his term has ended, so it is time for someone new to take the reins. The role of Area Governor is critically important, but far from a full-time job. If you enjoy the club and would like to help it continue to grow, I encourage you to step up and give back by becoming the new Dayton Area Governor.

Dayton

area
news

Ahh, Spring. By the time this is in print, it will almost be Spring. New things for all of us to experience. Time for spring cleaning, which includes some of our winter stored cars. Time for those of us who use our BMW's on the track to finish those upgrades we swore to complete over the winter. Soon, a beautiful drive in the country may actually be possible. This has been a long cold winter and I think we all look forward to some warmer weather and no more snow.

Everyone has read about and seen pictures of the holiday party. This was the first time I have been to Lance and Diane's collection and it really is a great trip. The quality of the restoration or the condition of every car is incredible. If you love BMW's you need to go to the next holiday party at Lance White's garage.

Attendance at our meetings has been very good, but we ask for everyone to try to make it to at least one or two meetings each year. We are still moving around to different venues and we will try to find some new and interesting places to take the members. As always, Chuck or I will send out emails about one week ahead of the meeting and we will post on the Buckeye BMW CCA event calendar.

We are still looking for someone to volunteer for the governor position with the Dayton area. I will continue to help as much as possible, but my term ended in January. Chuck has volunteered to continue as Vice Governor so we will be able to rely on his experience.

If you would like to visit someplace of automotive interest, please let me know and we will see what we can do to arrange a group trip for one of our meetings.

Spring is in the air, get out and drive. ■

Alex Watts
Dayton Area
Governor

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area
news

My apologies for taking a hiatus from Northwest Ohio. My wife made me do it! Hence, I'll be missing our monthly meetings for a while. I'm currently on a road trip, with several stops in Florida before heading west to Galveston, then home about the time tulips are blooming. In the meantime, I'm open for suggestions of places to go, things to see, and dives to eat at along the way.

January brought a sweep in the Toledo Area election. Jim Troknya and I remain at your service, and eager to hear from you regarding your preferences for Area activities. The Buckeye Chapter does a fine job of creating events for us all to enjoy as a group. We, in this Area, are free to do our own thing. We've got resources; we just need your input.

As for me, I'll be making plans to attend the BMW CCA Oktoberfest again this year. It's going to be a big thing, with the Club's 50th Anniversary Celebration right in the BMW mecca of the South Carolina manufacturing Plant.

Anyone enjoy autocross, gymkana or Solo2? Maybe we can piggyback at a SCCA hosted event in the Toledo Area.

Looking forward to hearing from you. ■

Phil Ross
Toledo
Area
Governor

Falling in love again...

I first became stricken with the classic BMW affliction in June, 2003. Once I had the green light from my spouse, I conducted a wide-ranging search which netted me a highly intact, though neglected, 1975 Sahara 2002. It had been through four previous owners, starting in Birmingham and ending up in Athens, Alabama. It was mine for the princely sum of \$3,500.

Why did I become a 2002 owner? In a time when most dads drove large American cars, I learned to drive using my father's 1972 Golf 2002. I read Dad's Car and Driver magazines and a poster of BMWs racing at Nurburgring adorned my bedroom wall throughout the 1970s. Many years later, it became my dream to own and drive one once again. To own a classic BMW for FUN — I was overjoyed to drive a car that was more than just practical. I began to meet other '02 owners, I started going to BMW events, and I became obsessed with rehabilitating my 2002 and learning all that I could about it.

By
Jim Denker

Somewhere along the way I lost the 2002 vibe for a while. Granted, I'd had a lot of fun with my '02. While many things were sorted after more than 10 years of ownership, the prospect of taking it to the next level was daunting. Paint and body work would be very expensive. I sold the 2002 in late 2013. I hear that current owner, Simon Robinson, has taken it to that next level. This is all good. I quickly found and bought a well-kept 2000 E46 coupe. The status quo for a time was my 2000 Topasblau E46 coupe as a daily driver and an E30 as my classic BMW. Something still wasn't quite right. The 328ci was eventually traded in for a shiny new 2014 Mini.

Fast forward to June, 2017: I became the proud owner of three fun cars: a 1987 Zinnoberrot 325 coupe, a 2014 Blazing Red Metallic Mini and a new-to-me 1973 Sahara 2002. Was this the solution to my search for the right mix? I had just purchased Andrew Ganz' 2002. I had first seen it at MidAmerica 02 Fest, parked next to Mike Self's near-clone Sahara '02. I flew out to Denver to pick up the car. It was all that Andrew had promised it would be. On my solo return trip, I outpaced a violent thunderstorm in the middle of Kansas, varying my speed to break in the just-rebuilt engine. My friends were eager to see the 'new '02.' I was back. I was exhilarated. My wife Mary had graciously said that it would be fine with her if I kept the E30 since so much money had been poured into it after I'd found it on Craigslist for \$2,500. However, a dilemma slowly revealed itself: How does one man drive three cars? How does he own two classic BMWs with a one-car garage?

I know there are quite a number of BMW CCA members who own more than three personal automobiles. In my case, limited time was the overriding factor. I might dream of owning a vast collection of cool classics, but I may not be agile enough to give them all the attention they deserve. That scenario is clearly hypothetical at this point. I had grown accustomed to having a daily driver and a classic, but I was not used to choosing among three different cars.

Though I really liked the 2014 Mini, purchased as a demonstrator at Cincinnati Mini, I was driving the 325 most of the time. I was also spending money on it, thinking about it, planning for it, clinging to it... What could I possibly have against my new Mini? It took a few months to realize that it was a long goodbye to nearly eight years of E30 ownership. There were many fond memories: Rivertown Gear Buster drives, Vintage in North Carolina, a trip to Nebraska, a trip to Clifton Forge, Virginia and many prosaic drives to work and to the grocery store. I had enjoyed the process of replacing the suspension, the exhaust system, the fuel lines, the brake lines, the cooling system, changing out the wheels and tires and correcting a long list of small flaws and glitches. It became my version of what the 1980s classic should be. (Thank you: Foreign Car Service, Reggie's Motor Works and my friends for their advice and know-how.)

My college roommate, Mike Amend, informed me that his son, Mick, a young BMW owner/enthusiast was in the market for an inexpensive E30. Before long, I decided to part with mine. I could finally give my Mini a fair opportunity to win me over. I imagine that by now, Mick has molded the old bimmer into his vision of what it should be. (Did he replace the head gasket yet? How about that oil pan gasket?) Clearly, it is his to treasure now.

I discovered what an absolute joy the Mini can be while driving it on the Fall BMW CCA Hocking Hills drive in 2016 and 2017. Sport mode certainly wakes up the Mini's engine and the enthusiasm in me. Burning rubber in the first two gears was a blast. Keeping up with M3s, very cool. Careening through tight curves, flying up steep hills, it is so responsive, so agile, so very satisfying.

Yes! I am hooked.

A lingering, fond farewell has led to a very pleasant, rewarding new equilibrium. BMW has done something so very right with the Mini Cooper. I can drive the Mini while again having the privilege of owning and driving a beautiful, classic 2002. Perfection.



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