

Die Zugspitze

New York Chapter Newsletter | Fall 2018

www.nybmwcca.org

**Auto-X is
happening!**



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The New York Chapter wants you, if you

- have professional or other experience in any area listed below
- would like to work with fellow BMW enthusiasts
- want to help guide the Chapter

Since the 1970's, the NY Chapter BMW CCA has been providing a wide range of tangible benefits to its members. The list includes social gatherings, technical information, a wide variety of driving/social events, high speed driving schools, Street Survival Program, and an award-winning newsletter, Die Zugspitze, just to name a few.

At this time, we are seeking volunteers and chairpersons to coordinate new and existing programs to help continue to provide these services to our members and to help build the Chapter.

If you have skills and/or are interested in assisting in any of the following categories, please contact the Chapter at: board.nybmwcca.org.

Marketing

Advertising

Accounting

IT/Webmaster

Social Media

Membership

Street Survival

Write a column for

Die Zugspitze

Photography

Social Event Planning

Membership



New York Chapter 2018 Events Calendar

March	10	25th Annual Beach Party
	31	New York International Auto Show
April	13-15	Driving School: NJ Motorsport Park
May	7-8	Driving School and Instructor Training School
	~	Rallye BMW Show
June	24	Karts and Coffee: RPM Raceway, Farmingdale
July	7	Auto-X: Nassau Coliseum
	29	Karts and Coffee: RPM Raceway, Farmingdale
August	4	Auto-X: Nassau Coliseum
	18	Auto-X: Nassau Coliseum
	26	Karts and Coffee: RPM Raceway, Farmingdale
September	1	Auto-X: Nassau Coliseum
	2	Karts and Coffee: RPM Raceway, Farmingdale
	9	Wine & Shine
	23	Old Westbury Concours d'Elegance
October	6	Auto-X: Nassau Coliseum

For more information, go to www.nybmwcca.org
or see the Chapter's Facebook page

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On the Cover : New York Chapter Autocross returns to Nassau Coliseum July 7th.

Photos by Steed Wells

To join the BMW Car Club of America, call 1-800-878-9292 or visit www.bmwcca.org. BMW CCA national dues are \$48 per year, \$15 of which is for Roundel.

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Welcome to our New Members!

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Rodney Anderson	Francis Croffie	Michael Gordon	Yury Kholondyrev	Maciej Pilat	Matthew Steele
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Octavian Bishop II	Paul Dowty	Richard Honigman	Robert Massina	Banu Roso	Dwight Tobin
Peter Bisson	Robert Ferreira	Gordon Hoppe	Jorge Mercado	Moris Roso	Eric Tolman
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Ray Brijmohan	Jose Figueroa	Howell	Sandon Moore	Richard Ruggiero	William Untz
Jason Burke	Wendy Fine	Ryan Howell	Jay Narvasa	Maxim Ryan	Denis Usov
Michael Capvano	Jose Fondeur	Curtis Hughes	John Nathenson	Jon Schiller	Andrew Wilson
Hugh Carrington	Paula Foresto	Gulnora Iafiasova	Ronald O'Neil	Norman Schiller	Yu Han Young
Randy Cheung	Max Gain	Mohammed Ilahi	Walid Pacha	Otto Scholtz	
Moinul	Phillip Gates	Kumar Jadav	Caleb Pan	Elliot Schwarcz	
Chowdhury	Flavio Gauna	David Katzen	Mark Paolano	Adalheid Seda	

And a salute to our long standing members!

Anniversary milestones for members who joined between April and June

5th Anniversary

George Bischoff
Darren Blair
Alfred Cabrera
Edgar Cabrera
Benjamin
Fleischman
Julie Fleischman
Charles Giangreco
Adam Goldberg
Kevin Gray
Benjamin
JeanBaptiste
Kenneth Johnson
Maxine Johnson
Daniel Khasidy
Jerome Krantz
Freddy Markham
Patricia Mauro
Michael Melita
Anthony Mustac
Belinda Mychajliw
Peter Mychajliw
Bernard Powell
Ralph Ronavita
Angelo Rosario
Michael Rose
Fabio Scaldaferrri
Bill Scime
Greg Tewes
Jobbin Thomas
David Wildermuth

10th Anniversary

Allan Englehardt
Armando Gallardo
Bruce Colbath
Carlos Foxworthy
David Gervase
Don Zacharia
Eric Miller
Erroll Byer
Fritz Romulus
Gregg Takata
Jerry Chin
Johanne Byer
Jonathan Cohen
Lawrence Hyams
Lorna Englehardt

Nelis Parts

Nicholas Liolis
Robert Barreto
Sapan Vyas
Steve Roeder
Willem Oswald
William Webber

15th Anniversary
Aamir Ahmed
Satbir Bedi
Robert Bozic
Allan Curran
Derrick Dillon
Don Dishinger
Ronald Friedman
Thomas Hutzel

Neil Kapoor

Saneh Kapoor
Norman Kleinberg
David Lowenherz
Rand Manasse
Frank Millo
Virginia Moore
Sanders Scott
Mark Starzak
Bruce Wildermuth
Gregory Wilson

20th Anniversary
Allen Berg
Joshua Bewlay
Peter Dodge

25th Anniversary

Trevor Gottfried
Anthony Howell
John Hulbrock
Dave Metz
Patrick Mortier
Jon Posner
Dennis Skinner

30th Anniversary
Phil Bettan
Thomas Halket
Patrick Jolly
Michael Kooper
Richard Moggio
Bob Perotto
Tom Vollaro

35th Anniversary

John Beckhard
Joseph Puglisi
Paul Vaughan

Over 40 Years!
Peter Alp
Kevin Bange
Steven Cappel
Stephen Carney
Gary Deane
John Ganey
Charles Greenel
Neal Gronich
Matthew Meng
Michael Raffia
John Schroeder
Gerald Stoller
Curtis
Vanvalkenburgh
Donald White

Over 45 Years!!
Neal Feldman
Burton Fleming
Steve Geraci
Bill Hedberg
Christopher
McGuinness
Seymour Mogal
Stuart Rosenthal
John Schroeder
Karl Topp

Contributors wanted! Remember your first 2002? Have a BMW that's been in the family for generations? Want to share a funny anecdote about teaching someone to drive a stick, or a project car that just never seems to get finished?

Send us your stories and photos and we may publish them in the Chapter newsletter. Send submissions to newsletter@nybmwcca.org

President's Page | Megan Yavel



Another newsletter in your inbox and another change of season is on the horizon. Summer is almost at an end, kids are back to school and the lights are flashing again in the school zones. Drive safe everyone!

The New York Chapter has a shorter schedule this year because we are still looking for volunteers to help us imagine and run more events! We need your input so we can continue to evolve and grow

together. Please send us your suggestions events@nybmwcca.org!

Our 12th Annual Wine and Shine was a fantastic event brought to you by Chapter Secretary Steve Geraci. All who attended had a great day despite the weather and enjoyed the cars, the wine, and the company of other enthusiasts. (Look for the more details in the next issue of the newsletter). This event has been held for twelve consecutive years and each year brings more enthusiasts and more interesting cars. Thank you for your support and for a great time! We look forward to more events like this in the future.

Autocross is in full swing at Nassau Coliseum and we have one more competition coming to you on October 6th. Darby Moses put together a great crew of people who are running this event and they ALL want to meet YOU! While we encourage our members to take advantage of this affordable driving activity, visitors are also welcome. Darby and the gang look forward to seeing you. Other attendees love to talk about this important local motorsport activity and welcome your questions.

Our last scheduled event for 2018 is the Concours d'Elegance. This annual tradition takes place September 23rd at Old Westbury Gardens. Sherwin de Shong heads this phenomenal event that is a real crowd pleaser! Each year the best of the best bring their cars to be judged at this competition. As always, we thank our friends at the Mercedes Club and the NY Metro PCA for sharing this wonderful day of beautiful cars on the lawn of a local historic site. Many of our attendees have been present at past events as we celebrate our joint passion for the BMW brand. Trophies are awarded to members who take the top spot in their class. Everyone who participates in the Concours receives a picture of their vehicle as a memento. Special thanks to everyone who supports us in our BMW/Mini corral!

Alas our annual elections are upon us. It's that time of the year where we look to you, our membership, for new Chapter Board members. Maybe jumping into the Board seems like a big responsibility. Not going to lie... it is. But this is a great chapter with a lot of history behind it. Now it's time to make some more history! So please take a few minutes and think about your membership and what you want out of it.

What motivated you to join the club? I joined because I was having lots of fun in the parking lot of "the Q" at autocross with my lifelong friends in the San Diego Chapter. After a few years, I started attending the meetings here in New York and decided I wanted to help our chapter continue to thrive into the future. Sometimes it is easy and sometimes it isn't, but at the end of the day we all care about the New York Chapter, each other, and the events we put on. It is fun to escape to a joyful place of our own making.

Please email your candidacy statement to nominations@nybmwcca.org or email me personally at myavel@nybmwcca.org if you want to contribute in anyway.

**BMW Car Club
of America
New York Chapter**



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All Things Aftermarket

So much hot air...

by Mitchell Frischer

I love the term “cold air intake” It’s often a huge misnomer as the majority of systems on the market do a far worse job of getting colder air into the intake manifold than a stock air box. Yes, just about every tuning and aftermarket company out there makes them, but more often than not you’re doing your car a huge disservice.

Let’s take a standard or stock air box. These are designed and engineered to maximize airflow into the intake of an engine. Colder charge air leads to lower intake air temperatures and we all know, especially with forced induction engines, that colder air means more power.

The stock air boxes aren’t an afterthought by the manufacturers as they’re quite important. Certainly the paper filters that come in new cars aren’t the best and an upgraded filter is usually a great solution. There are many brands to choose from and what’s great about most of them is their ability to be reused time and again with a cleaning and oiling kit or run dry. Companies like K&N, AFE and UniFilter have this ability as do others. So buying one not only allows for better breathability, it also saves money in the long run as they never need replacing. Now, let’s not get down on cold air intakes that actually work because there are plenty of those too!

A well designed aftermarket cold air intake will not only have a nicely formed and engineered intake tube, it’ll also have a larger filter usually in a cone-type design with proper shielding and ductwork to force cold air from the outside into the engine’s intake. What I do find humorous is when companies make (what they claim to be) “cold air intakes” that eliminate the stock air box and literally house a huge filter coupled to a tube inside the engine bay of a car with nothing designed nor included to direct colder air from outside the vehicle to the system itself. Every OEM air box is designed to do this, so why switch to something that is literally only sucking hot under-hood air into the engine? Quite simply put, it’s called “marketing”.

There’s no patent on the term “cold air intake” so everyone is free to use it. Whether or not it’s truly functioning is a whole other story. Just be sure when choosing one that it’s specifically designed to actually get the colder on-road air outside the vehicle into the intake! This brings me to the next point; tuning. I’ve written about this in previous articles but here I’m being specific to intakes. Your car has an ECU / computer with a “tune” that’s written very specifically to operate under various conditions. As with almost every “bolt on” performance part, your ECU needs to be “tuned” to take advantage of such things like a higher inflow of air and more.

I have tuned many cars on dynos in my years and get a good laugh when the companies who sell these cold air intakes leave out the important aspect of tuning. Even when a well-engineered intake is installed on a car, if the tune is stock the car may make some immediate gains in measured horsepower and torque, but eventually the ECU will adjust its calibrations to compensate for what it’ll deem to be “too much” airflow.

So, when these companies that make intakes brag about performance gains (especially on modern cars) know this:



A well-engineered cold-air intake has a shield or box containing the unit that is set up to draw cooler air from outside the vehicle.

They are going to be very short-lived until you actually have your ECU tuned with software to always take advantage of the larger volume of air coming into the engine. If not, the stock tune will recalibrate itself to "scale down" other aspects and adjust the timing, ignition, fuel, (and if applicable) boost settings to compensate for the increased air volume that's not in line and outside the parameters of the stock tune. In other words, if you put a performance part on your car the only way to really take full advantage of it would be having your ECU tuned for it. Otherwise those initial gains will disappear quickly and likely leave you making even less power than you had with your stock air box.

So, what's the point here? Well, there are a few to take away from this. Cold air intakes aren't always what they claim, so be sure to do your research and speak with a tuner you know and respect to find out if it'll actually be of benefit to your car's performance. Don't always believe the marketing hype in a name, and be sure to measure your car's performance on a dyno before and after you install any parts. Give your car's ECU time to recalibrate and adapt, do it again to see if it's actually working! If not, be sure to contact your trusted tuner to have your car tuned and I assure you that you'll be enjoying the parts and expected performance a whole lot more when it's all done properly.



An intake without proper sealing or containment, and no direct flow of exterior vehicle air, only draws hotter under-hood air to the intake.

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- Component rebuilding, such as manual transmissions, steering gear
- Maintenance and repair
- Partial and complete restorations, overseeing work which is not done in-house, such as painting, upholstery and rechromin

EuroMeccanica, Inc. was started by Michael Shiffer in 1991. Michael is a tech advisor for NYBMWCCA and EuroMeccanica hosts their annual Beach Party, where dozens of BMW owners and enthusiasts converge to learn more about their cars. The shop's atmosphere is warm and open. Questions and input from our customers are welcome, and we make every effort to explain what we are doing to your car, and why.



Race car preparation:

- Installation of roll bars, harnesses, racing seats, fire systems and other safety devices
- Suspension modification, such as coil-over conversions, larger sway bars and urethane bushings
- Chassis stiffening and reinforcement Bolt-on engine modifications, such as cams, cold-air boxes, exhaust systems and larger radiators
- Fuel cell installation
- Two-way radio installation



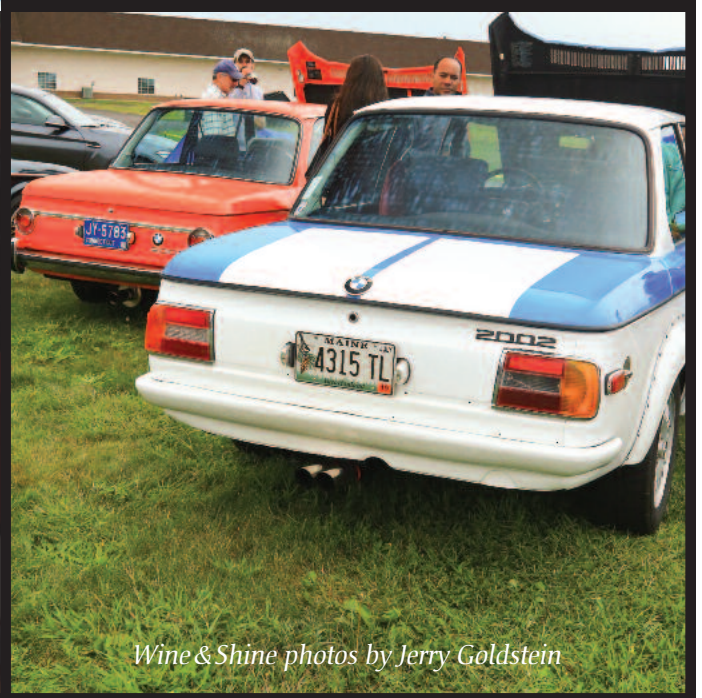
Come join us and share the joy with fellow members at our NY BMW Chapter events...



Returns!



Autocross photos by Steed Wells



Wine & Shine photos by Jerry Goldstein

E36: Eat your Hartge Out!

A Rock and a Hartge Place

Story & photos by Paul Rathod

Part 2 of 2 – Although Hartge did not share the same glory as Alpina or AC Schnitzer or the like, they muscled out some fiendishly powerful models and deserve a fair share of credit for their iteration of the perfect BMW. There is very little documentation to be found on the H26SP (or K28), as it was solely built for the Japanese market and in vastly minute quantities, much like some rarer Alpinas. The few resources that are available comprise articles from Japanese tuner magazines from the 90's and forum/blog posts from enthusiasts in Japan. What can be surmised, from the primordial data that lurks, is that somewhere between seven and possibly up to twelve H26SP's were built, stating that close to half were automatic and the other half fitted with manual transmissions.

Inside-Out

The seats bore resemblance to some of the tuners of the day with firm bolstering along the sides and back. The steering wheel triangulated your view to the cockpit and the E36 cluster layout was not diminished, with all gauges oriented toward the driver.



Interior showing the signature 3-spoke steering wheel, and Hartge dead-pedal



The widely-recognized striping of Hartge; like other tuners of the day

The vehicle received the full body treatment. It was fitted with the adjustable, two-piece rear wing that I had never seen on any other E36 to date. It wore the Hartge cloth interior, also not often seen, other than in rare images from tuning magazines of the 80's and 90's. It was quite a delight on first inspection: The vehicle had been further worked by one of the authorized aftermarket BMW tuners in Japan, Elbe BMW.



Markings of the BMW Tuner that modified the car, Elbe BMW

Some accompanying records indicated modified brakes, and aesthetically, they had placed some of their insignias on the door moldings and a few BMW memorabilia-type roundels on the interior, which didn't bother me at all, and I left them intact to keep the car true to its origins.



The mirrored reflection of clouds over the pristine Diamantschwarz hood.

The previous owner had modified certain aspects and I very much believe in leaving those items untouched, as it

told some of the story. There were few focal points where paint work was performed, but all was of above-average to good quality. I would not describe it as perfect, as this car is no concours candidate, but it didn't impede upon the lines of the car. There was nothing major that stood out with the mechanical inspection and having a professional paint shop assess the condition of the vehicle, I was very pleased with the outcome. The overall interior condition was exemplary, as it had not been smoked in and all components were in very good order. The Hartge striping on the side of the vehicle was beginning to show its age, with some nicks and marks, but nothing of note. The look was a favorable patina and did not detract, but rather augmented the appearance with an age marker.

"Tenken-Seibi"



Annual Japanese Service Sticker, known in Japan as the 点検一整備, or "Tenken-Seibi"

The official-looking sticker is known in Japan as the "tenken-seibi" sticker, or the annual service sticker. Not to be confused with the vague "Next Service Due" that the shops supply, which you ignore! It is a legal requirement for one to have the checks performed and is probably a major contributor to the fine condition of vehicles that are brought over from Japan.

Too Far Gone?

As with all vehicles that I have imported from Japan, I had promptly taken them from the port of Newark, New Jersey, directly via flatbed to OMG Motor Works in West Babylon, where they began to strip the vehicle and assess any items needing replacement. Upon closer inspection a leak in the head

gasket was identified, which we proceeded to correct. At that point it became evident that there was some work to be done, but nothing that was beyond the scope of what could be easily attained.

All Appendages

She was stanced over a set of the original Hartge 3-piece 17-inch wheels with low profile tires. An odd set of brake rotors displayed an intriguing spiral pattern, as opposed to the commonly seen cross-drilled or slotted variety, thus adding a little bit of a unique look to the car. Another aspect that we left unaltered was the exhaust. Although not an OEM part, we left it untouched because it was the same shaped tip as the original Hartge oval, but from Supersprint. The inline six-cylinders were given the Hartge treatment, where they were bored out to 2.6 liters, for an added punch. Although this was not the monstrosity that was the V8, Hartge gave it a gentleman-like driving experience, and not a furious grunt expected from a German tuner of the 90's. It is set apart both aesthetically and functionally by the design cues that seem to mark it as a distinct E36. The DTM cup mirrors were a welcome addition, which kept with the profile of the fenders so as not to lose a mirror on the track – I truly love this accompaniment.

Of Course, It's a 6-speed

I will attempt to describe the most intriguing part of this vehicle – the shifter assembly. The first gear labeled "P" was the most boring of them all, followed by the one marked with the letter "R" which unfortunately did not activate "Race" mode; this was followed by the letter "N" which did not seem to activate Nitrous Oxide. Finally, I arrived at "D". This would hopefully engage the "Destroy" function (as in the competition). That did not end as expected. I glared to the left of the shifter, and I discovered a small switch... could this be the secret to unleash the fury? There was nothing else to do but to get out and test it!

To Swap or Not to Swap

Historically, if a vehicle was equipped with two pedals instead of three, most would venture on a quest to acquire a manual transmission from a donor vehicle and resolve the "situation." This was indeed my initial inclination, however, upon further researching the model in question, I felt it was far too harsh a treatment for something this rare, which survived the test of time in mostly original form. Being that I was simply a short-term purveyor of this automobile, I decided to leave it to the ultimate owner to decide the fate of this example. (Almost as a small courtesy to the final owner – should I really perform fully invasive surgery on this without consent?)



She Spoke to Me!

So here I am, at 3 a.m. at night, or morning, depending on your latitude, pondering upon writing an article about an automatic... We're not speaking of DCT's or launch control or SMG's; we're speaking of good old "Sport Mode." I clenched the three-spoke wheel and drove out, looking for inspiration to somehow describe the experience in words. The seats held the side-to-side motion well and I began to feel the engineering at work. Hartge made various, more potent models in their lineup, but how many days have you woken up and had the opportunity to purchase an original example of a German tuner car that was sold solely in Japan? Not many that I can recall! Here, we have the final product!

Upon clicking the sport mode switch, I began to enjoy the sounds of the H26SP revving; I cornered hard, and frequently, pushing the agility, and the handling was always purposefully

planted. I felt every little bump and each vibration through the chassis and smiled, as this was the old feedback mechanism, just like mother wanted for you. No digital overrides, no electronic component controls, no magnetic damping of my suspension. It was just the good-old road-feel. It remains difficult to engineer a "driver's car," but anyone taking this vehicle out touring would entirely attest to the fact that Hartge constructed vehicles to suit the needs of the driver; concerns of the passenger were secondary or nonexistent.

The aerodynamic kit followed cleanly and seamlessly with the lines of the E36 body with a handsome front apron and neat rear diffuser with the opening for the oval-cut tip of the exhaust. The side skirts on this model were a preview into what BMW's "M" division would pursue with the E36 M3. The engine bay was neatly laid out and impressively clean, as though it had received a wax-on/wax-off treatment! The Japanese are truly methodical and regimented in their maintenance of vehicles to a commendable level. Each vehicle I have brought in from Japan has shared this theme – they were maintained to high standard and kept in optimal condition. It wasn't just a means of transportation, but a statement of their character and extension of the self.

Transcendent

The automotive enthusiast community continues to scale any language or culture, as is evident with the admiration received by the H26SP at every venue. This unique automatic, German sport-sedan built for Japan, tuned by Hartge, imported to New York, and described herein. She will truly be a difficult one to part with when the time comes...

Happy Driving!

Contact Mahipal (Paul) Rathod,
Member, NY Chapter BMWCCA via
info@msrautowerks.com

V C A R C L U B O F A M E R I C A

DIE ZUGSPITZE

NEW YORK CHAPTER VOL. 23 NO. 1 1997



IN THIS ISSUE:

- EuroMeccanica Tech Session
- Wet, Me Worry?
- Club By-Law Changes
- Election Information
- BMW Websites (New Listing!)

*Place : Lake Bridgehampton, aka Turn 5 at Bridgehampton Race Circuit
Event : Amphi car driver' school and U-boat races*

A blast from the past

by Steve Geraci

Once again, let's go back to the days when driver schools, now known as High Performance Driver Events (HPDE) were run here on Long Island at the "Nirvana" of race tracks, Bridgehampton Race Circuit, known world-over as a true driver's track.

This story appeared in Die Zugspitze in early 1997. That year would be the last season the track would feel wheels scream down the 3,000 ft. straight, high up on a plateau that looked out to the north over Peconic Bay and Robins Island. As you came to the end of that straight and went under the Chevron Bridge, drivers who

A Novice Returns, Then Splits

by Melanie Coronetz

"What brings you back after eight years?" asked the tech inspector.

I was ready to say, "The weather," but the truth is, I wanted to see if my husband's newest find, a Hartge 6, measured up to my deceased Bavaria. (see the Roundel, Sept. 1988). And I wanted to be part of the absolutely, positively, very last New York Chapter Driver's School at Bridgehampton. (Ahem, aren't they all the very last?)

But, drenched and cold, I ended up in a steaming bubble bath at my Shelter Island home, before my tires ever hit the track. I didn't punk out, mind you, but I received signs from the heavens, and they were not good. Aside from the raging Nor'easter, a bad omen in the form of a peculiar-looking 2002 showed up for tech inspection.

At first I thought it was an amphi-car, so I figured, great! This will float through the puddles. But I got nervous when a guy started pulling off the wheels. Why did I care? Because that was my instructor, and the mutant mobile was the car I was supposed to ride in for the Novice-as-passengers run.

The Black run group lined up, but the 2002 was still under repair. I introduced myself to the instructor. He nodded at the car and at his busy helpers, and told me they weren't quite ready. I don't mean to put words in his mouth, but I bet he meant, "We may never be ready."

Then I saw a boy with a lug wrench securing the front wheel. That was the ultimate sign. I left the Hartge for my Husband, hopped in our 535i, and zipped home, wondering what I might miss, yet thankful, in a way, that I'd never find out.

An Instructor (Captain) Returns, And Stays

by Steve Geraci

Little did anyone know, but that was the ultimate sign, you see that boy is a member of my pit crew. Though Andrew Geraci, 12 years old, may seem a bit out of place to the casual novice student, he has been involved in track activities for more than half his years. He had crewed for my EMRA GT-3 2002 race team for 5 years and for several years prior as we sorted the car at drivers schools. He has been to every race track in the Northeast and then some, having been a part of over 2 dozen first place sprint race finishes.

As for the other member of my crew, anybody who has attended a drivers school in the past several years knows my older son Douglas as an accomplished instructor who had been my crew chief during those same years.

As for the amphi-car, that's not its name... it's the Tii-tanic, a 1974 2002Tii. Just as some ships have had a few problems on their maiden voyages, our car was on its proverbial "shake-down" cruise. We felt that was appropriate considering the weather conditions. Just for the record, the Tii-tanic ran fine except for a slight over-heating of the main boiler, and I personally veered "off-course" several times and hit a few buoys. But otherwise I made it back to port, I mean the pits, safely.

Next season, the Tii-tanic will be sporting a new paint scheme to replace the gray bottom paint and barnacle effect, with Motorsports colors painted laterally like a ship's waterline.

See you at Lake Bridgehampton.

wanted a bit more excitement resisted the natural urge to brake before the bridge and would keep their foot to the floor, knowing the track elevation dropped out from under them as the track swept to the right. Anyone who's done it knows the rest of the story. It had become an addiction for us, we just couldn't get enough of it.

Though we knew its days were numbered and we had been warned several times the track might close, we never really

took it seriously, or even contemplated what we would do without "our" race track.

Many of our old newsletters are full of articles and accounts of warm sunny days spent challenging the 2.85 mile, thirteen-turn circuit. But on this weekend, it rained heavily all night Friday before Saturday's driver school. Here's a different take on that weekend in late 1996, when the weather was not so cooperative....



TechTalk with Mike Shiffer

I like fixing things and do not like selling cars.

I have to sell cars from time to time. Customers will often give me the opportunity to buy their worn out rides instead of repairing them. Most of the cars I've owned for personal use have come to me this way. And sometimes I

will buy an unwanted car because it seems too good to pass up. A little effort, a couple of parts and I'll make a few bucks.

The lies we tell ourselves.

You see, I like to fix things. Once some poor, unloved automobile gets into my clutches, I can't keep my hands to myself. No matter how much I promise, "this one will be different", I wind up fussing around with every silly little feature (misaligned trim; busted cruise control; cupholders!) and fritter my profit away.

Real car salesmen realize that any mechanical improvements to a vehicle (beyond what's necessary to get it off the lot under its own power) doesn't raise its value. What determines a car's market value are: make, model, age, mileage, cosmetic condition and location. If it starts, runs, turns and stops without drama, its mechanical condition is of little interest to most buyers, and has a minuscule impact on the selling price. The most important job in prepping a used car for sale is detailing it. Knowing anything about the actual condition of the car is a liability for the salesman. If he doesn't know about the torn CV joint boots, the broken exhaust mounts, the missing bolts on the timing cover or the inoperable right rear window lift motor, he doesn't have to lie about them. If the body sparkles, the carpets are clean and the A/C is blasting, most customers will assume everything works just as well as it looks. The salesman is happy to go along with this assumption.

I cannot do this for two reasons. The first is pragmatic. Since

I am a mechanic who cares about his reputation, people expect any car I sell to be working very well indeed. If that car has a problem, it reflects badly on my competence and trustworthiness. A used car dealer cannot reasonably be expected to know as much about their cars' mechanical condition, and are less likely to be held responsible for minor issues. If after a car is sold a problem crops up and the customer comes back, the dealership may have to fix it, but there is no incentive for doing so beforehand. Many customers will ignore small problems, opt to pay for their repair, or move out of the area, so the dealership is better off not fixing non-essentials until they have to.

The second reason, though closely related to the first, is more personal. I really, really like fixing things. I WANT the cupholders to work, the thrust arm bushings to be good, the exhaust to hang securely. This is not good for the bottom line.

Many years ago, I acquired a 1991 Range Rover from a customer. I didn't want or need it, but I couldn't throw it out. It was presentable, with a good interior and decent paintwork, but it desperately needed springs, shocks and a muffler. It also had a whole suite of amusing English electrical eccentricities. After many hours and too many dollars, I had a Range Rover with no issues to speak of. I wound up selling it to another customer for slightly more than the cost of the parts I put on it. It was worth it when, after many years, he said, "It is the most reliable car I own." This statement, about a Range Rover, has never been heard before or since.

Currently I have a 2006 330i 2WD which came to me when the owner had Had Enough. The car needed a host of things, but the, ahem, deferred maintenance was not the reason the owner sold it. This E90 Wunderwagen, black/black, with Comfort Entry, CCC + iDrive, good cosmetics and strong engine, was not reliable. Its battery would go dead after a short stretch, sometimes overnight.

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Other times it would work fine, but the owner was never sure whether it would start or leave her stranded. I spent some time diagnosing it and concluded it could take a long time to pin down the problem. Plus, it had a cracked windshield, needed four tires, a couple of wheels, brakes and a few other things, so the cost of bringing it back would be several Gs on top of the cost of finding and fixing the battery drain. So she decided to sell it. So I bought it.

Silly me.

"I'm gonna be smart this time", I told myself, "I won't do the tires, brakes, windshield or cupholders until I sort out the battery problem", I resolved firmly. "Well, maybe I'll fix the cupholders first, but THAT'S IT!"

From the codes stored in the BMW's many modules, it was clear the problem was related to the K-Can. This is the network that links the various body controls together. The hub is the junction box, or JBE. It takes information and signals from all over the car and converts them into action. The JBE powers up the windshield wipers, door locks, windows, seat controllers, etc. It is also the module that wakes up the whole car when a door is unlocked or opened, and puts the car to sleep after 20 minutes or so of quiescence. Something on the K-Can was not letting the JBE do its job, so many modules were staying powered up, draining the battery.

Grabbing a few minutes here and a half-hour there, I determined that unplugging the module that automatically adjusts the seat and mirrors (depending on which key fob is used) made the K-Can codes go away. I left it unplugged and, with confidence borne out of ignorance, I replaced the windshield, tires, front wheels, brakes, fluids, filters; replaced the damn cupholders and took it out for a ride. Of course,



the codes came back, and the brand-new battery was dead after a weekend of sitting. And the radio/video display stopped working. AARRRRGH!

Now I really had to dig in. After way too many hours, I traced the problem back to the iDrive control knob. Replaced that (and the radio itself, which quit for unknown and probably unrelated reasons), and now the car was behaving itself. Or almost. You see, another mechanic who was trying to fix the same problem before I saw the car had removed the telephone module (which allows the driver to pester some poor operator at BMW Central at the touch of a button), thinking, wrongly, that it was the problem. This meant that, every time you start the car, it would look for a signal from the missing module. Not finding one, the cluster would light a warning lamp that looks exactly like the letters SOS with a sword running through them diagonally. Eventually, the cluster would get bored and turn it off, but it left a reminder in the form of a little exclamation mark in an amber triangle, to remind the driver that All Is Not Well. It took me another hour to find out how to tell the car its phone module was gone, and yet another hour to convince the dozen or so little K-Can brains to stop looking for it, or at least stop panicking over nothing.

So now I have a BMW to sell. Everything works, as far as I can tell, so it's ready to go. Except for one thing: it still hasn't been cleaned, let alone detailed... 🚗

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Auto-X Returns!

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2019 Call for Nominations for the New York Chapter Board

Open Positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Members interested in running must be nominated by a member in good standing. Include a short statement supporting the nomination and mail to: New York BMW CCA, PO Box 102, Williston Park, NY 11596 or via email: nominations@nybmwcca.org.

Candidates for President and Treasurer must have prior service as a member of the Board of Directors in order to be eligible to serve.

Nominations must be received no later than October 25, 2018.

New York Chapter BMW CCA By-Laws can be downloaded here:
<http://www.nybmwcca.org/bylaws>

