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New York Chapter Newsletter | Fall 2013

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New York Chapter 2013 Events Calendar

February	16	: 20th Annual Beach Party
April	27	: Auto-X: Test & Tune
May	4	: Auto-X
	20	: Driving School: NJ Motorsports Park
June	2	: Dine & Shine at Alure
	10-11	: Driving School: Watkins Glen
	22	: Auto-X
July	6	: Auto-X
	27	: Auto-X
	28	: Teen Street Survival
August	3	: Auto-X
	31	: Auto-X
September	7	: Auto-X
	15	: Wine & Shine (Rain date October 6)
	21	: Auto-X
	22	: Concours d'Elegance "Legends of the Euro Motorways 2"
October	12	: Auto-X
December	21	: Holiday Party and President's Dinner

For the latest information, see www.nybmwcca.org

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On the Cover: Andrew Geraci's pristine 1973 Inka Orange 2002 and Siran Libretto's awesome 2013 Lime Rock Edition M3 at Orient State Park at the 4th Annual Dine & Shine ~*Photo by Steve Geraci*

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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- 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.



Michael Pops Ron

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

President's Page



Jim Siegel

Fall is just around the corner and it's hard to believe another three months have passed. We've already held both our Driving Schools at NJMP and Watkins Glen; Dine & Shine; Teen Street Survival and several Autocrosses.

But not to worry – more great events are planned for the Fall season. In September we have two autocrosses, the ever popular Wine & Shine, and the Westbury Concours, which was revived last year after a long hiatus and proved to be a great event. This year we expect the event to be bigger and better than last year.

Then there's the Autocross season finale in October, and, last but not least, the President's Holiday Party, which unfortunately had to be cancelled last year due to fallout from Superstorm Sandy. This year we're holding the party on Saturday December 21st and we'll present the season winners of the 2013 Autocross Series, as usual. Don't forget to mark your calendars for those of you who won't already be travelling to holiday destinations.

For details on the entire list of club sponsored events please go to our newly redesigned website at www.nybmwcca.org.

Also it's the time of year where anyone who's interested in a board position can submit their candidacy statement to run for office. Members interested in running need to be nominated by a member in good-standing. You can find more information below and on our website.

Thanks and enjoy whatever warm weather is left!!

2014 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 920576, Arverne, NY 11692

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 9, 2013.

New York Chapter BMW CCA By-Laws can be downloaded here:
http://www.nybmwcca.org/downloads/NY_Chapter_By-Laws.doc

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of America
New York Chapter**



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Why MINI?

by Matt Wayne



Matt's Mini Coupe in White Silver



Photos by Matt Wayne

Let's take it a step further. Most cars you get your color choice, maybe some interior or performance option. O.K. How about the ability to build over 10 million combinations! I sit back in amusement now as I look at other manufacturers trying to copy the success of MINI, making cars that are chic, quirky and fun to drive. It might be a little late, pretty confident MINI now owns the market.

So with that said, give your BMW the weekend off; if you drive it like most BMW enthusiast do, it deserves it! Go grab a friend who owns a MINI or visit a dealer, find some windy roads and prepare for exhilaration.

MINI has been labeled more than car; more than a way to get from Point A to Point B, it has been labeled an icon. I'm quite sure when Sir Alec Issigonis decided to make a fuel efficient car in 1959 to aid in the crisis of the Suez Canal, he never expected that the car would be what it is today, nor know what it means to the people who drive it.

If you are reading this magazine it's because you enjoy the experience of the BMW brand, but a good portion of you may hold little thought or have minimal knowledge of the MINI Cooper product. I've been working with BMW for 12 years now, and can remember my first impressions of the MINI in 2002. I refused to drive it! I believed it was a disgrace to BMW to release such a product. I wouldn't ride in it, nor have anything to do with the eccentric people that were drawn to it. O.K. maybe I was a little overly passionate toward BMW, but aren't we all sometimes? Well that lasted till about 2004, when I finally decided to get behind the wheel of these little extroverted pieces of engineering and embark on a mountain drive in the MINI Cooper S Hardtop. That's when I realized I would never own another car for the rest of my life!

So how does a lover of the oh-so glorious 2001 740 with the blackout trim that was so popular become a lover of MINI, and has yet to purchase anything since? Simple, it's the same slogan that appears across every BMW commercial "the ultimate driving experience"! Eureka, BMW successfully carried over the passion and excitement of driving a BMW into the MINI brand. When you jump into the seat of a MINI with its small 1.6 liter twin turbo power-house at 181 hp, it's thrilling. It may not be a M3 off the line, but you will have endless amounts of fun driving mountain roads and find yourself adamant about taking the long way home from work.

Of course we all know the old saying "you can't have your cake and eat it too", well MINI proved that wrong. Not only are you getting a feel for the road that barely any other car on the market can compare to, you also can thicken up your wallet

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Autocross Corner

2013 Autocross Season

Hi there Autocross fans! The 2013 season is at the halfway point, and what a season it has been so far.

The tweaks that we made to the registration process seem to have paid off. Wait times to register have decreased and this has given the members more time to walk the course and prepare for the event.

The mid-season standings are very interesting. D Class has a big group of Autocrossers this year making this class very competitive. CR Class is also very interesting. Long-time Autocrosser Arvin has come out of the box on fire, picking up from where he left off at the end of last season. He is making all of us in this class step-up our game. It's been a lot of fun so far. But the biggest surprise this year is the Ladies' Class, where we have been averaging between seven to ten ladies per event. The competition among them is starting to heat up.

Good luck to everyone, and may the second half of the season be even more fun than the first!

André Noël

Photos at right, top to bottom: Master Time Keepers Darby and Bobby; Marusia slicing around the cones; Ken rocking the '86 Camaro; Josh Levy's Corvette-powered Miata; Augie in a Mini Cooper S clocking a fast time.

Below: The Queen of Speed & Ladies' Class, Heidi. Mike, André and Jim present Heidi her first place awards from last year. Photos by Mike Allen.





NY Chapter BMW CCA presents

The Vineyard Series Seventh Annual Wine & Shine at Pindar Vineyards

Sunday, September 15th 2013 • 12:00 pm (noon) to 3:00 pm
(Rain date: October 6)

Take a leisurely drive east to Long Island's Wine Country and join us at one of the North Fork's most highly rated vineyards, Pindar Vineyards Winery and Pavilion, for an afternoon in the late summer sun. Bring the family and a picnic lunch and relax on the pavilion overlooking the vineyards 550 acres. Sample Pindar's award-winning vintages in their beautiful tasting room and on their newly constructed deck. Tour the vineyard's facilities and enjoy complimentary tastings, open to all BMW members. All wines are available to purchase at a special discount to our members only.

All those attending will be eligible to enter their BMW in our clean car "Show and Shine" on the grounds of the vineyard in a separate parking area adjacent to the pavilion. Winners will receive bottles of select vintages of Pindar wines.

All registered entrants will receive their choice of either a bottle of red or white Pindar wine. All entrants must register online to qualify for a bottle of wine. Registration fee is \$10 per person, children are no charge.

While on the North Fork, stop by Briermere's Farm on Sound Ave. for home baked pies, The Jamesport Country Store on Rt. 25, Main Rd., or

one of the many fresh fruit and vegetable stands selling Long Island grown produce.

Register at:
www.nybmwcca.org/shine

For additional information, contact Steve Geraci at stevegeraci@reflexphoto.com

Pindar Vineyard

37645 Main Rd., Peconic, NY 11958
(631) 734-6200 | www.pindar.net

Maps & Info:
www.peconiclandtrust.com
www.liwines.net



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Ladies of the Glen

by Marissa Abriano

Photos by André Noël

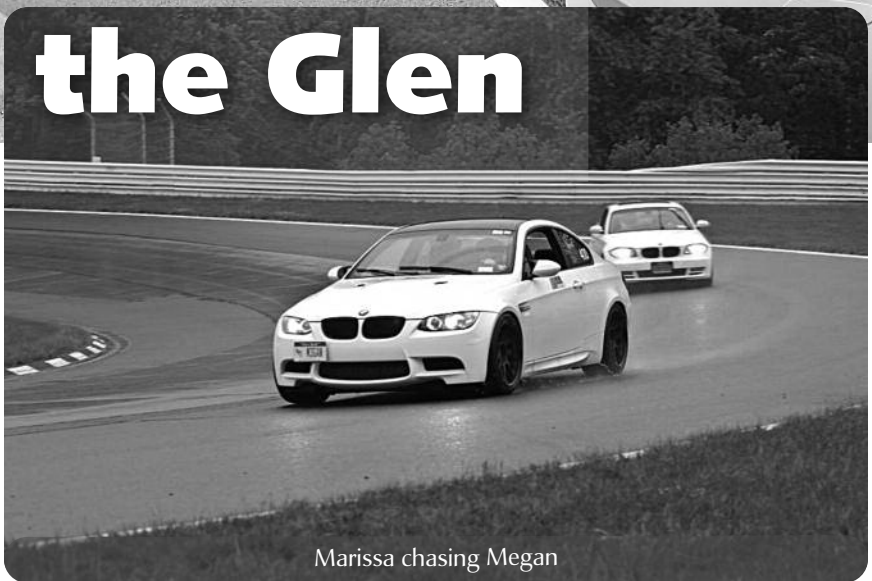
Watkins Glen International,
June 10 and 11, 2013

I've done track days before, but I've always felt slightly intimidated by Watkins Glen...Pocono, New Jersey Motorpark, I could handle those. Watkins Glen was for the big boys (and girls).

But the reigning New York Chapter Ladies Class of 2012 buckled up and took to the highways for the long journey upstate, on a gorgeous June day, saddled down with helmets, spare parts, tool kits and beauty supplies. Little did we know it would be the start of an amazing addictive habit.

The three of us drove up to the NY/Patrol sponsored event in just under four hours from the city (obviously because there was little traffic, NOT because we were driving any faster than we should have been!), leisurely stopping along the way at rest stops and making new friends (Hi, Chuck!) who clearly were going in our direction.

We arrived at the lovely Falls Motel, choice lodging for many, and a great spot to meet, shoot the breeze, prep for the next day's event, and sit on the porch watching the traffic pretending you are a local. The Seneca, the



Marissa chasing Megan



Megan on point at Turn 9



Heidi mastering the Esses

Ladies' Medium

by Heidi Ellison

I moan and roll over. The air feels sticky. It's way too early, but I'm excited. I'm driving the famous Watkins Glen International Raceway today. My roommates and I immediately check the weather outside. It's raining, but I don't have time to be sad about it. I'm going to be cutting through that fog and water so fast later today. We didn't get much sleep. We were all nervous and we spent the night reassuring each other, complimenting each other and giggling until we fell asleep.

It's a beautiful sight pulling up to that stately front gate. I'm in awe and I'm in just the right place in the long line of BMW's. I can't help it and I snap a couple of pictures while everyone in front of me signs the waiver. I can't believe I'm here. I take my spot, just like autocross, empty the heavy contents from my car, and head to the registration table. There are three drivers there to check me in, all women. I move along like it's an assembly line and at each station we share a mutual smile, a smile that says, I support you, I respect you, and I can't believe we're here, but we belong here. This feels perfect. Then it happens, like it has so many times before, at the third station after the smile. I didn't realize we get a t-shirt. That's great, a souvenir I'll be proud to wear. I

have a brief moment of excitement, until I remember, there's going to be a problem, this t-shirt isn't made for me. I slowly grab it by the shoulders and lift it up higher and higher. It's huge. It's a man's size and must be an extra large, or at least it would be on me. Maybe I can belt it and wear it as a dress. No, that wouldn't be right. It's a shame. It's a great t-shirt and it's just not meant for me.

It makes me think back to when I bought my racing seats. I couldn't just choose what I liked and order online like everyone else. I had to drive to another state, make a special appointment and try each seat to ensure it would fit. The first seat didn't fit my hips at all. It fit a hip, one hip, and the shoulders were way too wide. My upper body was swimming in the seat like it was my stock, unsupportive seat. The second seat was slightly better but too snug at the bottom and I couldn't get up. My brother had to help me out and we all laughed as the seat came up with me. He came along for the ride and support and to help get the right fit for my passenger man-seat. It went on and on until the owner brought us to the dark storeroom where he pulled out an old dusty seat. He hadn't been able to sell it because no one could fit into the tight shoulder bolsters. I fit. My brother began trying passenger seats that would closely match mine and we found it on the first try.

It wasn't much different with my driving shoes. At least it was local this time and I was use to the struggle. The owner was nice and

very accommodating, once again. He fumbled and dug through boxes then back to the storeroom. We tripped and tiptoed along the way. He showed me the one driver's shoe that came in a ladies' six. It was cute in pink but it was awkward and looked more like a bowling shoe. "I'm a boys' four if that helps," I said with defeat. The colors and styles were limited but finally I found it. It was in the back in a dusty box but it fit. This fits me, I tell myself, and I'm not alone.

I think about my daughter and how I want to teach her to drive manual just like my mom taught me. I want to teach her not to put on makeup or text while she drives, but I also want her to learn about rev matching and weight transfer. I want her to love to drive too. Every time I see a group of cars on the street with exhausts roaring and I see that one woman, we give each other the smile too, because I want her to know that she belongs. Every girlfriend and wife at autocross, sitting and watching, I'm sure is just a driver who hasn't had a sip yet. It's an amazing thing and it is part of me. It fits me.

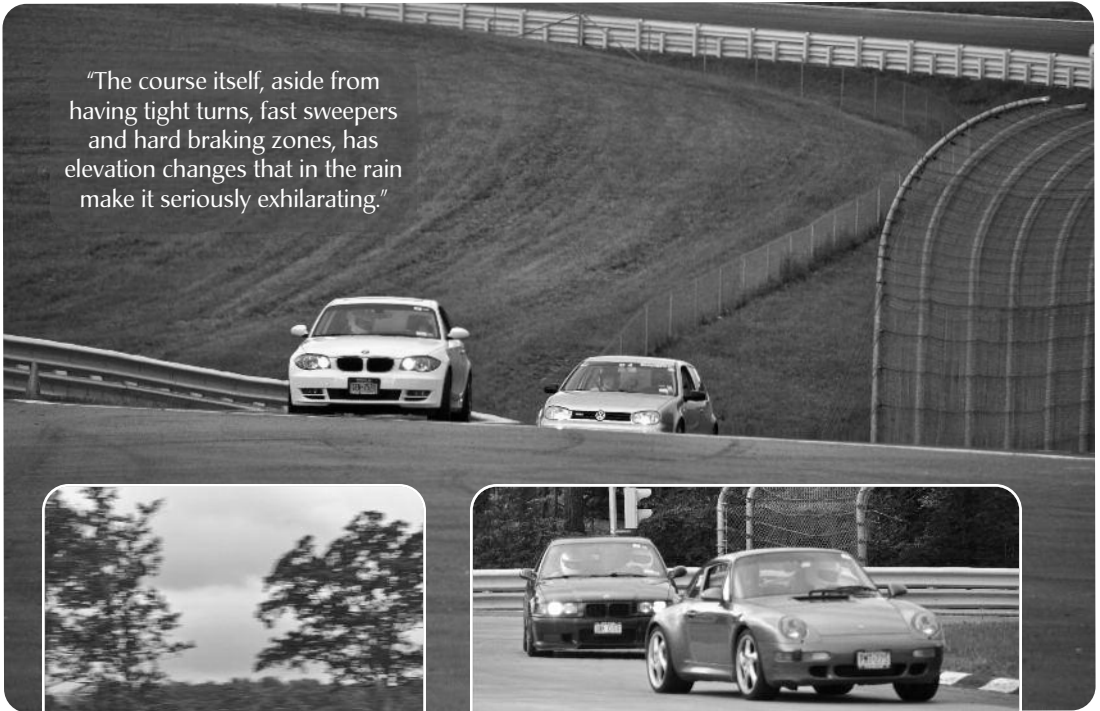
The Glen was awesome. On the long drive home we were roundel-to-roundel, following the three other drivers who checked me in, and my mind wandered a little. I thought about how we share more than bobbypins and rubber bands, we drive together, and maybe one day there will be enough of us so I can finally get a t-shirt in my size, Ladies' Medium.

legendary Seneca, that's where you go to get rid of any pre-track jitters by way of liquid refreshments. I'm sure Seneca played a small part in everyone's sense of fearlessness on the second day of the event – Cheers to that!

Our two day track event was better than I could have ever imagined. Our gorgeous summer day led into a soggy, sometimes drenching weekend. Despite this, or maybe even because of this, it was insanely fun and extremely challenging. The course itself, aside from having tight turns, fast sweepers and hard braking zones, has elevation changes that in the rain make it seriously exhilarating. After each driving session, everyone would come in with a half-second frown about the rain and then a huge (HUGE!) grin about how much fun it was driving. It was great to see some non-BMWs out there with us, including some good ol' American muscle in the form of Corvettes. I think I even saw a Chrysler 300 haulin' it down the straight.

All in all, it was a weekend of laughs, back-slapping, and camaraderie. Everyone stepped away meeting someone new and having a blast... I guarantee it! Even with some track difficulties due to the rain and a minor accident (kudos to those guys who fixed that car in between sessions), nothing put a damper on the spirit of the club. Nothing!

And so after two long days of driving hard, Ladies Class headed home; worn tires, a flat tire (reason #285 to drive in caravan!), our cars beaten and exhausted.... But every time we get together we say, "The Glen – the ride up seems too far, and the ride back is brutal – When do we go again!?!?"



"The course itself, aside from having tight turns, fast sweepers and hard braking zones, has elevation changes that in the rain make it seriously exhilarating."



Photos, clockwise from top: Marissa looking for the apex; Heidi chasing a Porsche; Chevy Pro truck chasing two BMWs; an e92 3-Series in the bus stop; Alex flat out in 10; Richard getting ready to pit in 2; the New York crew; Zeke in his MINI rounding Turn 10; Steven mastering Turn 10.



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Admission Fees for Spectators

Members of OWG	FREE
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Adults over 62	\$8
Youth (7-12)	\$5

(Payable at the gate.)

Classifications

Street: Judged on exterior only (No undercarriage; tops up on convertibles)

Concours: Judged on interior, exterior, engine compartment, trunk (No undercarriage, tops up on convertibles)

Tuner: Judged on interior, exterior, engine compartment (No undercarriage, tops up on convertibles), with a focus on creativity and uniqueness.

MINI Corral: "Best of Show". Mini's only. Judged on interior, exterior, engine compartment and trunk (No undercarriage, tops up on convertibles)

Location

Old Westbury Gardens
71 Old Westbury Road
Old Westbury, NY 11568

Directions To Old Westbury Gardens

www.oldwestburygardens.org
For additional directions
call (516) 333-0048

Registration

Deadline: September 15th, 2013
Online Registration at
www.motorsportreg.com

For additional information

Contact: Gordon DeShong,
srde28@hotmail.com

Concours d'Elegance

"Legends Of The Euro Motorways 2"

on the beautiful grounds of
Old Westbury Gardens

Sponsored by:

Hassel BMW

Autocraft

Divine Catering (Chef Rico)

Gliptone (Let Gliptone Make It Shine)

BMW CCA NY Chapter

Sunday September 22, 2013

Gates open at 7:45 AM for entrants, 10:00 AM for general public
Judging will begin at 11:00 AM

Entrants Fees: (includes Gardens' admission fee for driver)

Pre-registration BMWs, \$40.00 (payment must be made
by September 15th);

Registration, day of event BMWs – \$50.00, space available basis

Pre-registration MINIs – \$25.00 (payment must be made by
September 15th)

Registration, day of event MINIs – \$30.00, space available basis

The featured marques are BMW, Porsche, Mercedes Benz, with
special appearance by Aston-Martin

Please make plans to attend this great event. Bring your family
out to enjoy a gorgeous Sunday on the Great Lawns of Old
Westbury Gardens. Divine Catering will be on site to provide a
reasonably priced buffet.

“Who’s on First?” The 4th Annual Dine & Shine by Steve Geraci with Photos by



Photos, top: With Orient Point State park as the setting, members congregate and enjoy the cars, sun and ocean air; Second row left, Two '73 2002's in the same place at the same time? Whoa! Above, Angel Frias 2001 M5; Left, The special edition 2013 Lime Rock M3 with carbon-fibre roof and air diffusers; Below, M cars at the beach; Opposite page: BDR Cobra Replica, 475 HP and E-36 suspension, brakes, steering, and limited slip diff.



This year I decided to change the Dine & Shine to a dual-venue event. It seemed simple enough, move the car show out of the parking lot at A Lure Restaurant in Southold to a new location more appropriate for our needs, then back to A Lure for lunch. My plan seemed perfect; I would use the parking lot at the State Park at Orient Point for the car show...until I went there.

Superstorm Sandy had long since come and gone, and the North Fork of Long Island seemed to have escaped mostly unscathed. When I arrived at the park that February afternoon I was greeted by barriers and ROAD CLOSED signs. Alex, a friend of mine who works there part time, drove me in his pick-up truck to the Park Manager's office. Along the way, we dodged washed-out sections of the roadway as he pointed out thousands of feet of barrier beach and hundreds of barrier beach trees on both sides of the road washed away in the storm.

When I met with the Park Manager, Susanne Wuehler, she assured me the park would be open before Memorial Day. I thanked her and booked June 2nd as our date. By late May the park was back up and running as if the storm had never happened. The state workers and staff at the park did a fantastic job; anyone who has never been there would have no idea of the damage the storm had left. The beach, picnic area, trails and all facilities were perfect again.

Sunday, June 2nd was a sunny day with temps in the 70's and a slight ocean breeze (just like I planned), but our turnout was hampered by two factors, both out of my hands. The event fell right between the Spring and

Artur Tadevosyan

Summer issues of the chapter newsletter, and we were experiencing difficulty with our ability to send out timely emails to members to remind them of the event. We had a relatively small but enthusiastic turnout, with an array of different BMW's, in fact the only duplication of models were two 1973 2002's!

Among the notable cars present that day were a 2013 Lime Rock Edition M3 owned by Siran Libretto, the perfectly restored (with some help from yours truly) 1973 Inka Orange 2002 of Andrew Geraci, Artur Tadevosyan's very well preserved 1973 2002, the cool 2001 M5 of Angel Frias, and in the distance my 1965 replica BackDraft Racing Cobra, complete with BMW E-36 brakes, steering, front and rear suspension, and LS differential.

Toward the end of our visit we decided to capture a photo op of the two hi-tech BMW's of their day – the 1973 2002 and the 2013 Lime Rock M3, forty years of BMW's at their best – but we did get scolded for setting up the cars on the freshly seeded baseball field (who knew)?

After a morning in the sun at the ocean, we were off to A Lure in Southold for refreshments and lunch. About two dozen members, family and friends enjoyed a leisurely afternoon on the covered deck overlooking the Peconic Bay and Shelter Island. Then everyone left.

Hey, remember that freshly seeded baseball field? I'm working on my punishment now, I have to write "I will not park a BMW on the baseball field" three thousand times...

Can I park my Cobra there?



New York Chapter BMW CCA

Annual Holiday Party and President's Dinner

**Saturday December 21, 2013
7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.**

Jericho Terrace (Oak Room)
249 Jericho Turnpike, Mineola, NY 11501

Adults \$65 each
Children (ages 4-12) \$25 each
Children (3 years of age and under) Free

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Tech Talk with Mike Shiffer

This week I had to repair a nasty little problem on an E38. There is a carpeted panel that runs along the side of the transmission tunnel just under the center console. It is about two feet long and a few inches high. There is a single screw that holds the front end of it to the heater assembly next to the gas pedal, and a spring-steel clip that slides into a slot on the side of the tunnel near the

right front corner of the driver's seat. Like many interior panels in modern cars, it gives no clue as to how it is attached. The screw's head is sunk into the pile of the carpet and even when unscrewed, the clip at the back prevents the panel from coming off until it is slid rearward. Needless to say, it is not unusual for someone who doesn't know this to give the panel a bit of a tug. (This isn't stupid: many panels on the car come off only with a short, sharp, terrifying prying yank.) If the tug is too lusty, the clip tears off the plastic panel. Somebody did just this before I got to it. In trying to repair it, this somebody melted the plastic around the clip with a soldering iron, attempting to duplicate the plastic slots that originally held the clip. (I suspect this somebody was on an electrical mission, as evidenced by his choice of tools to repair the mechanical problem that confronted him.) Didn't work.

Now it was my turn. The clip's correct location on the panel was easy, as the panel had a clear footprint showing where it had been. I drilled four tiny holes around the flat clip and basically sewed the clip to the panel. I used very fine stainless wire and fluffed up the carpet's nap where the wire passed on the outside of the panel. The repair took ten minutes, is nearly invisible and is strong enough to do the job as well as a new panel.

This simple, quick, effective repair took me 50 years.


That's how long I've been taking things apart, putting them together, making things and breaking things, this last being the most important learning tool of all. My work life has been a daily dance with the physical world: materials, chemicals and physics. I work with wood, metals, plastics, cloth, rubber and glass in rod, sheet, wire; molded, cast, forged, stamped and raw. I cut, drill, sand, file, weld, braze, solder, sew, glue, hammer, pry, squeeze, crimp, twist and stamp on stuff until I'm satisfied. I've been doing these things long enough to have achieved a level of expertise in solving physical problems. I have a lot of tools in my box, arrows in my quiver, weapons in my arsenal and metaphors in my writing.

So what is my expertise? I work with all this stuff, yet I'm not a master of any discipline. I am a pretty good gas welder, moderately skilled in sheet metal fabrication, mediocre carpenter, unimpressive with a sewing needle, lousy painter, barely apprentice-level machinist, competent home plumber and electrician. What I don't do especially well is make things from scratch. What I do with all these half-skills and varied experience is fix things that others make. And I do this very well.

So some experts are specialists, and some, like me, are generalists.

The thing about expertise is that it is never what the non-expert imagines it is. Things that seem to the layman complicated and challenging are often straightforward, while things that would never occur to him are sometimes far more troublesome, important, time-consuming and make all the difference between success and failure.

For example, being able to deal effectively with the often frozen-in-place bolt that secures the upper ball joints on the front suspension of an Audi is more important than memorizing the torque specs and procedure for removing the steering rack, for which that bolt must be removed. The latter information can be looked up, while removing the bolt without damaging the aluminum upright or the two control arms is a matter of skill built on bugged parts, wasted hours and constantly trying to do better. The knowledge that allows an experienced mechanic to liberate a frozen bolt in ten minutes is not so much in his head as in his hands. Knowing the difference in feel between a bolt that is turning and one whose head is likely to break off is part of it, as is how to shock a bolt with heat or impact and how to use pushing, pulling, bending and twisting force to direct it. (Getting metal to do what you want is a matter of shock and direction. People, too.)

I specialize in cars, but cars are wonderfully general! Today I had a car (2004 VW Passat) that bucked and hesitated at highway speeds. At 9 years old it is young enough to have good self-diagnostics, so the first thing we did was to hook it up to a computer and pull codes. Welcome to the 21st Century! There were none. What now? Well, go back to the 20th Century. Before computers ruled the world, a car which bucked and hesitated at highway speeds would have its ignition system checked, possibly using an oscilloscope but probably not. Also, the fuel system's pressure and delivery would be measured. Since the ignition system on this car is well monitored by on-board diagnostics while the fuel pressure is not, we went straight to the fuel filter. Sure enough, it was almost completely blocked, just like the old days! For some reason, many OBD systems will not set any codes at all when fuel delivery is low, so NOT having codes with a poorly running car is nearly always due to this: no diagnosis being a sort of diagnosis. Having a foot in both centuries (and a filter on the shelf) got the car fixed and out the door in a short time, along with knowing how to deal with the frozen bolt in the plastic strap that holds the filter on the car. Heat from a torch is a no-no around gasoline and plastic, as is excessive force. But we have run into this before, and our solution, though simple, is hard to describe. Anyhow, it takes about ten minutes... 

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