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**ON THE COVER:
428i**

It looks like the 4 Series is going to be a big seller.



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Dennis Nowak
President - Houston Chapter

I find my thoughts have been all over the page when thinking of what I would write for my first page. Uh...where to start? I would be terribly remiss not to say a few words about my predecessor, so I will start there.

I have had the pleasure of working with David Dalton on the Board for the last 3 years, where I have gained insight into his exceptional business ethics. I have also gained a friend in David and getting to know him on a personal level has made me a better person. You see, David has a big heart and his willingness to do the right thing shows in what he has accomplished for this club during his tenure as President. For his leadership, guidance and friendship I am deeply grateful. I can only hope I will be as good a President as he has been.

Speaking of leadership, check out the 2014 Board Members listed in this edition. Working with almost all of these folks for the past year has made my transition from VP to President go pretty smooth. When you see these folks out and about, make sure you thank them for their service and feel free to chat up any ideas you have to make our club better.

Looking forward, I am excited about the next year for several reasons. First, having Blake step into the VP position will be a huge benefit to help me guide this club. Second, National has been tasking chapters to broaden our reach to members and potential members through social media outlets. Tor Taklo has been our Facebook Administrator for quite some time and doing an exceptional job, albeit with a slight Nordic spin induced in the chat! He elected to vacate the position if we found someone to take on the task, hence the pleas in the eBlast recently.

Well, I am pleased to say Kristen Reyes is well qualified and has eagerly accepted the challenge to head up our Social Media Committee. I look forward to working with her to broaden our club's persona in the social scene! Oh and we're not stop-

ping at just Facebook, Jennifer Ridgway, will be administering Twitter for our chapter too!



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Third, another committee I am excited to see formed is the one Donovan Brown is leading to bring the Houston Chapter our very own DE's. An excellent group of guys have assembled to jump start the program and these are the type of guys that "make things happen!" Keep your eyes on the events calendar as we look forward to seeing their efforts come to fruition soon. More on that in later editions.

www.houston-bmwcca.com click on EVENTS

I have to sing out praises for all those who helped with the January 18th Annual Dinner. Thank you Pam for a super event, you have really raised the bar. I heard nothing but kudos and saw smiling faces from those who attended. The slideshow Jeff Thomson put together was nothing short of awesome. Not only did he have great pics, but the music was so good we had folks coming from outside the ballroom asking about it. Thanks, also goes out to Chris Stokes and the Autocross Committee. You guys always seem to make the awards presentations enjoyable. Congratulations to all those who won awards for the 2013 season! Remember, there will be a social events award given next year to the person with the most event points. How do you get in on that you ask? Check out the latest details on our webpage. www.houston-bmwcca.com Several items your Board has been working on since the last newsletter:

1. For the Annual Dinner, we elected to subsidize the fee for each person, upgraded the quality of food, provided 2 free drink tickets per person, hired a magician as entertainment and provided three tire certificates instead of one. If you enjoyed the Annual Dinner please let us know.

2. The Houston Chapter elected to make a \$3000 donation to the BMWCCA Foundation. The Foundation sponsors and promotes the Teen Street Survival courses which we believe to be a very worthwhile project.

3. With the direction of the AX committee, we purchased new timing equipment for our AX program. Those of you attending AX events have by now seen the timing display. What do ya think?

4. We are diligently working the details to bring you an online merchandise store. Hopefully, by the time this newsletter gets to you, it will be up and running. If not, please stay tuned via the forum, eblast or our social media sites. I think you will be pleasantly pleased.

Remember the BMW CCA Oktoberfest is coming up June 16th through 22nd. I have no doubt it will be a blast. If you plan to attend make sure you hook up with the infamous Houston Road Monkeys, your trip will be memorable for many years!

By the time this edition of the Toque gets into your hands we will have had the 2014 Texas Trifecta event at the Circuit of the Americas track in Austin and the Rudi Lechner's Dinner, both scheduled in March. I am sure, Jim, our Newsletter editor is sending out requests for stories and pictures of those events. If you have something you would like to share get in touch with Jim.

Final thoughts....

Yes, you have a new President for your Chapter. I think of myself not as the new leader, but rather as a new driver. I will be sitting in the driver's seat for next couple years as long as you are my navigator. Without you giving me directions and feedback I can't take us where we need to go. This is your club as well as mine, together we can go places.

I hope to find you at the events;

You can find me..... in the driver's seat!

Stay Informed!! - eBlast Signup

Once a month the Chapter emails an eBlast to all members who have indicated that they want to be kept informed about Chapter activities and events, as well as news and information involving the Chapter.

If you wish to receive this information and are not already signed up you may do so on the website at www.houston-bmwcca.com.

The eBlast request is located at the lower left on the front page.



The Houston Chapter BMW CCA Annual Banquet

A hearty “well done” to everybody who worked on making last night’s annual dinner one of the best in a long time. The venue was great, the staff friendly and helpful and the food excellent. Even the magician (about whom I must admit to having had some initial reservations) was a delight. Perhaps once the word gets around about this year’s dinner, we’ll have even better attendance next year.
Jeff

Thank all of you that helped make this event fantastic! Jeff, we heard many complements about the music and slide show. Great job!
I too had reservations about the magician. I think it turned out great and was unexpected by most. I like the venue, hopefully a place for next year! And yes, those that missed it, missed a good one. Pam you hit a home run!
Dennis

Thank you all for the support and help with the dinner. It was fun and a very rewarding experience for me. It was especially nice to have a group that big, see all the smiles and good humor and have no grouching!
Pam



Autocross Awards

by Jeff Conley

One of the highlights of the Houston BMWCCA annual banquets is the presentation of the trophies to the autocross winners for the previous season. This year's presentation was different and special in that there was a new style of trophy, and trophies were also given to the X class winners.

Chris Stokes and Jeff Conley co-em-



ceed the presentation while Levi Ball and Barry Norman (gotta love his M-striped suspenders and lederhosen!) handed out the trophies.

This year the trophies were a wood plaque in piano black finish, with an etched silver plate with the winner's name, class and position, and an etched picture of Don Guilbault's 1976 2002, significantly leaning around a cone through a corner.



Thanks Don for allowing us to use a picture of your car! For a little background before jumping into the Class winners, let us explain the points system. The final season point total for each driver is based on the sum of his/her six (6) best event finishes in a class. Winning of 1st place receives 9 Points, 2nd - 6 Points, 3rd - 4 Points, 4th - 3 Points, 5th - 2 Points, and 6th through nth - 1 Point. C Class was presented first. This class had the closest competition for the top three winners of all classes for the season.

Only four points separated the top three winners. Doug Meinen won 3rd place with 42 points, William Hoy won 2nd place with 45 points, and Lonnie Howell won 1st place with 46 points.

D Class also was a tight class with Jan Rowe and Michael Knierien taking a few first places. Karl Herrmann's MINI had engine trouble and was out of commission for the last three events. In the end, Peter Fry took 3rd place with 33 points,

Karl Herrmann took 2nd with 35 points, and Jeff Conley took 1st with 45 points.

In E Class, Albert (Levi) Ball took 3rd place with 32 points, BJ Ongoco took 2nd with 42 points, and Thad Davis took 1st with 48 points.

In F Class, Blake LaGrone won 3rd place with 19 points, Aaraj Thyagaraj took 2nd with 40 points, and Barry Norman took 1st with 54 points. Notably, Barry won his class having

driven in only seven of the ten events. Of the seven events he drove,

he took 1st place in six of them! G Class is the top of the BMW classes, with the top drivers, and the highest power and/or most modified cars. David Hedderick took 3rd place with 32 points, Donovan Brown took 2nd with

42 points, and Chris Stokes won 1st place with 54 points.

Chris accumulated the most points over the season of any driver (74 points) and had the most first place wins (7). He held first place in his class from February through the end of the year. Sandbagger!

As I mentioned before, this year's presentation was special in that this year was the first for awarding trophies to

the X Class (non-BMW cars) drivers. These drivers have always been huge supporters of Houston BMWCCA autocross, usually making up about half of the drivers at any one event.

X1 Class includes cars with eight cylinders or turbocharged engines such as Corvettes, turbocharged MX5 Miatas and the like. There is even a 1975 Datsun 280Z with a V8 trans-





plant that competes regularly. There was no third place trophy in this class because only two drivers had the minimum six events to qualify for a trophy. David Duxbury took 2nd place with 28 points, and Terry Price won 1st with 36 points.



The X2 Class includes cars with six cylinder or normally aspirated rotary engines. We have Porches, 6 cylinder Mustangs, Lexus GS350s and others in this class. As in X1 class, no one took 3rd place. Michael Schnetzer took second place with 30 points, and Jim Hedderick took 1st with 51 points.



X3 Class has cars with four cylinders, and had the most number of participants throughout the season. Typical cars in the class are Mazda Miatas, Honda S2000s, Integras, Subarus, Scions, etc. Michael Gutierrez took 3rd place with 16 points, Cody Lam took 2nd with 29 points, and Robert Horton took 1st with 51 points.

Each year we have additional trophies for outstanding drivers; Most Improved Driver and Driver of the Year. Lonny Howell was awarded Most Improved Driver for the 2013 season. He drove in B Class the first two events of the year, then switched to C Class to get some tougher competition. He improved from 5th place in the class in March, to 3rd in May, and then 1st in November. And this with a very high mileage E39 with open differential.

Thad Davis was awarded Driver of the Year for the 2013 season. He earned this trophy for several reasons. As mentioned before, he won 1st place in a very tough E Class, earning four first place wins, having driven three different cars. He attended all ten events, helped improve the skills of other drivers by instructing, and made suggestions to improve the safety of our events. Finally, he went out of his way

to help a fellow driver by trailering their car home after it broke down at one of the events. He definitely demonstrates sportsmanship.

All the trophies were well earned. We are fortunate to have a great group of guys and gals participating in Houston BMWCCA autocross. Good luck in the 2014 season!



Hair Of The Dog





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67 Local Chapters

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Z3 Speaker Upgrade

Our Z3 was sounding a lot better with the subwoofer speaker repair, but once the kick panel speakers also began to have a noticeable distortion. Previously some research on forums indicated that the Bavarian Soundwerks (BSW) www.bavsound.com products produce an improvement over the factory speakers. With Octoberfest in Monterrey coming up, an improvement was in order for the drive to California.

BSW offers speakers which are reported to be more efficient than the factory parts, have improved bass response, and simple plug and play installation. For the Z3 they offer a kit with the kick panel speakers and an improved door tweeter. Our car also has the mid-range speakers behind the rear seats, but so far, no rattles were detectable from these. Several forum letters pointed out these don't do much for the overall sound. The rear speakers are offered separately so I decided to try the kick panel/tweeter kit first. The rear speakers can always be added later. When the BSW kit arrived, it contained four (4) speakers, but no instructions. The kit was about \$350. The instructions are available on the web as a download, and are pretty well written, 12 pages, better than what are provided with most aftermarket parts.

The install for kick panel speakers is straight forward, so was done first. The passenger and driver kick panels can be removed without removing the dash panels. The passenger side was done first. Figure 1 is the installed kick panel.



Figure 1 Passenger kick panel

Turn the quarter turn fastener, peel back the rubber edging, and the panel comes out. Figure 2 is the original speaker. The red arrow points to a crack like area

around the speaker, and the suspected cause of the rattle.



Figure 2 OEM kick panel speaker

To try and improve the speaker response, two pieces of Fat Mat, which is a thin rubber sheet with an aluminum foil top. The rubber side has a light adhesive, which over time bonds strongly to the steel body. The more known product is Dynamat, but Fatmat (www.fatmat.com or ebay) is available in larger quantity and I had plenty left over from efforts to quiet other cars in the past.

Figure 3 shows the pieces, about 4 x 8" each. The foil side is on top and paper backing protects the adhesive. Figure 4 shows it installed.



Figure 3 Fatmat material



Figure 4 Installed Fatmat material

Figure 5 shows the BSW speaker (left) and the stock speaker (right).



Figure 5 Speaker comparison

Since we autocross this car, I was curious the weight of the BSW speakers compared to the stock speaker. The BSW speaker was 739 grams and the stock speaker was 1156 grams, almost one pound less. Most aftermarket parts seem to add weight to the car, so this was a pleasant surprise.

The installed speaker is shown in Figure 6. The spacer around the speaker falls off, so I put some contact cement on it to make sure it stayed in place. Also the new speaker terminals are too small so the connectors had to be crimped with needle nose pliers to stay on. The connectors are different sizes so polarity is taken care of.



Figure 6 Installed BSW speaker

Here's the trim panel on the driver side with the hood release are removed, Figure 7.



Figure 7 Driver kick panel

The tweeter replacement requires the door panels to be removed. The Z3 is one of the more difficult panels to remove and get back on properly. Spare clips should be procured ahead of time, particularly if anyone has removed the panel previously. The part number for the 2000 Z3 clip is 51411973500. Replace as needed.

Our car has door airbags. It is recommended you disconnect the battery when disconnecting them. However to get the door panel off, the window will need to be lowered. I lowered the window and then disconnected the battery. I was short of time, so ended up doing one door panel, and then doing the other one on another day.

Figure 8 shows the door handle trim for the drivers side. Normally these can be popped out with a plastic trim tool. Note the direction of the locking tangs.



Figure 8 Door handle trim

Remove the SRS cover. The tangs break very easily, but these are readily available from the dealer or internet parts suppliers. There are several part numbers for these depending on the color of the door panels. Figure 9 shows the back side and position of the tangs.



Figure 9 SRS badge clips

Remove the mirror switch by gently prying out with a small screwdriver. Disconnect the wire connector. Figure 10 shows the switch removed.



Figure 10 Mirror switch removed

There is one screw at the top of the door handle opening and one under the SRS cover. They are Torx head. Older cars usually have Phillips head screws. I always have a telescopic magnet tool on the screwdriver to make sure the screw doesn't inadvertently fall off.

Once the screws are removed, use a plastic trim tool and pop the clips loose. Start at the lower left and work the tool close to the clips then lever them out. Use the plastic trim tool and lever the panel above the rubber trim at the window. The difficult part is next, getting the plastic piece out at the wing window. Try to hold the plastic while lifting the panel up. It may be necessary to rotate the panel at the back of the door to get the front plastic to slide out.

Once the door panel is free, inspect the supports for the clips. Some will likely be loose. These panels seem to have been assembled with an adhesive like hot glue. I usually glue any loose fitting with JB Weld quick because it sets in about 10 minutes, however doesn't develop full strength for about 12 hours. I had to glue several of mine. Figure 11 shows the clamp to hold it while it dries.



Figure 11 Door panel repair

Figure 9 shows the back of the panel speakers. The new tweeter has a metal frame that is larger than the old speaker. Also the screw holes are too large so a washer is needed for the old screw to work. A #10 washer fits well, two (2) are needed for each side. The red arrow in Figure 12, shows the location.



Figure 12 Tweeter mounting with washer

It is necessary to juggle the position to get the grill and tweeter in the correct position. I tried removing the grills completely but still had to leave the tweeter loose then tighten to get everything lined up right.

While you have your door panels off, it would be good time to inspect your window guides, and possibly replace them. Tell tale signs are slow window movement, or sticking windows.

Reinstall the door panel carefully. The most difficult part is getting the plastic portion under the wing window back in position properly. A little silicone on the plastic may be helpful to get it in place. Make sure to align the lock rod as it goes together.

To reinstall the screw through the door handle use a small piece of electrical tape to retain the screw, Figure 13. Once a few threads are engaged, remove the tape and tighten.



Figure 13 Torx screw retention for installation

Once the door panels connect the battery and test the sound by altering the left right balance and front to back fader to make sure all speakers are working.

On our car the sound is cleaner and has more volume. Prior to buying the BSW kit, I considered just changing to an aftermarket speaker set, but this would have required a change to a different amplifier to interface our aftermarket radio. This would have meant pulling the factory amps and a complete redo of the entire system with amps and speakers. That was not something I wanted to do.

Overall the BSW kit is a nice improvement for the work and cost. A better sound results with a completely stock appearance. So far we still don't see a need to replace the mid-range behind the seats.

Jeff Otten



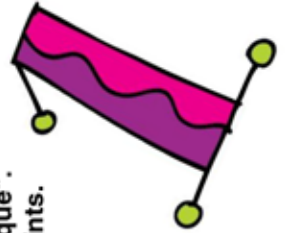
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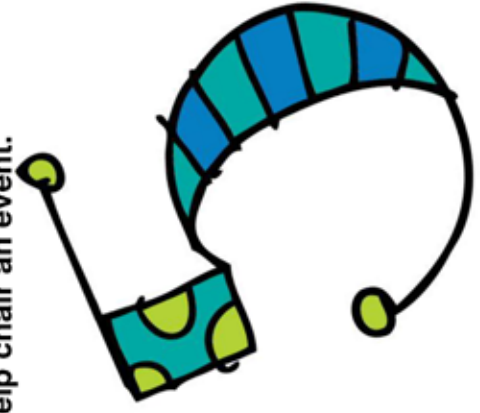
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Are HID (Xenon) lights really better?

Frank Henderson

High Intensity Discharge lights have achieved popularity as a better, brighter, and longer-lasting lighting system. Most HID systems use bulbs filled with xenon gas and are simply called “xenons”.

These systems, available on BMW’s for over 10 years now, are appearing in significant numbers on the used car market, leading the general public to purchase these cars with higher expectations.

But will these expectations be fulfilled? How do these lights hold up over time compared to a standard halogen system? My 2003 530i Sport, which came with HID (xenon) low beams and halo rings.

While I recognized the halos were purely for show, I would be driving behind xenons for the first time and was hopeful they would provide a noticeable improvement in light projection over the BMW halogen.

I immediately discovered rebuilding these modules is more difficult than halogen modules; requiring more expensive aftermarket adjusters (BMW doesn’t acknowledge these lights can even be rebuilt). Since most BMW headlights experience failed adjusters, I was willing to overlook this. (See my website for an E39 DIY procedure: tinyurl.com/kjq4lz.)

Over the course of several months I tried to distinguish the light projection abilities of my stock halogen ’99 E39 compared to my ’03. Other than the light color, I disappointedly concluded there

was no discernible difference between the two. On some nights I thought I could see a difference, but that may have been the placebo effect.

I assumed I needed new, better bulbs than the set inherited from the previous owner. Online forums recommended “The Retrofit Source” - www.theretrofitsource.com - where I purchased Morimoto 3-Five bulbs (4300K) for the great price of \$45/pair. Eagerly I installed them. One socket tab broke off the bulb’s base during installation, illustrating manufacturers continue to underestimate the forces applied when installing.

And what were the dramatic results? Well, they didn’t work. There was a brief flash however. After about seven separate attempts to turn them on, they finally started. A call to the nice folks at TRS customer service revealed my old ballasts weren’t producing the needed voltage. TRS experts told me ballasts last only 5-6 years and should be replaced with the bulbs. This was not stated on their website. (They do publish a 2000-hour service life for their Morimoto 35-watt ballast and only 1500 hours for 55-watt ballasts.) When they worked, the 3-Fives’ light projection was the same as my existing set.

Thoroughly disgusted, I was told thru forum advice that for best results I should buy new projectors too (which reside inside the light module). Since BMW does not offer projectors as a replacement part and OEM ballasts are outrageously priced (about \$700/pair!), aftermarket sources are a must.

For more light, many have “upgraded” their OEM 35-watt xenon systems to 55-watts, coupled with a range of projectors starting at around \$120/pair and high-end bulbs approaching \$200/pair. None of these parts (except bulbs) is a direct plug-n-play replacement for OEM stuff and, the legality of this notwithstanding, it certainly negates any efficiency advantage of xenon lights. Complexity is inherently less reliable and more expensive. The E39 xenon system replaces a halogen three-circuit system (high beam, low beam, turn/corner bulb) with a five-circuit system (high beam, low beam, halo/side, turn, leveler motor) plus the electro-mechanicals needed to generate the level signals (suspension-mounted arms and control module).

The trendiness of Xenons are popular

with the aftermarket crowd.

They do look good, especially when combined with halos or LED arrays. Many have spent hundreds of dollars retrofitting xenon lights in place of halogens on their older BMWs. But I have discovered few, if any, are aware of the limitations of these systems. While this may be only grudgingly acknowledged by lighting pros, most car enthusiasts don’t want to talk about it. I suppose makes me a party pooper.

As shown, xenon light projection apparently diminishes over time as the OEM bulbs, ballasts, and projectors deteriorate. In fact, it reduces to the point of being no brighter than a halogen system. Depending on usage, this process takes affect within 5 years. Being a gradual process I doubt many drivers are even aware of their reduced light output. This means all pre-2008 BMWs with Xenons lights perform no better than halogen systems. In order to restore them to their former glory, a complete light module rebuild is necessary.

In conclusion, xenon lights don’t live up to their reputation as a better, longer-lasting system. The average used car buyer would not go to the lengths I did in resolving this, since most are only familiar with replacing bulbs in a halogen system. And once the cost of “properly” rebuilding xenon lights is considered (bulbs/ballasts/projectors), the cost advantage of long-life xenon bulbs evaporates.

I think Xenon lighting can be a benefit, but only if the light modules are periodically rebuilt. Thus, the reputation of Xenons may suffer and possibly affect resale values. Meanwhile, those interested in long-term value may prefer a halogen system which, when combined with the new range of “super-bright” H7 bulbs on the market, should perform as good or better than aging, stock BMW xenon systems.

Frank Henderson
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ERRATA

I made a very regretful error in the last issue of **TORQUE OF THE TOWN**. For some unknown reason I did not include the advertisement for:

BIMMER WORKSHOP

Also, club-member Frank Henderson from Willis, Tx pointed out that in my Editor's page article I misrepresented the Me-109 as P-109.

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2014 BMW 428i Coupe

Jim Robinson

There's been a lot of conversation about the new 4 Series. So I went over to Momentum BMW West to check it out. I'd heard they had a convertible version there, alas I was too late. Apparently our economy is improving for some and there's plenty of money to burn. I didn't ask for a test drive and wasn't offered one, nor was I given the keys to light up the displays. But they did open the car and let me photograph it. I guess I need a press card in the band of my fedora for that. (Well first I gotta get a fedora.)

The 2014 BMW 428i Coupe in Alpine White with Dakota Saddle Brown Leather and Anthracite Wood Trim is well appointed with 18" wheels, Navigation system w/touchpad and Head-up Display and all the Smartphone apps.

Although the six-cylinder is available, BMW seems to be pushing the four cylinder turbo engines. This vehicle, according to the window printout contains the 2.0 liter, BMW TwinPower Turbo inline 16-valve 4-cylinder engine with high precision direct injection, Valvetronic, and Double-VANOS. It's not what I'd call the rompin' stompin' death and destruction power plants of the big M cars but I suppose with the turbo boost this 4,340 pound puppy will get out of its own way. From what I was able to glean from the internet the car produces 240 hp @ 6500 rpm and torque rated at 255 lb-ft @ 1250 rpm.

I found the owner's manual online and found something I thought interesting. It says, This vehicle is equipped with an

event data recorder EDR. The main purpose of an EDR is to record, in certain crash or near crash-like situations, such as an air bag deployment or hitting a road obstacle, data that will assist in understanding how a vehicle's systems performed. The EDR is designed to record data related to vehicle dynamics and safety systems for a short period of time, typically 30 seconds or less. The EDR in this vehicle is designed to record such data as:

-How various systems in your vehicle were operating.

-Whether or not the driver and passenger safety belts were fastened.

-How far, if at all, the driver was depressing the accelerator and/or brake pedal.

- How fast the vehicle was traveling.

EDR data are recorded by your vehicle only if a nontrivial crash situation occurs; no data are recorded by the EDR under normal driving conditions and no personal data, e.g., name, gender, age, and crash location, are recorded.

“However, other parties, such as law enforcement, could combine the EDR data with the type of personally identifying data routinely acquired during a crash investigation.”



While this may not be a big concern in most circumstances it could become a factor once the M version comes out. And by the way, the owner's manual is integrated in the iDrive display; so ignorance will be no excuse.

To read data recorded by an EDR, special equipment is required, and access to the vehicle or the EDR is needed.

In addition to the vehicle manufacturer, other parties, such as law enforcement, that have the special equipment, can read the information if they have access to the vehicle or the EDR.

Editor's Corner

Jim Robinson



This month we welcome our new club officers: President, Dennis Nowak. I think we can expect Dennis to take the Houston Chapter to new levels. He's got some big shoes to fill taking over from David Dalton but I believe he's up to the task. Vice-President Blake LaGrone; send congratulations and comments to vice-president@houston-bmwcca.com We welcome Kheng Swee Goh our new Social Events Chairperson. If you have any suggestions about social events I'm sure he'd like to hear from you. Email him at socialevents@houston-bmwcca.com Kristen Reyes is our new Social Media Coordinator. As Dennis mentioned in his Driver's Seat page we're trying to increase our presence online; Kristen is heading up our FaceBook and Twitter accounts. I'd also like to thank David for his help with the newsletter. He's given me a lot of guidance and suggestions to make it better with each issue. I'd still like to have more audience participation from our members. I'd like to hear from the membership about the various social events attended. Just email me at newsletter@houston-bmwcca.com and if you have any pictures attach them.

And now some more eye-candy.



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