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SUMMER 2017

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Summer 2017

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ON THE COVER:

*Cité de L'Automobile
Museum
In Mulhouse France*





Open Roads

Spring Torque Issue

The saga of the M3 continues and I really identify with **Robert Siegel "The Hack Mechanic"** as well as **Joseph Chamberlain "The way we were"** in our National Roundel Magazine! I love the two older BMWs that I own (yes, own, no car payments, no lien holders, no lease agreements!), they are two classics in my view, an E36 M3 and an E39 530I. Both.....slightly modified. Like Robert I enjoy keeping these cars in good shape, and, like Joseph, I fall into the category of a "Beezer" (a Geezer who owns a BMW).

Here's what my M3 looks like right now...



I am close to completing a bottom half rebuild after an oil pump failure at **Laguna Seca** (Mazda Raceway) in Monterey CA last summer.

Now, I also own a 2015 Toyota Tacoma TSS pickup truck. That vehicle will never look like this. I change the oil and rotate the tires, take a look at the

It is by far the most comfortable long distance cruiser I have ever experienced. The M3 is a little harsher but still not bad on a long haul and just awesome in the twistys! I wouldn't even think of putting the Toyota on COTA or Road America, it just wouldn't be any fun for one thing, and it certainly wouldn't excel at it. The Toyota is my Fishing (boat trailering), Golf, Dog and hardware car and it is great around town. It will be Uber reliable after 100,000 miles (unlike a lot of our BMWs I hate to say) but boring and reliable... Someday I will be looking at a new BMW (maybe a new M4 GTS), but I don't mind fixing what breaks on my two favorites and I doubt I will ever get rid of either!

Treasurer **Bill Krupowicz** and I had the opportunity to attend the National Chapter Congress in Dallas last month and it was worth it for a number of reasons. We now have a new Regional Vice President, Jeff Gomon, and Bill and I got to meet with him for a bit.

The BMW CCA National office

belts about every 30k and put gas in it...that's all. And that's about all I will ever have to do to it over the course of 200,000 miles! But the philosophies behind both vehicles are completely different. Both the 5 series and the M3 are not only competent on a good road track, they Rock! The 5 series I have driven completely across this country a number of times. It's, set the cruise to 95, turn on the radar detector and watch the miles fly by.

is setting up a new feature that will allow all chapters to set up webpages through the National office for a minimal charge and allow for local and national event notification with just one posting. So, if we have an event that we post to our calendar, it automatically migrates to the National calendar, Roundel Calendar, etc. It will eliminate duplication of efforts and save us money in the long run. This new platform should not only save the larger chapters money but give the smaller chapters an online presence they simply couldn't afford. I spoke with Josh Butts (Vice President Tejas Chapter and part of the National Tech Team) today re this issue and National is planning on instituting the next steps in this progression during July and August. Jeff has started the process and you will see some changes to our online presence over the next few months.

Other news from National is that the **BMW CCA Foundation**, the BMW Zentrum Museum, BMW CCA National headquarters and the Performance Center will all be located in essentially the same place. Making Greer South Carolina a must see on any trip east!

There was also discussion from the **National Capitol Chapter** (Virginia, DC area) about an event they have been putting on called the ///M Club Day Event. This would be a Chapter sponsored one day event to the Performance Center in Greer for a one day driving school, and a variety of other activities like a Foundation tour, BMW Zentrum Museum tour, Factory tour. This sounds like it would be an awesome Driving Event for our chapter. Go to www.Msreg.com type in ///M Club Day Event and a location of Greer, South Carolina for additional details.

BLUEBONNETS!!!!

We had our annual Bluebonnet drive on April fool's Day this year and our **Vice President Chris Stokes**, **Social Events Chair Christine Hsui**, **Membership Chairman Jim Moffitt**, and all around good guy **Mr. Ken Finley** did a wonderful job setting this up and executing it! Jim Moffitt did a great job with the route but was unfortunately basking on the beaches in Cuba during the actual drive! After talking with him at breakfast I think there was quite a bit of good Rum and Cigars being consumed! Our Condolences Jim...!!!! Here's a shot of the line dance through the bluebonnet country...

I am still trying to locate the nice guy that took this shot of our cars! I have searched my emails and text files but can't find seem to find his name! If you see this, please refresh my memory cause you did an awesome job with this shot.

The car in front is my 2002 E39 530I and the car behind (I believe) is the gentleman's car who took this picture. It was a nice cool day for a good drive in the country!



I am sure most of you have heard that the annual Oktoberfest gathering has been re-scheduled (Hallelujah...!!!) from July in New Orleans to October 31st through November 4th. The "Road Monkeys" however will not be denied a chance to travel the back roads of Louisiana and will be taking a weekend trip in July to St. Francisville Louisiana. We will arrive as early as Thursday 7/6 and depart either Sunday 7/9 or Monday 7/10. Our Peerless leaders have some interesting day trips set up and I look forward to yet another Monkey Shine adventure. For further information re the Pre Ofest road trip contact [Valerie Baker \(VBakerBMW@aol.com\)](mailto:VBakerBMW@aol.com). For further information about Oktoberfest in New Orleans go to www.Ofest.BMWCCA.org. I hope to have the M3 back in service over the next couple of weeks. I have sorely missed driving that little black demon. Unfortunately, I have to do a break in on the new bearings, nothing above 105mph or 5500 rpm until I get 1200 miles on the engine.

**See you all out there
on the Open Road!**

Blake LaGrone



Chris and Leanne basking in the blossoms!



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Jeff Otten

In Mulhouse France is claimed the largest automobile museum in the world. It is also the largest collection of Bugatti automobiles. I had an opportunity to visit the museum last year when on a business trip to the Alsace region of France.

My flight went to the Basel-Mulhouse airport which is an airport on the border of France and Switzerland. I stayed at the Hotel du Parc in Thann, France and drove by the museum signs on the way. It's located about 32km from the Basel-Mulhouse airport, off of the A36 motorway, in the city of Mulhouse, France. The museum has National Heritage status, and is referred to as the Schlumpf Collection, after the original founders of the collection. The cost to tour the museum is 13 euro for adults.

The Cité de L'Automobile is reported on Wikipedia to have 520 cars. Bugatti accounts for about 200 cars.

Bugatti automobiles were manufactured in Molsheim, France. Molsheim is about 100km north of the museum. This area of France is near the Rhine river and was part of Germany from 1871 until 1919.

Bugatti is now part of the Volkswagen group, but the current cars are still made in Molsheim. Bugatti had a long heritage in motor racing, and focused on performance, and light weight, in their road cars as well.

The collection was primarily the effort of Fritz Schlumpf. He and a brother ran a textile company and apparently used company funds to amass the largest collection of Bugatti automobiles. They converted part of the old factory to warehouse the cars. When the business went bankrupt the government found company funds procured the cars, and took the collection. Later the family was more fairly compensated. It ultimately evolved to the national museum that it is today.

The bulk of the museum is the Motor Car Experience area, where cars from 1878 to present are displaced in chronological order. The Motor Racing Area has cars from 1908 and a nice collection of Formula 1 cars. The Motor Car Masterpieces area has cars from the 1930's that are truly extraordinary. The last main area is the Bugatti Veyron exhibit. While the Veyron is no longer in production it is still a remarkable car. Ever wonder where the name Veyron came from? It's the last name a famous Bugatti racing driver, Pierre Veyron.

The museum is a walking self-guided tour. They have an audio system

that has a brief description of about 200 or so of the cars. Most of the cars also have a sign next to them with some text in three (3) languages. All the signs have engine size, power output, and rated top speed of the car. (Power is in "CV" which converts roughly 100 CV equals 99 hp). If the sign has a headset logo and number, then you can put the number in the audio system and listen. The audio is available in many different languages. There is also a cell phone app available.



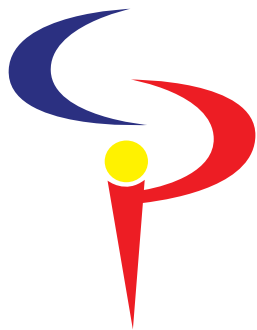
1920 Rolls-Royce with 6 cylinder engine, 7428 cc, 50 CV, and 100 km/h



1912 Bugatti, 4 cylinders, 5027cc, 100 CV, and 160 km/h, with a chain drive!



1912 Hispano Suiza



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When looking at the older cars, it's interesting to see the evolution of suspension design. Also in figures 6 & 7 note the positive front camber. Opposite what we know today is better for performance with current tires. This was typical of all the older cars.

I think of Steyr, Austria for arms manufacturing and as the center of BMW engine excellence for 3, 4, and 6 cylinder diesel and gas engines. Cars were made there as well until 1977.

One of the main areas of the museum is the Motor Car Masterpieces area. Here you will find amazing samples of Bugatti, Hispano Suiza, Rolls-Royce, Maybach, and many others.



Steyr Cabriolet type 220, 6 cylinders, 2260 cc, 55 CV, 120km/h



1938 Mercedes-Benz, 38 CV, resemblance to the familiar VW.



1929 Mercedes-Benz Type 720SSK, 6 cylinder, 7065 cc, 170-235 CV, 200 km/h. The final SSKL hit 225 km/h.



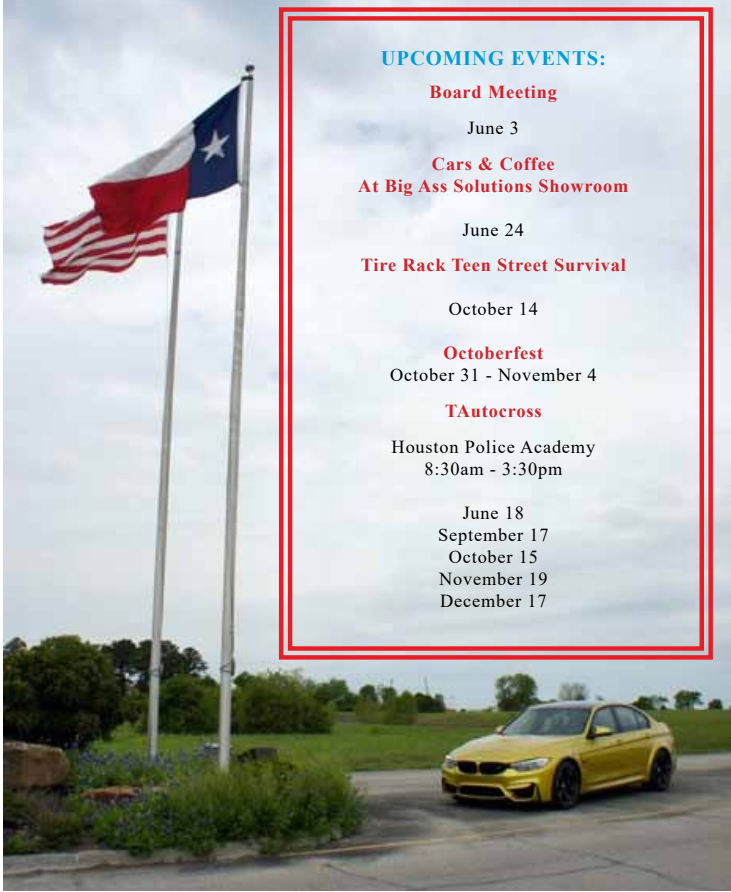
1927 Bugatti type 38, 8 cylinders, 1991 cc, 70 CV, 130km/h customized by an American owner with a shortened chassis.



1963 Lotus Type 33, 8 cylinders, 1495 cc, 210 CV, 260 km/h



1936 Alpha Romeo, Coach Type 8C 2.9A, 8 cylinders, 220 CV, 220 km/h. 1936 Mille Miglia winner.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Board Meeting
June 3

Cars & Coffee
At Big Ass Solutions Showroom
June 24

Tire Rack Teen Street Survival
October 14

Octoberfest
October 31 - November 4

TAutocross
Houston Police Academy
8:30am - 3:30pm

June 18
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John Crispino
Parts Specialist

The Bugatti Royale which was purchased by Fritz Schlumbohm from the Bugatti family. Ettore Bugatti dreamed of building the ultimate luxury car and created the chassis in 1929 and his son designed a body to match his father's passion for horse drawn carriages. The car has a 12763 cc 8 cylinder engine, 300 CV and capable of 200 km/h.

The motor racing area has a mix of old and new race cars. Many late model Formula 1 cars are there, with a bias for cars with Renault or Peugeot engines.

The Lotus used in the film Grand Prix is there (Figure 14). This car won the Dutch Grand Prix in 1965 driven by Jim Clark, and took part in more than 20 Grand Prix.

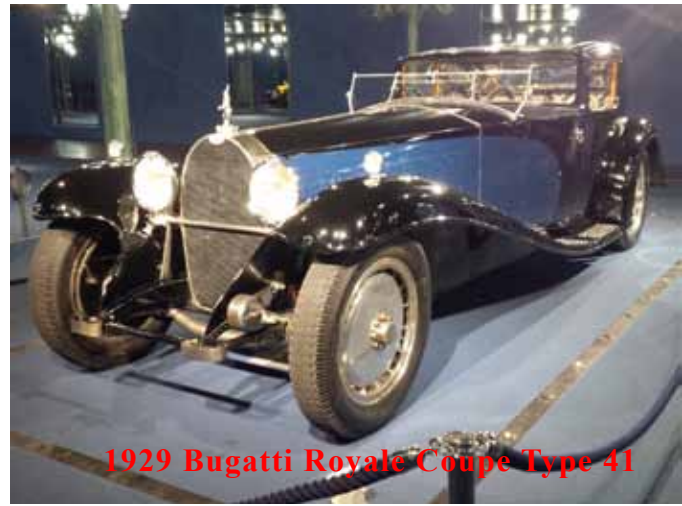
The Veyron exhibit is a rotating car with a video providing extensive information about the specifications and new developments needed to build this car. Bugatti's latest car is the Chiron, also named after a Bugatti racing driver, Louis Chiron.

The museum also has a small track where different classic cars can be driven. They had several cars, including a Jaguar, MG, Ferrari, Bentley, and Mercedes-Benz, mostly convertibles. It costs 40 to 60 euro for a few laps around the track.

Overall the museum has an impressive collection and was definitely worth a visit. Allow at least several hours. More information is available at www.citedelautomobile.com/en.



1994 McLaren Peugeot, 10 cylinders, 3498 CC, 750 CV, 330 km/h



1929 Bugatti Royale Coupe Type 41



Classic cars available to drive



1921 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, 6 cylinders, 7428 cc, 100 km/h



Vintage Harley-Davidson



Bugatti Veyron, 1000 hp standard, 1184hp sport



Ignition Key Lock Replacement

The ignition key lock on our 2005 X5 failed suddenly, completely disabling the car. This happened at 158k mileage. Usually the fuel pump is the culprit for a disabled car, but the not being able to turn the ignition key renders the car immobile. Particularly for cars with an automatic transmission, as you can't even get the car out of park to push it. With AWD on the X5 it really leaves the car stuck.

BMW's since about 1994 builds have what is called EWS (Elektronische Wegfahr Sperre) which is an anti-theft immobilizer that requires the key be in the correct position or the car will not start and the transmission will also not go out of Park.

In my case the car was parked in front of the house to unload landscape materials. Our neighborhood has typical narrow streets as residents are not supposed to park on the street. When we went to move the car the key would go in, but not turn at all. Normally when the key will not turn, it is the steering wheel locks binding due to setting with wheels turned.

Slightly turning the wheel to the left, usually frees the key to turn. (Tip: leaving the wheels straight when turning the key off usually prevents this).

In this case the key was just totally frozen. Next thing to try was the other key, on the off chance the first key had been damaged. The other key did the same thing.



Figure 1 Stuck key

At this point the problem was pretty frustrating as the car was too far from the curb and blocking the mailbox. We were forced to leave it there till the end of the week. Resist the temptation to apply more force to the steering wheel

or the key, as further damage may be caused.

Next was to try lube with WD-40 and wiggling the key. This had worked once before on a failed lock in an E36 car, allowing the car to be moved. No luck with the X5.

The ignition key actually turns a switch that is external to lock mechanism. By removing the plastic cowl around the steering column the switch can be removed from the ignition lock housing. The switch can then be turned with a screwdriver.

The Bentley X5 manual provides the basic (read minimal) instructions to remove the cowl. The only exception is that their directions recommend removing the lower left cover of the dash which is not necessary.



Figure 2 Releasing upper boot clips

The cowl on our car had a few scrapes on it, but if you are careful it will come off without damage. A plastic trim tool along with a small screw driver are needed. There is a plastic threaded fastener on the top (Phillips screw) and a Torx screw (T20 driver) holds the bottom cover. There are also clips to pop out from the boot at top and bottom. The steering wheel position control can be used to improve access to the boot fasteners.



Figure 3 Left side cowl separating



Figure 4 Right side is most difficult to get started

Once the cowl is removed the switch is mounted to the left side of the lock housing. There is a plastic bracket that holds the wire loom to the column. The bracket was broken on our car. Someone had obviously worked on this before and did not remove both screws before removing the switch. A couple zip ties also need to be cut and removed. Two small set screws retain the switch.



Figure 5 Switch wiring and upper retainer screw



Figure 6 Set screws to hold switch

Once the switch is out a flat screwdriver will turn it. This provides power to position 1 and 2 of the key but the car will not start due to the EWS. Also the transmission is still stuck in Park due to the transmission interlock cable.

Note that normally it would be recommended to disconnect the battery cable when working on the ignition switch. Since the car needed to be moved, power was needed. Since no high power connectors were being removed, I didn't disconnect the battery.

The back of the switch has a T shaped extension. Turning the key pushes this out, it engages the switch, and it is spring return. Needle nose pliers would not maintain a grip on it. Using small vise grips, it could be pulled out. Once the spring load is relieved, by wiggling the key it could be turned. The key was not working properly but if it is turned about 60 degrees the EWS is disabled, and the screwdriver in the key switch allowed the car to start. The car could then be driven off the street and to a spot in the driveway to complete the repair.



Figure 7 T shaped pin drives ignition switch



Figure 8 Small vise grips to pull and turn T pin

The EWS has a wire on the top that should be disconnected, but it is long enough to get the lock out first, making the connector easier to access. The next step is to depress the spring loaded cam that locks the key lock to the column. At the front of the lock is a small hole on the outside of the inner diameter. With the key inserted, by placing a "tool" in this hole with a bend on it the spring latch can be "cammed" into a depressed position.

The Bentley manual claims a stiff wire like a paper clip can do this. My experience is it does not. Professional tools are available that have a small bend at the end. On YouTube several different schemes can be found. The best tool, readily available, is a bobby pin with the correct bend at the end. The bend is about 3/16" from the end and using the flat side should bend in as in the figure. On the internet pictures can also be found of the lock cylinder housing cut off, a drastic measure that should not be necessary.



Figure 9 DIY "special" tool – copy the shape at the end and remove plastic

Wiggle the pin in and then turn about 90 degrees. The "bend" should point out. Try it several times. See Figures 10, old lock, and 12, new lock. The pin will have a spring feel, and turn about 90 deg. when the end is in the correct spot. The key is then aligned to the casting line on the housing and the lock will come out.



Figure 10 Key out with bobby pin holding cam latch down

With the key out, it was clear the lock cylinder had failed. Upon inspection of the inside the lock housing, that part seemed Ok. If the lock housing is bad, the whole assembly must be replaced which requires drilling out the tamper proof screws.



Figure 11 Housing ready for new lock



Figure 12 Practice with new lock to operate locking cam

The lock cylinder for cars of this vintage can only be purchased from BMW matched to the original key. The dealer will require to see and copy the title and the driver's license of the registered owner or same last name family member before placing the order. The key lock is then coded to the original VIN record. The new lock cost \$145.00 with tax, using the club parts discount.

Older BMW's can be repaired with a new lock that comes with keys not matching the car, and recoding by changing the shims from the old lock to the new one. This can be cheaper than getting a VIN keyed lock. The older cars had a pin that could be driven out to change the lock cylinder or change the settings to a different key. The newer style doesn't.

Ordering on Monday, to my surprise, the new lock cylinder was ready for pick up on Wednesday. BMW really provided quick turnaround on this critical part. Test your key on the new lock.

Clean the lock housing and apply some grease to the inside. The bobby pin operates the locking cam. The bobby pin has a nice spring loaded feel when the cam is up or down. Practice with the new lock before inserting in the housing. The key is turned to align with the casting line and insert. Turn the bobby pin back and the cam will release and the lock will be retained in the housing.

Since the T shaped stem was pulled with vise grips there were some marks and upsets on it. I should have tried some duct tape before gripping to protect the surface. These must be filed/sanded down so the part will slide in and out of the plastic switch. Use a file and sand paper to smooth the surface. I used a small amount of synthetic grease on the T stem. Test it several times to be it operates properly. If it does not disengage properly the key feel will be wrong. Tighten the two small screws to retain the switch, and check a final time.



Figure 14 Housing re-installed

The vehicle normal function was now restored. The procedure is essentially the same for all key start BMW's.



Figure 13 Key lock installed in housing with EWS ring (arrow shows release tool location)

The EWS has to be installed on the lock cylinder to start the car. Remember to install the dirt seal before snapping it on. Replace zip ties for the wiring.

The cowl for the underside has the metal screw, make sure the speed nut is properly aligned with the hole. Carefully fit the tabs on each side and align. One the large tabs at the back was damaged on my car, try to make sure both halves are aligned on all clips on both sides before snapping together. The small clips on the side can stagger if not properly positioned as the main clips snap. Once the cowl is fully made up and fitting correctly on both sides, put the top and bottom screws in, and clip the boot retainers in.

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**Houston BMW CCA Board Meeting
March 11, 2017**

Meeting was called to order at 11:50
Following Board Members were present:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Blake LaGrone | President |
| Chris Stokes | Vice President |
| Bill Krupowicz | Treasurer |
| Diane Albrecht | Secretary |
| Jim Moffitt | Membership |
| Jeff Thomson | Webmaster |
| Richard Lo | DE Chair |
| Jim Robinson | Newsletter |
| Jeff Otten | Tech Advisor |
| Jennifer Ridgeway | Twitter |
| Priscilla Saynay | Facebook |

Bill presented the Treasurers report for last quarter. He also presented the expenses for the banquet. Total net expenses were about \$9900. This is in line with other years. Bill will process paypal refunds for all the board members. The Treasurers report was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Priscilla updated the Board on advertising at the Rodeo. We need to find a dealer that we can partner with that hasn't advertised before. Priscilla will take an action item to investigate and update us next quarter.

COTA:

The Club issued a check to COTA. Blake signed the profit & loss agreement with PCA so the Club will be a part of COTA.

Bowling Event:

We need to issue a plaque for the bowling event. Blake will take an action item to get it done.

Octoberfest:

Our Club will do the autocross for O'fest in New Orleans. Chris S. to form a committee.

INSTAGRAM AND WEB FORUM:

Priscilla got the Instagram account set up. Face book traffic is picking up. Do we need to keep the forum open so than people who have questions can use that? Priscilla has people who have questions where can they go for answers since FB isn't set up for that right now. Priscilla needs someone who is techy that can be the designed person that she can go to. We need to open up FB since social media is the trend. We need to set up the ground rules. Priscilla needs to dos and don't that she can monitor. Set up links to another website for sale items.

Minutes were accepted as read by the board.

**NEW BUSINESS:
ANNUAL MEETING**

The food was very good, speakers were good, format was good. The next annual meeting, the club should be more vocal about who gave the large prices. Next time we should advertise the big prices so more people attend. We should make sure that we get more pictures of the car corral.

NEWSLETTER:

We have a lot of articles this time. Newsletters at the mail out now Jim got credentials for auto show so he will have articles for the next newsletter. Deadline for the next newsletter is May 20. Ads for newsletter all paid up. Driving Events update:

Fast Fest Plan to have it advertised 2 months before. Already given COTA the deposit. No news from TWS. Most of the dates open are in the summer. Maybe the club can do a one day event. Richard will find out how the Lone Star club race did last week.

CCA CONGRESS:

Blake and Bill, Chris and Richard to attend.

The club will pay \$110 each for Blake and Bill. The club will pay \$170 each for Chris and Richard to attend. This includes meals and rooms. National will reimburse for mileage.

SOCIAL EVENTS:

Bluebonnet drive is April 1. Jim M will work the route out. Coffee is March 25 at Cedar Creek. Rudi Lechners is March 31 Chris S to post the flyer for Bluebonnet route on Facebook. Big Ass Fan event – They want us to have an event there. We need to figure out what to do there. Maybe we could have coffee there instead of Cedar Creek. Update on a dinner cruise out of Clear Lake or Lake Conroe. The price is too high to rent the boat. We could all buy tickets for the same day and time will be cheaper. It seats 40 or 50 people. Movie event – Diane to set up. There will be Charity Golf event on May 6. The Mercedes

Audi Clubs will participate. Reauss Garage should we incorporate with a Wash and Wax- Jeff Otten will coordinate the Wash and Wax

Chris S recommended that for participation points that the club no longer give out prizes since most of the board members are the ones who participate the most. Blake to ask Dennis how many t shirts are being sold.

The club needs a solution that board members download an app for sign up. Christine & Nick volunteered at the last meeting. Chris S to contact Christine and Nick to find out the status. Membership:

There was discussion on how to get additional members. A suggestion was made that once a month, volunteers could go to the dealers and give out information on the club.

Jim M stated we have lost more members than gotten new members in the last quarter. We are staying the same in total. Chris S will try to target 1500 total members.

We can pay Facebook to promote our Club. Radius will be based on our zip code. The Board agrees to do promotions 4 times a month for 3 months. It will cost \$5.00 each time.

DRIVING EVENTS:

Richard had someone contact him that we should do more drives. Richard will find out who the person is.

TECH ADVISOR:

Jeff O stated that 30% of tech questions are not from club members. He helps everyone that emails him. The majority of questions are "what repair shops do you recommend."

Board adjourned at 1:40pm.

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At the Vintage ~ 2017

Jim Moffitt



Consider this a “save the date” postcard for next May if you are a fan of BMW cars. Well, OK, older BMW cars as in “Vintage.” The event known as “At the Vintage,” “The Vintage,” “Vintage in the Vineyard,” and other names is a great example of what can happen when the right mix of cars, people, location, and plain hard work all come together and blossom into an iconic event.

Scott Sturdy began the event in 2003 because he felt that the Tar Heel Chapter of BMW CCA needed something other than track and driving events on their calendar and because the other events targeting older BMWs were too far away. Apparently he was spot on in that evaluation said the guy who just drove 3000 miles to this year’s event in Asheville, NC. Attendance has grown from 55 at the first Vintage to this year’s cap of 650 cars as the event has migrated from Dobson, NC through Winston-Salem to the current locations, Asheville and Hot Springs NC.

The number and variety of the cars on display is overwhelming for a one day event. Do you like E30 M3s? Step over to the line of 20 under the trees over by the river. E9 your thing? There are dozens in all colors, with a sprinkling of Alpina and Hartge specials. Isettas? Yes. E36? Not this year. Not yet old enough to be classed as “Vintage” by the Festmeister. No big deal. In 2010 my E34 M5 was banished to visitor parking, but now would have been welcomed.

E12 your weapon of choice? I found 2 other than my own. A number of vendors are there each year and they may have just the part you need. To see the full scope of the event go to the event’s home page <http://www.atthevintage.com/> or search You Tube for “2017 BMW Vintage - Hot Springs, NC”. The Vintage has become that “too far, but I really want to go” event on many calendars. I urge you to make it one that you actually attend.

The Vintage is kind of like the

TriLateral Commission in that its three components augment and stabilize each other.

Yes the Saturday show in Hot Springs is awesome, but you must not miss the Friday night registration and hang out at the host hotel (Clarion - Asheville airport location.) and an unlimited number of drives on fantastic roads in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina. Event dates for next year have not been announced, but you can expect them in the fall. Registration usually opens in the first quarter of the year. If you plan on going, be sure to register early and book room at the host hotel for maximum event immersion,

The Vintage has become an annual pilgrimage for many on-line BMW communities, perhaps answering one of the existential questions for BMW CCA, “Is the Internet going to make local chapters unnecessary?” Answer: No. BMWs are things that must be seen and smelled and examined. At The Vintage screen names and forum handles are transformed to actual humans and true friends. Be ready to chat with folks with similar cars, or cars you’ve never seen before. Bring a chair, cash (because there’s NO CELL DATA COVERAGE in Hot Springs so Square doesn’t work), sunscreen and bug spray.

I learned about The Vintage through the my E28.com forum, and since every BMW series seems to have its own on-line focus I’ll assume that others came through a similar path.

Now the travelogue. Skip this part if you wish. I finished most of the todo list for the E12 on the Saturday a week before The Vintage so the windows sometimes went up and down, the oil was fresh, the trunks was filled with essentials and that wetness

on the left front strut wasn’t an actual drip. Sunday 7:30 AM at the McDonald’s in Cleveland was this year’s launch. Pavel, Sherman and I left at 9 AM heading for the start of 4 days of rolling through the mountains of Appalachia. Our destination was north of Chattanooga 800+ miles east. Made it. Glad to see the rest of our group had made it in from their various home bases in Florida, Canada, New York, West Virginia, and Virginia.

Day two brought us to London, KY after winding over the Cumberland Plateau. Day three took us through Kentucky Coal country and into Princeton, WV. The roads are incredible, the coal trucks are very large, and a clutch hose failed. Now the magic of the internet connected universe begins. No replacement hose in Princeton, so one was fabricated in Virginia and arrived at 2:30 AM. First guys up at 7:30 AM installed and bled it. Ready to go by breakfast.



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Day three was a bit of back-track as the destination was Robinsville, NC. Sound familiar? Yessir, that's dragon country. First order of business, though, was the "Back of the Dragon," Hwy 16 south of Tazwell WV. It's like the "Tail," but tighter, emptier, more remote and has a 55mph speed limit that you'll never reach. I opted to drive through the Great Smokies National Park which is bracketed by Dollywood on the north and Cherokee on the south. I prefer Cherokee.

Day four was set aside for driving in the area around Robinsville, so I opted for the Cherahola Skway - Tail of the Dragon loop where I learned that while an E12 with blown out struts (remember the damp strut)

is faster than a Harley in any corner, those damn things accelerate out of the corner much faster. For me Day five was set aside to visit the BMW CCA Foundation facility in Greer SC for the "Heroes of Bavaria" reception as it was for many others attending main Vintage event. The interstate from Greer to Asheville was filled with classic BMWs.

The drive home after The Vintage was spread over a couple of days to accommodate visits to the "Wheels Through Time" motorcycle museum in Maggie Valley, Barber Motorsports Museum in Hoover, and Strawn's Eat Stop Also in Shreveport. A great trip, but I WILL fix the AC before taking the E12 out again.



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North Houston Beemer has moved to their new facilities at 26015 I-45 North in Spring.

Originally opening in January 2011 North Houston Beemer began with a business model of quality car care and a commitment to treating customers like family.

Owner, Edgar Tello, developed the business model of offering a unique car care experience and that is carried forth at the new facility with its modern design and pleasant atmosphere. The new space offers a family atmosphere. "This is a faith based Christian operation."

General Manager, Juan Tavares: From the beginning we set out to create a first class facility with well trained staff. The new facilities at North Houston Beemer reflect our understanding of the BMW culture. Owners love their cars and expect the highest in quality at a fair price. We have a five-star rating on Google.

One look around the new place one can see that it is a comfortable family oriented place. It is also run with a professional attitude where customer service is the most important thing. Service Advisor Louis Barcenas assures that customers are kept informed of the progress being made on their cars photos are taken for clarification so that the customers are kept informed.

Viewing the seven work stations it's easy to see that cars are maintained with the utmost care and attention to detail. North Houston Beemer have BMW trained Master Technicians. Lead by Shop Foreman Josue Marquez, Jermaine Owens and Abraham Duran have a combined 50 years' BMW repair experience.

The new location offers easier access for new business and walk in traffic. The facilities are professional and accommodating.
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Jim Robinson



**Edgar Tello
President**



**Juan Tavares Jr.
General Manager**



**Luis Barcenas
Service Advisor**





Editor's Corner Jim Robinson

Okay, the round up at the Roundel exhibit included various models from the 750i with M package, to the new 5 series and on to the utilitarian 3's and X's. But, like a moth to a flame the M4GTS caused the most distraction. I got a bunch of pictures of other cars in addition to the M4GTS but the one on display done up in what I call "White Wedding" or Billy Idol fame was so stunning that all the other cars on display paled in comparison. Most of us have seen the gray metallic version but this one stood out like a high-class call-girl in church. "Father, forgive us of our sins." "But, if not, welcome to the congregation anyway." For the "modest" price of \$134,200 or rather, the cost of an average house, I think I'd do okay being "homeless" for the brief moment I'd spend before being arrested and sent to prison for driving one of these on the freeways around town.

Now, where was I? Oh yes, there were other cars there; after all it was the Houston Auto Show. The M4GTS was absolutely stun ... drat.

The 750i with all its electronic wizardry enhances with M components was striking as it is huge. I have to say, though, that the Volvo S90 is a really nice alternative. Okay, run me outta Dodge City for that but I'm mainly talking about luxury on a budget.

Speaking of budget, or abandoning any sense of frugality, the Aston Martin DB11 stands tall above the fray for the monetarily elite. At way north of \$300k this car, for me, was the show stopper. What are they going to do when Daniel Craig calls it a day? I'm wondering when Ford will send the new GT40 to the fourth largest city in America for its car show display. This was a glaring omission from Blue Oval; seriously \$450k for a V6? I know, it's a great feat to get 217mph and reestablishing preeminence at Le Mans after 50 years but we'd still like to see the car. Okay, I like what you've done with the new Mustangs, yawn, but, I digress. On display was the fastest GT40 done up in Gulf livery.



Tata Motors are kind of resting on their design laurels; thus not much outstanding from Jaguar. McLaren's doing fine with their Matchbox® cars. Lotus brought one of their Evo's relating it to the movie "Ghost in the Shell" but that car wasn't in the movie.

The rest of the new car offerings for this 34th annual event were as expected being the show is brought to us by the Houston Automobile Dealers Association. Everyone attending got the chance to see, touch and in many cases test drive the variety of cars on the market today. The people working the displays were kept busy wiping down the windows of handprints refreshing the cars for the numerous visitors.

Also on display, roped off to prevent grimy hands, were custom cars and classics. Old Corvettes, a vintage Rolls Royce. Lots of eye-candy, enough to send a diabetic into a coma.



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