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Houston Chapter



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WINTER 2011

A Publication of the Houston Chapter BMW Car Club of America



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WELCOME New Members to the Houston Chapter!

In order to help us keep you informed of last minute changes to event schedules, please send your email address to: membership@houston-bmwcca.com

We will add your name to the e-mail list that goes out on a more frequent basis. Also, be sure and visit our website and forum at www.houston-bmwcca.com

ON THE COVER:

A pair of Z4's owned by brothers Andy and Chris Golden of the New Mexico Chapter at the natural amphitheater near Albuquerque, NM

MOVING?
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The Road Ahead



Here we are very close to the end of the Holiday Season and coming up on 2012. From Thanksgiving through the first of the New Year is the time to visit with family, friends and acquaintances. Some you may not see very often but once you reconnect it is as if they had always been there. A toast to good times and celebrate the arrival of the New Year. Making resolutions you know in your heart of hearts there is a very slim chance you'll ever see them through. But the magic and joy of the season has a way of making you feel like a kid again at times, and I think there ain't nothing wrong with that.

Okay, back to reality for a moment... Remember to register for our infamous Hair of The Dog Drive on January 1st. As hard as it is to pull yourself out of bed at the crack of dawn and get there in time for the briefing and group assignments, it always proves to be an uplifting and enjoyable way to kick off the New Year. Also remember to register for our Annual Dinner to be held January 14th, a must-go-to occasion. Registration for both of these events can be found on the website.

Welcome to our new advertiser in the Torque, ProAm. John Rawson and his staff at ProAm have a passion for performance cars and club racing. Located at 6125 Richmond Ave., ProAm is a unique auto accessory store with everything from racing and autocross gear to parts and accessories for the enthusiast, including professional in-house installation. Next time you are in that area make it a point to stop in and see what they are about. It is always a good Idea to support our advertisers.

In this issue of the Torque are the ballots for the 2012 elections. Please take the time to vote, whether it be for the candidates on the ballot or a write-in candidate; your vote is appreciated. If needed further instructions for write-in candidates can be found in the Ops Manual on our website.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous New Year.

See ya on the back roads.

HOUSTON CHAPTER – BMW CCA
2012 Ballot Instructions

Please note there are 3 ways in which you may cast your ballot for the 2012 Chapter Elections:

1. Mail your ballot to: Houston Chapter
BMW Car Club of America
Post Office Box 56763
Houston, Texas 77256-6763
2. Email your Ballot to a member of the Nomination Committee: Jim Iden: jim@waynerussellsearch.com
Priscilla Irawan: irawan.priscilla@gmail.com
3. Bring your ballot to the Annual Banquet on January 14, 2012.

BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 14, 2012 TO BE CONSIDERED
BALLOTS WILL BE COMPILED AND TALLIED WITH RESULTS ANNOUNCED AT THE ANNUAL BANQUET



HOUSTON CHAPTER – BMW CCA

2012 Executive Committee Ballot

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2 OR MAIL YOUR BALLOT TO:

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BMW Car Club of America
Post Office Box 56763
Houston, Texas 77256-6763

3 OR EMAIL YOUR BALLOT TO EITHER:

Jim Iden:
jim@waynerussellsearch.com

Priscilla Irawan:
irawan.priscilla@gmail.com



David R. Dalton

President



Dennis Nowak

Vice President

BMW CCA MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

NOTE: Ballots must be received no later than January 14, 2012 to be considered.

HOUSTON CHAPTER – BMW CCA

2012 Executive Committee Write-in Ballot

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2 OR MAIL THIS COMPLETED WRITE-IN BALLOT TO:

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BMW Car Club of America
Post Office Box 56763
Houston, Texas 77256-6763

3 OR SCAN AND EMAIL THIS COMPLETED WRITE-IN BALLOT TO EITHER:

Jim Iden:
jim@waynerussellsearch.com

Priscilla Irawan:
irawan.priscilla@gmail.com

President: _____
Nominee's Printed Name

Nominee's Signature & Membership No.

Signature: Nominated By/Membership No.

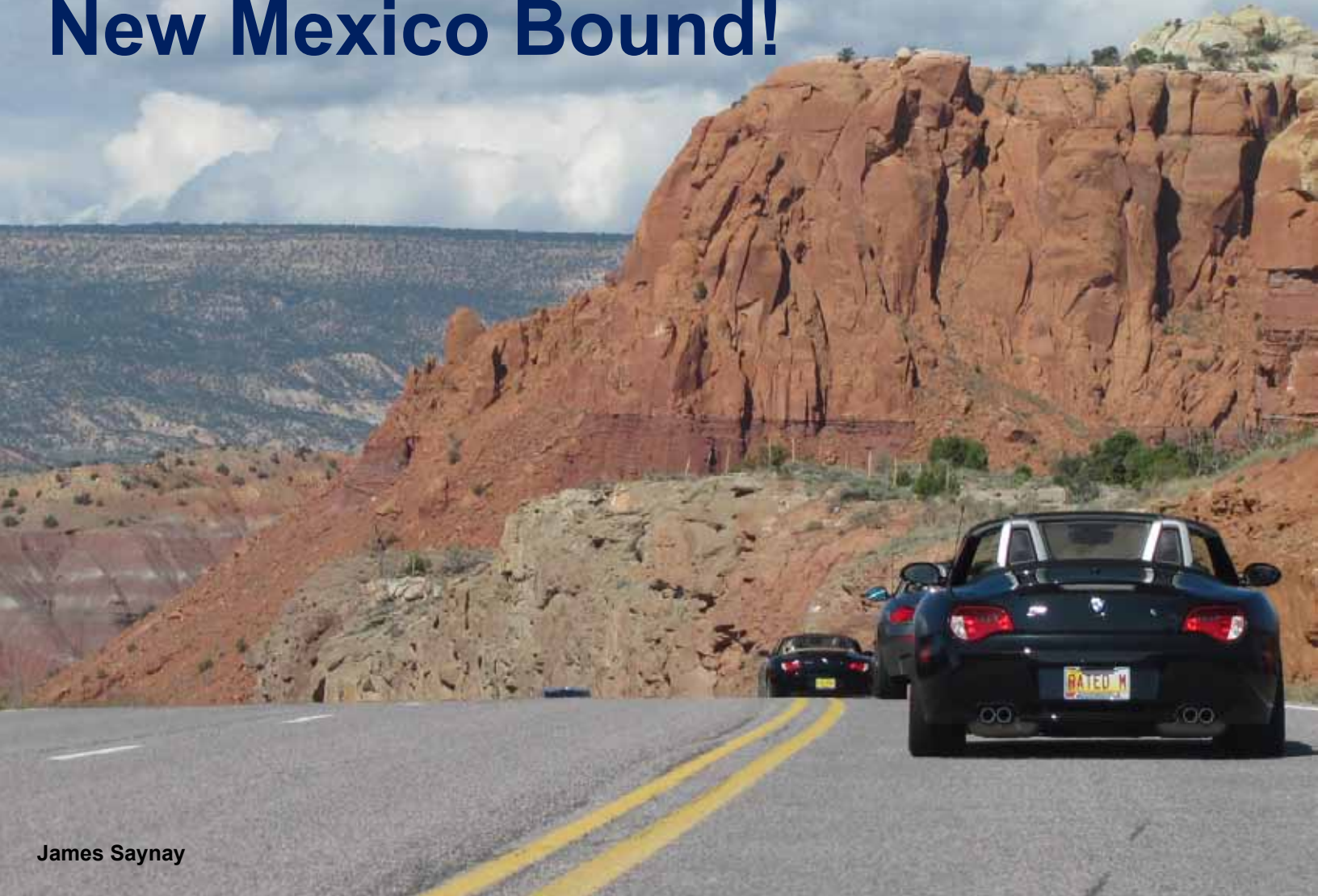
Vice President: _____
Nominee's Printed Name

Nominee's Signature & Membership No.

Signature: Nominated By/Membership No.

NOTE: Ballots must be received no later than January 14, 2012 to be considered.

New Mexico Bound!



James Saynay

It's not often that when you think of going on a drive you become torn. Most every formidable drive is filled with good times with friends, great scenery and wonderful memories. This past October I was presented with a decision that on the one hand would yield exceptional reward and on the other hand regret. You see there was a drive at the same time as the National BMW Octoberfest. Octoberfest – wow! Who would not want to attend that! However the opposing drive was no small doing. This drive was in New Mexico – Albuquerque to be exact. Hardly any outside of the New Mexico BMW CCA have even heard of this drive. It was called the Karl Fox Memorial Tour. Sounded intriguing for sure! I had no idea what this drive was about but I did know Albuquerque! So after some deliberation we decided we were New Mexico bound – after all, Octoberfest can wait one more year right?

After some planning it was evident that this was no simple trip. We had in front of us a trip that would rival any road monkey (!). The plan was to depart Houston, attend the New Mexico CCA drive, tour Colorado and back to Houston – about 3,000 miles in 6

days. I decided early on that along with the normal fluids change I would need some new rubber for my Z4. I chose the Michelin Pilot Super Sports - a choice that would prove worthy once up in the mountains. With all systems a “go” we were off.

Anyone who drives out of our State realizes one thing – Texas is huge! 10 of the 13 hour trip to Albuquerque were spent in the Lone Star State; with the exception of a major deluge around Abilene, the drive out went without incident.

Less than an hour into New Mexico we noticed the terrain change from laboriously flat to rolling foot hills. The drive along I-40 into Albuquerque is exceptional – up and down and a few curves that told us we were in a different world. We left Houston around 6 am and arrived at the hotel in Albuquerque around 8 pm. Tired from a long day of driving we were down for the night.

The rain we experienced in Texas was associated with a major cold front that had hit the Albuquerque area a day or two before. There was a sharp chill in the air. We were to meet at 8 am to assemble for the drive, but as we were representing the Houston Chapter, we wanted to arrive with a clean machine. Note to self:

7am, 30°F and in a different State was no time to search for a car wash. We did find one however and eventually made it on time to the meeting place.

I kept asking myself – who is this Karl Fox and why is a drive dedicated to him? I soon found out. Aside from being one heck of a guy, Karl was an enthusiastic BMW owner. Karl was a club member and a huge BMW enthusiast. Like many of us, he owned more than one BMW. Karl was a frequent attendee at BMW CCA events. He had a cheerful and outgoing personality, and he had many friends. Karl was also a tour enthusiast and helped arrange several tours, as well as other club events. Karl died tragically a few years ago in the prime of his life. The New Mexico Chapter named the fall tour in honor of him shortly after his death. The name just stuck. The route is different every year, but the tour always goes through the New Mexico Mountains in early October, in hopes of seeing the gorgeous fall colors. Everyone that knew Karl believed this is what he would have wanted.

Karl was the son of Dieter Fox and the late Jacqueline Fox. His parents own an independent BMW (and other German cars) repair facility in Albuquerque. His parents were the energy behind



the formation of the New Mexico Chapter of the BMW CCA, many years ago. Jacque Fox collected signatures, recruited members, and was a tireless advocate for the club. It is possible the New Mexico Chapter would not exist without their efforts. Karl inherited their enthusiasm and then some. Monika Fox, Karl's younger sister, was the tour-meister this year.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dieter and Monika – what wonderful people! That goes for the entire Chapter – everyone was warm and pleasant; you could tell their enthusiasm about BMW and their Chapter.

One thing to note about the New Mexico Chapter – unlike our Houston BMW Chapter - theirs is geographically spread out over a large landscape (even reaching into West Texas). While they are much smaller in numbers compared to the Houston Chapter, they are just as large in heart and spirit.

We departed Albuquerque on time to meet additional drivers at the BMW dealership in Santa Fe – about an hour away. As we drove I could not help but think of the reason for this drive and that it had much more meaning than I originally thought. I was happy to represent the Houston Chapter!

Almost every model of BMW was represented - the Z's (3 and 4), 3, 5, 7 and 8 series and even a two wheeler took part in this drive (brrrrrr).

During the drive to New Mexico I took it easy on the new rubber, but once we hit the hills, I started to test out just how good these tires were. WOW! Grip like I have not felt since I got the old Z – little did I know that these tires would be tested to the edge in a few hours!

After passing through the town of Madrid (featured in the movie Wild Hogs), our first stop was the Ghost Ranch Living Museum. A lot of history here and it was such a different feel than Houston or the Hill Country that I was beside myself. From there we went to the natural amphitheater. This was a bowl of pure rock carved out from erosion over several thousand years (see cover). From there we stopped for lunch at Gabriel's - a local favorite - and then off to a scenic overlook that took us

through several small towns. We made some friends this day and although the official tour was over, a couple of members invited us to make a run up to the Peak of Sandia Mountain. We gladly accepted. As we made our way up (still with the top down) we could feel the temperature drop after every curve. At the apex, we were chilled at a sub zero temperature. The view was breathtaking! Snow had blanketed the trees and roadside and the switchbacks were challenging, but with the new tires it seemed like child's play. After taking in the view we departed back down the mountain and said our goodbyes. We made some friends, shared a bunch of laughs and just enjoyed the drive. We met so many warm and friendly people that have an extreme passion about BMW's - I am certain this is not my last trip to Albuquerque or the Karl Fox Memorial Drive. If you have the opportunity to visit Albuquerque during this time of year, be sure to contact the New Mexico CCA and partake in this drive – it is well worth the trip!

Back at the hotel we rested as we had a long journey ahead of us into Colorado but could not help but think that we did indeed choose the right drive.



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Bama Bound... OKTOBERFEST 2011

Blake LaGrone

I was really looking forward to this year's Ofest as I headed east on I-10 to our rally point. The day dawned mild and clear and we had a good turnout for our caravan to Birmingham. I had done quite a bit of preparation work on my car to get ready for this trip. Prior to our departure date I ordered and installed new Stoptech slotted front rotors and race/street pads, ordered new lightweight wheels from Turner Motorsports (Hey, they were on Sale! What can I say, just had to buy them), a new set of Dunlop Direzza's, installed a new Zionsville radiator, Spal electric fan, Stewart high performance water pump, new thermostat and housing, changed oil in engine, transmission and differential and generally just made sure I was ready for the road. My thanks to James Williams for his major help in installing the radiator! I had 60,000 miles on the original radiator and I just knew that if I didn't replace it, somewhere between Houston and Birmingham something was going to blow.....I kept thinking of Jim Moffitt's misfortune last year!

I got to the staging area first and on time and was apparently the first one there. I called on the radio for any nearby Road Monkeys but got no answer. I checked my paperwork again and yes, I was in the right place so I went ahead and gassed up and by the time I was done filling my tank here come the rest of the Road Monkeys! As we had several new folks this year (and because Vinnie expired in my care last year) I wasn't going to get to carry our Monkey this time. But things turned out well as Vinnie has a twin brother Vennie! Vennie and his new wife Vanessa had gotten married recently, at the same time as Bob and Stacey Devault. They heard about the upcoming road trip and immediately asked to join! Fortunately Vennie didn't hold his brothers demise against me (but he didn't want to ride with me either!) But surprise surprise, Vennie came with not just with a wife, but two children, Curve and Speed-bump! They were so grateful to be able to come along. They all rode with our new folks, Vennie rode with Marco Cordon Sr., Vanessa rode with Bud and Lori Vanrooyen, Speed-bump rode with Dennis and Sarah Nowak, and Curve rode with J.R. Ridgeway.

It was an interesting caravan this year, we even had one new couple (Bud and Lori Vanrooyen) driving a truck towing a trailer with a Porsche on it! Just goes to show we are an inclusive group and this trek is open to most anyone. So, off we go to our first stop of the day for lunch. Our trip leaders Ken and Vicky Finley always find interesting ways of getting anywhere and this was no exception. I salute you and thank you for what I know was a lot of work. Thank you for the written itinerary, that was great! Off we start on I-10 but quickly were on the back roads headed for the restaurant. Our first interesting detour was via the Cameron/Holly Beach Louisiana Ferry where we crossed the water on a jam packed ferry boat that didn't do much more than just turn around to the dock on the other side.

Getting on the ferry was interesting, I think we all heard the most horrific sounds emanate from beneath our vehicles as we tried to negotiate the on ramp. Ah well, no blood no foul and we all got on together. After our ferry ride we went on to Abbeville and a wonderful restaurant called "Shucks", great seafood and they accommodated our troop graciously.

After a great lunch we hit the road again headed for Avery Island Louisiana and the Tabasco plant. We got to Avery Island and travelled down a white crushed gravel road to the plant. It was a pretty dusty drive and by the time we got there all of our cars looked.....



different. Mine looked kinda cool, like it had a custom paint job that went from sapphire black at the top to a silvery white at the bottom. Someone one said that people would pay to have their car painted like that! To me, it just looked dirty!

The tour of the Tabasco plant was fun and informative. I bought some T-shirts for my sister and got a bunch of free stuff that is very tasty! They had done some truly imaginative artwork on some pumpkins for Halloween.

After our tour it was back on the road towards White Castle Louisiana and Nottoway Plantation. Valerie Baker did her usual excellent job of finding us a wonderful place to stay. This one was truly memorable. Nottoway is a pre-civil war plantation owned by the Randolph family. During the civil war Union gunboats traveled the river shelling all of the plantation homes on both sides of the river. Nottoway survived because the Officer leading the gunboats had once been a guest of the Randolph family and he ordered the crews to leave it alone. The plantation and mansion is still owned by the Randolph family, and they have done an amazing job of restoring the plantation mansion and grounds. We stayed in standalone cottages at the edge of the property that were luxurious and allowed us to park our cars by our front door. They even provided car wash facilities for us.

After stopping for gas we headed out to the back-roads and then had to pull over for a bit as Jeff Thomson had a flat on his M3 and it took us a bit to get that sorted out.

Jeff had to stop in the next town to find a replacement tire, so Marco stayed behind and they caught up to us later.

Next stop, The Original Oyster House in Spanish Fork Alabama! This place has been redone numerous times due to hurricanes and the pictures on the walls tell the tale of devastation that has happened. It took them a while to get our group seated and we had plenty of time to see just how many times this restaurant had been rebuilt.

After another wonderful lunch we got ready to head out again. At this point Valerie and Dan Baker and I separated from the rest of the group and went straight on to Birmingham. Dan had to attend a council meeting and I was anxious to play the golf course at the Ross Bridge Renaissance resort and hotel which we would make our home for the next week. The rest of the group went on to Lake Pointe Lodge,

Eufala Alabama.

Dan, Valerie and I arrived at the resort around 8pm and I have to congratulate the Oktoberfest committee and their choice of locations. This was a truly wonderful place. As you can see, we kind of took over the place. Even the presence of a Harley Davidson convention couldn't outshine BMW CCA of North America! Thank you for your hard work and a magnificent place to hold our gathering. Dan and Valerie got presented with a new member of the tribe as we walked into the Resort lobby. Fellow Road Monkeys, say hello to "Road" (no, that's his name really!) monkey! He came complete with a BMW T-shirt, and armbands for the Oktoberfest event.

After a much needed rest that evening I headed for the golf course the next morning. The golf course at Ross Bridge resort is one of the Robert Trent Jones golf trails in Alabama and probably the best of his designs there. For those of you who are non-golfers, Robert Trent Jones is one of our





countries best golf course designers and he outdid himself at Ross Bridge.

Ross Bridge golf course is truly a beautiful and challenging course. I managed to play 3 times during my stay and even got to play a round with Pam Johnson, our membership chairperson. We had to quit early though as it started to rain on us during the round. Pamela is a good golfer (and a good sport, as I know she was ready to call it quits long before I did!) and we had a fun round together.

Tuesday came cloudy and misty but the concourse de elegance show went on. The first picture I took before the mist started falling was of our own Barry Norman preparing his car for the "Super clean" category and true to form Barry took 1st Place! Good work Barry!

Tuesday night we had a very nice buffet put on by one of our sponsors Spaten Beer. Great food and all the vendors had their wares on display. That evening at the drawing I won a BMW! Kinda small but it sure is well equipped!

Wednesday came cloudy but with no expectation of rain so it was off to Barber Motorsports track and my

DE time. This facility is truly exceptional with grounds that are groomed as well as the nicest golf course, a track surface that was smooth and gripped well, and was just plain fun! There are sculptures adorning the infield and there is an absolutely amazing museum as you enter the grounds.

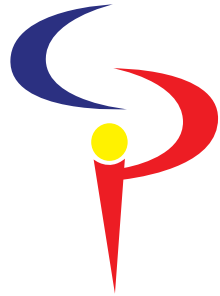
The classroom instructors did a fine job and I drew a young man named Kurt who was a real help to me in finding the line on this technical track. The straight-aways were not nearly as long as Road America and there were many blind corners. On my first session I got passed once by a red M coupe which I didn't feel too bad about. It took me a little bit to figure out the "Corkscrew" and the really late turn in to turn 15 but once I had those down it was pedal to the metal and what a fun Track! I never got passed again in subsequent sessions and did a lot of passing myself. The end of the day came much too quickly, on my last few laps I really started to feel comfortable on this track. There was one turn I especially enjoyed; coming out of the corkscrew is a hard right turn up a hill to a continued blind right turn. I could floor it in 3rd at the bottom of the corkscrew hit the apex at the top of the hill turning right and when the car settled after coming

off the top of the hill hit 4th briefly before down-shifting into the next hard left.What a blast! My car performed well and Kurt commented on the power available, he was surprised at the torque I could demand and get when I wanted it.

Wednesday night we had a nice Buffett and Casino night. Barry tried to teach me how to play the craps table but I didn't do so well. So I cashed out and went over to a blackjack table where I tripled my money and won another 20 tickets for the raffle.

Thursday came partly cloudy with the chance of thunderstorms and I headed to Regions Park for our Autocross event. By the time I got there the sun had come out and it turned nice and warm. I found Ken and Vicky Finley, and Jim Moffet and parked with them, then went off to find out what work that I could do for this event. I can't stand for very long due to long standing back issues so I was assigned to work the timing tent, listening to the radio for cone and DNF calls and making sure the timer got the cars and calls correctly.





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Our hosts gave a drivers meeting filled with the usual information about what constitutes a penalty and what doesn't, etc, etc. Because of the forecast they also told us in the event of rain the course would be closed. It sure didn't look like there was much chance of that when we started.

It was a very large parking lot and after walking the course I could see several areas where it would be very easy to miss the next gate due to its distance from the one you just exited. So, I headed back to the car and as the sun was out and it was getting quite warm I opened the windows before heading back to the timing tent (this turned out to be a big mistake) and my work assignment.

The event started pretty much on time and due to the length of the course the officials decided to run 3-4 cars simultaneously. This didn't work so well, many people were getting lost on the course and subsequent cars were catching them resulting in the red flag being used to shut the course down. This happened numerous times. Of the cars that ran over 50% DNF'd on at least once, if not multiple times and some even on all their runs.

One of the officials was sitting next to me using his smart phone to monitor the weather radar and saw that there was a big red cell headed right for us. He and another official talked about it for a bit and a few minutes later we could see a large black wall headed straight for us. The timer said we should shut this down but no one did anything. Within minutes of sighting the black wall coming our way it hit with the sound and power of a freight train. The wind increased from 10 mph to in excess of 50 mph (according to a AAA insurance investigator and the NOAA weather records) The course remained open and visibility was reduced to 10-20 feet due to a heavy cold rain and howling winds. There were corner workers running to get off the course while 2-3 cars were still driving. This was flat out negligent on the part of the folks running this event. Sorry, folks, but this sucked.

The timer and I jumped up and grabbed the timing tent to prevent it from blowing into cars behind us and damaging them. The whole time I'm thinking of my open windows but could do nothing about it as it was all I could do to hold the tent down. Two other grown men joined the timer and I to hold the tent down and it took all of us to do so. Even with 4 of us there, I still got lifted off the ground by the force of

the wind. During all of this there was a heavy freezing rain blowing in our faces. By the time the wind calmed down enough for us to let go of the tent I was soaked from head to foot and shaking uncontrollably from the cold. I walked over to my car thinking of the windows and hoping there was some hot coffee at the snack shack. Fortunately there was and I met LaRita at the snack shack where she told me I had better look over my car pretty carefully. Apparently the canopy that was behind my car had become entangled on my car. One leg had gotten stuck under the car while the other five metal legs were bashing my car all over due to the wind. It was like an octopus with five ice picks had attacked my car. I took my coffee and headed to the car because I had to warm up and that was the only place to do so, looking inside I see the dashboard and seats have puddled water all over. I found a towel, wrung it

out and dried things off as best I could then jumped in and fired it up. That was a mistake, my Pioneer GPS/XM/CD/DVD/IPOD player started up and the screen immediately dissolved into a bunch of indecipherable lines. I think "OH CRAP" and immediately shut the car down and pulled the fuses for the radio, then restarted the car and waited for some heat. As I am waiting, I see a fire truck and EMT van pull up. Apparently one poor fellow had been hit in the head with flying debris and was bleeding so badly he had to be taken to the hospital. I later heard he took 12 stitches to his scalp and

after some observation was released. My car finally warmed up, but I was still soaked so I headed back to the Hotel for a hot shower and dry clothes. After I could feel my toes again I headed back to the Autocross course to see if there would be an afternoon session. I was scheduled to drive in the afternoon. After the debacle of the morning I doubted we would be doing anything but I headed back anyway. Arriving at the course I was just in time to grid up for the event. This course was way too long and too complex. The purpose of this Autocross as stated in the Oktoberfest schedule was to have fun and learn something. Nobody's learning anything or having any fun when they are lost on a course that was ill planned and poorly run. I am no Autocross



expert, but I am no neophyte either, and this thing sucked big time! The damage to my car is now estimated at \$4500.00 and has yet to



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It Really Happened

Tony Sakkis



Frankly, it's hard to recall, let alone relate.

But It happened. Really. Swear to God, it really did.

BMW beat Porsche in IMSA's famed GTP competition.

No, not GTO. Not GTU either. Not production-based sedans at all. But beat them in GTP.

That's P for Prototype. And P for Porsche, as in 962, as in the car that dominated IMSA, the car that nobody else could beat until Jaguar came along. Then nobody could beat Jag until Nissan came along; and nobody could beat Nissan until Toyota came along; and then nobody could beat Toyota, and nobody came along. So the series shut down.

Oh, sure, a few cars other than the designated parade cars insinuated themselves into the inappropriate winner's circle occasionally, but that was typically a Porsche during the Jaguar years, a Jaguar during the Nissan years, and so on. It wasn't as if it was a fair competition.

On the top of the heap, and starting the manufacturer's parade in 1984 and up through '88 was Al Holbert and the awesome 962, the Americanized version of the world-dominating 956. And Holbert was winning everything. The blue and white Lowenbrau Porsche was on the cover of every motorsports mag from sea to shining sea and on the front page of every sports page of newspapers where a race was held from Daytona Beach, Florida to Sonoma, California.

But on September 21st, 1986, in the neighborhood newspapers of upstate New York, there was a different picture, a different headline. And if you blinked, you missed it. And if you were covering the sport, you thought it was a typo. And if you were a regular fan, well, you just deleted it from memory.

BMW? Won a GTP race?

Whaaaaat?

These days if you bring it up to people who know their motorsports history will adamantly disagree. No, BMW never won an IMSA GTP race. Hell, BMW never even had a prototype in IMSA. Never. Ever.

Yes. They did.

And it won. Really. Swear to God.

Of course, you'll have a hard time proving it. Other than the magazine and newspaper reports. Other than the little agate-style reports in the 1986 Camel GT media guide, there's almost no mention of the car.

More mysteriously, in the Camel Media guide, it lists the winner as BMW on page 13: BMW North America #18. Then five pages later, it lists the winner again: Kodak Copier 500, Watkins Glen, NY, Camel GTP: Davy Jones and John Andretti BMW GTP. And magazines of the day confirm it: BMW won.

But as with everything in relating this history, things blur. Nothing matches. People deny the car existed. People deny the win took place. You start to question yourself. Was that a dream? Was I just hoping it would happen?

Because on page 60 of that same media guide, the guide racing journalists saw as the bible, the race-

by-race recap of the year says: "... Al Holbert and Derek Bell collected \$75,000 for winning the 500-mile endurance race."

Even IMSA itself seems to have forgotten the car!

But it was out there. It was driven by Davy Jones and John Andretti, little fresh-faced boys -- not even men yet. In the second car were the veterans John Watson and David Hobbs. A pair of white cars, a little like the NISSAN NPT-90s that were so dominant a few years later. They were mostly white, with BMW motorsports stripes, M Power stickers all over them. No sponsors, of course, because that would be too easy to track.

And on that day in 1986, after Jones set the pole with the car, he led from the drop of the green and put four seconds of distance on the second place, Hobbs. Holbert was in third and, as Holbert was prone to do, was waiting to strike when the opportunity was right. Hobbs' BMW, however, sprung a leak and sprayed oil all over Holbert, who on the eighth lap pitted to have the windshield washed since he couldn't see anything, then rejoined down in the race. Sarel van der Merwe (Remember that name? Extra points if you remember the car he drove and how it slightly contradicts this story) took up third, but then spun a few laps later.



By the 40th lap, As Holbert was apt to do, he had caught and passed Andretti, now behind the wheel of the BMW. They dived for a few laps, and then Holbert pitted for fuel and tires. Holbert was down some 40 seconds and charged back over time to within 17 seconds of Andretti, and an unrelated accident caused a caution, which bunched them all up again.

Andretti pitted and let Jones back in. Holbert also turned over the controls to Derek Bell, so Bell led with Jones behind, followed by Price Cobb in the Dyson Porsche 962. It was a tough sandwich for a young driver to find himself. But the young hard-charging Jones was up to the challenge.

At the restart, Jones passed Bell immediately and shot away. Cobb, chasing Jones also passed Bell. Then the final round of stops came, where Cobb took the lead when Jones stopped, and Bell took the lead when Cobb stopped, and Jones took it back when Bell stopped. Jones was in front again and kept the lead until the end.

With the second place finish, Holbert won the Camel GT Championship, and all eyes were on that -- to the point that the BMW win was secondary. Thus the lack of attention to the race itself. No matter, we all know who won ... sort of.

But, as it turned out, the BMW only won the one race and the campaign folded. Both young drivers were absorbed into other teams, Jones went quickly to other places and ended up at Jaguar where he won Le Mans among other great things. Andretti took a while before he landed at Hall-VDS Indy Cars and then landed permanently in NASCAR. Hobbs and Watson were already winding down their careers. The car itself disappeared at the end of the season, possibly as a result of the lack of publicity. After all, who even knew the car existed?

But it existed. And it won. Really. Swear to God.



Stay Informed!! - eBlast Signup

Once a month the Chapter emails an eBlast to all members who have indicated they want to be kept abreast of 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.

A Thank You and A Challenge

Have you heard the cliché "it is what you make it?" I believe it is true of many things in life. Work and family come to mind, but I would like to associate it, for a moment, with this car club we belong to. Now, we all joined the club for various reasons and for me, what keeps me in the club is the fun activities and friendships I have made. Yes, I know, the cars, it's the fun with the cars too, but it's the people in the club that make it what it is.

Many of you may not know that this club is an all volunteer club. Meaning, that from the Board Officers, to the person shagging cones at a car control school, are all doing it for the benefit of the club. For free! And here is where the cliché comes into play. Are they just doing it for fun? Or are they trying to make a difference in some way, to possibly make the club something they want to be a part of? I believe it is the later.

I have been both a participant and one who helps plan events. I know for certain it takes a great deal of time behind the scenes to put on an event. AutoCross, Car Control Schools, the Fredericksburg Drive and the An-

nual Dinner are just a FEW that demand a huge amount of time and volunteers to make these events successful. And it is TIME that seems to be the most precious commodity we have so little of these days. So why do they do it? Money? No, you caught the "volunteer" part, right? Then is it for the gratitude? Well, quite frankly some of this can feel like a thankless job. So maybe then, it's the desire to get involved, to make this club into something continually better for all. And for that, speaking as a Board Member, I would like to change some of that "thankless job" feeling. All the Chairpersons and volunteers who put forth the time and effort to make this club their own, to make it better, more than just about the cars, I really do appreciate what you do. You have my deepest gratitude and a huge "Thank You" for making all the events so enjoyable. Take pride in knowing you are part of one of the best Car Clubs in the world.

If you enjoy attending or participating in the various events this club puts on during the year,

please take the time to thank those who made it happen. I would also like to challenge you to make a little time to volunteer as well. If you are unsure what you could do, contact the Chairperson of the area you feel interested in. Their contact information is listed in the Torque and on our website under "about us" then "Houston BMW CCA contacts." I am positive they would be more than grateful for the help. Those who may be interested in helping out our Newsletter or Social Events Chairpersons they would be very grateful indeed. You can take ownership of a task that will fit into your schedule and benefit the club too. This is your club, IT IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT!

Dennis Nowak,
BMW CCA Houston Chapter Vice-president
vice-president@houston-bmwcca.com

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-See website for more details

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March 17 - Open to Blue Solo &
Advanced Drivers
April 29 - Open to NASA & Yellow
Drivers
May 27 - Open to SCCA Drivers
July 22 - Blue Solo and Advanced
Sept 2 - Blue Solo and Advanced
Nov 11 - SCCA Drivers
Nov 25 - NASA & Yellow Drivers

\$215 for Test & Tune Events
\$25 for garages

www.TexasWorldSpeedway.com

A Weekend in Fredericksburg



Katie Brown

Ben: Guess what we are doing for Halloween?

Katie: What?

Ben: Going on a BMW Run!

Katie: Ok, what is that?

When my husband Ben and I moved to Houston, TX one year ago, he was finally able to fulfill a dream of his by becoming a proud owner of a 550i BMW. What I failed to realize is that once we owned a BMW, we would then begin to do all things BMW. BMW breakfasts, BMW movies, BMW car runs, etc, etc. I was a little skeptical at first - why in the world would you want to sit and talk about cars for hours? I was completely surprised (though there is a lot of talk of engines and upgrades) the club is so much more. We have already made some great friends and done some really awesome things as Chapter Members.

This leads me to our recent big adventure, our first BMW Car run on Halloween weekend in Fredericksburg, TX. For those of you who don't know, Fredericksburg is a German tourist town in the Hill Country in between Austin and San Antonio. There is a main street filled with boutiques and our first unique shops, great food, beer and our first taste of Texas wine (a story for another time). It is a great town to visit and explore walking, or cruising through in a BMW or any car. OK Ben, there is no other car to drive than a BMW (my husband's addition to this article).

Being new attendees to a "run", I assumed you get in the BMW, drive and you end up where you end up. Not at all - there is so much organization and precautions taken when you attend a drive. The drive is pre-planned and maps are provided along with radios. The organizers divide the drivers into

smaller groups and each team sets out with a lead and end car. The lead car is responsible to warn the teams of upcoming hazards, changes to the preplanned route (to avoid slower cars) and to ensure you are not going five miles over the speed limit (sarcasm) when the radar pings.

Feeling safe and prepared, we were off and it was the perfect day for a drive; sunny and crisp autumn weather. I wasn't sure what we were in for - moving from California, I'm a little spoiled when it comes to the scenery, (Highway One anyone?). I had the typical California perception of the Texas countryside being long dusty trails and tumbleweeds. Well, believe it or not, I was wrong again, everything in Hill Country is green, there are gentle and steep hills covered in trees & wild flowers. There are small lakes, wineries, creeks and lots of cattle (well it is Texas). Ben and I really enjoyed our first run together. I admired Enchanted Rock and Ben admired how well the car handled on the turns. I pointed out a creek we were crossing and Ben pointed out how smooth the ride was even at speeds five miles over. I loved the little towns we drove through and Ben loved the performance of the radar detector. When we stopped for the picnic lunch at Llano Wildlife Park, we both had to take several pictures of the incredible scenery. We have pictures of the river, surrounded by trees and wildlife and we have pictures of the twenty BMWs lined up in the parking lot shining in the sun. (Bet you can't guess who took which).

All in all it was an amazing day and we can't wait till the next run. I've been told that the Three Sisters is an incredible drive and that it will have something for both of us! We will be prepared for our next trip because we each learned something from our first trip.



Continued on p. 22



TECH TIP

Courtesy of Bavarian Machine Specialties

COOLING SYSTEM FAILURES

Even though it's cold outside, your engine can still overheat. Engine cooling systems are sometimes more susceptible to sudden failure during winter months. Colder ambient temperatures and sudden temperature changes adversely affect seals, hose connections and plastic parts. Equally susceptible are thermostats that can stick and cause intermittent overheat situations (see past tech tips for additional thermostat information).

If you notice a small leak under your car or a low coolant level indicator, do not hesitate to have it checked out. Failure to rectify a seemingly insignificant coolant loss can lead to costly repair.

Never drive your BMW in an overheated condition. Driving with the temperature gauge in the red for even two minutes will compromise your engine head gasket. Driving a further distance will severely damage the engine.



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Editor's Corner



Wow! Where did the year go? It seems just yesterday that we were bringing in 2011 and here it is almost 2012!

As a club - we have had a year filled with some very fine dinners, tours, movie nights, bowling nights and a host of other activities. Our Autocross committee has had another fabulous year as well.

For me personally it has been an exciting and challenging year as Editor of the Torque of the Town. Having said that I would like to extend a hearty THANK YOU to everyone who submitted articles and helped with the production of our Newsletter. I could have not done this alone.

As promised last quarter, this edition of the Torque of the Town has focused on drives including the infamous Oktoberfest.

Tony Sakkis has once again knocked one out of the park by providing more BMW race history.

The board would like to wish all of the Houston Chapter members a safe and happy holiday season.

Finally, as we enter 2012 it's again time to vote for your board members. Be sure to either clip out and mail or email your vote soon!

Keep both hands on the wheel and all four on the ground.....

- James

be repaired. That does not include the fried Pioneer unit that unfortunately did not recover after it dried out. Wish I could say something good about this event, but I would be lying if I did.

Fortunately, we had a wonderful event at the museum on the Barber Motorsports track that evening. They fed us well and we got to peruse a most amazing collection of cars and motorcycles. The museum itself is a work of art. What a wonderful museum! I could easily spend a whole day here.

Friday was a very relaxing day for me. I played golf in the morning and then headed back out to the track to watch our other folks have their DE day. Congrats to Jeff Thomson who got his SOLO ticket on this track! I got to watch an amazing spin out and recovery of the McLaren that day, the driver and the 3 others that followed him off did an amazing job of avoiding any metal to metal contact, and all 3 got back on the course and kept driving.

Friday evening was our closing dinner and awards ceremony. The staff there did a great job on the dinner.

Included in our dinner package was a lively conversation with Larry Koch of BMW NA and Bill Auberlen of Team BMW. Bill had just competed in the Petite Le-Mans and the team did very well this year winning the Manufacturers championship. I didn't get to watch much of this year's race

season, but what I could find BMW dominated!

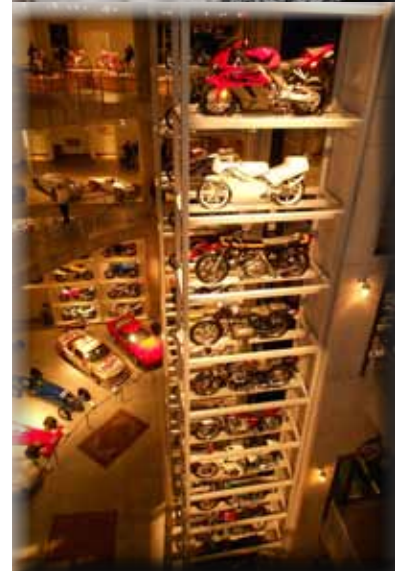
I didn't get many pictures at the last dinner, I was headed to bed early so I could get up early and get on the road. But, I did get a nice picture of our own Barry Norman and Maria Isabel all dressed up....

I had a wonderful time throughout (well, except for that blip on the radar at the autocross) and I am ready for 2012! Let's make it a 30 car caravan this year!

For those of you who are not much in to the "Track" type events, there is so much else to do during these yearly gatherings. There is the "Gymkhana", the Fun rally, the TSD rally and there are always planned events to take in the local sights. If you haven't ever attended an Oktoberfest there is always something going on to attract just about any type of BMW owner.

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear and I scooted out early to head for the BMW facility at Spartanburg, NC and then on to drive the "Tail of the Dragon".....but that's another story.

See Y'all on the Road!



Katie's Lessons learned on her first BMW Run:

1. Pictures of scenery from a moving car going five miles over, don't really turn out
2. When he says on we will stop on the way back, we never do
3. Do not bring coffee with you unless it has a tight lid because your husband will take the regular turns super fast because the BMW can
4. Make sure your seatbelt is very snug and you are not leaning forward for when your husband taps the brakes for that time he is five miles over when the radar pings
5. Do not go to the wine bar the night before because your husband will take the hairpin turns super fast because the BMW can

Ben's Lessons learned on his first BMW Run:

1. I Love my BMW



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