

A Publication of the Houston Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America



Torque of the Town

Winter 2010

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O'Fest 2010 @ Road America**

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Join Us @ Annual Dinner!**

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MOVING? Please send address changes directly to:

BMW CCA, INC.
 640 South Main St, Suite 201
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 or online at: www.bmwcca.org

COVER: see pg. 4
Award-winning Isetta
restored by George &
Ginger Ramsey

- Photo by Adriana Diesen

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The Road Ahead



By David R. Dalton
President, Houston Chapter

Does anyone buy a BMW just for the marque, or simply because it goes fast? Well some maybe, but I'll bet they are not BMW CCA members. Quality, attention to detail, design, engineering, handling, the history... and just how the darn thing feels when you are behind the wheel all seem to come into play a whole lot more. Then having a local Chapter as dynamic as ours, is just icing on the cake.

Being active in our Chapter you quickly learn that sometimes when you make a purchase you are not simply buying an object — you are buying into an idea and the references implicit in that brand's identity. In essence, becoming a member of a community of owners of that brand. In subtle and complex ways, our lives become even more meaningful through our associations with others. And the purchase acts as your membership ticket.

We are very fortunate to have the type of people who own up to the responsibilities of making our Chapter a success. As it is members that make certain our Chapter endures over the years. Member dues provide the necessary funding and member volunteers provide the guidance and skill to move the Chapter forward. The more people we have working together with a common interest, the more likely we are to prosper. And participation

in the events and activities makes the difference in a Chapter being active and vibrant, or sedentary and merely struggling to maintain its existence.

Looking back at the many Chapter events during 2010, you can't help but feel very appreciative for the time and effort the Chairs and their committees devoted to make it all happen. Those who have served on the Board as committee Chairs and those who have submitted their names for 2011 are vital to our Chapter's success and vibrancy, and responsible for making our events as enjoyable as they are. And for that, the membership owes you their gratitude and admiration for your commitment.

I have been told a few times by people I approach regarding joining the Chapter that they just don't see the need to join, that autocross, dinners, coffees, day trips, or our annual Fredericksburg weekend just doesn't appeal to them; they just don't have time. That's when I have learned to just shut up. Understandably some people's lives are hectic and with many other commitments, and yet they probably wish they did have the time. And then there are those that just don't get it. And so they go on to drive their remarkable machines for the marque... oh, and because they go fast.

See you on the back roads.

Cover Star: 1957 BMW Isetta

"What is it?! I didn't know BMW made a car that small!" These are the most common questions that I seem to get, along with "how fast will it go?", "how many miles to the gallon does it get?", and "do you drive it very much"? All these questions are pretty common with a car like this, but the main thing my wife calls it the "Smile Car", because every time everyone looks at it they get a smile on their face, especially the children.

The BMW Isetta gets a lot of attention at the car shows. I'll start with answering some of the questions. Yes it is a BMW! But it was designed by Iso of Italy, so really it could be called an Italian car. Iso licensed BMW to build this car as they did some other manufacturing as well but BMW built most of them. Although it was designed by Iso, it has a BMW engine, 1 cylinder that produces

13.5 horse power. Top speed on this car is around 55 mph, however I have never tried it. I imagine at that speed it would feel something like a Bugatti Veyron at top speed on the test track. Information on specs claims to be over 50 miles per gallon with a 5 gallon fuel tank. This car was found in a heap of rubble in an abandon industrial warehouse. It literally had been lived in by squirrels and was disassembled with many of the parts found in different places with in the warehouse. It was lovingly and totally restored at our shop to its present better than new condition. It was won 1st place in its class at Keels and Wheels twice! It took 3rd place at Classy Chassis most recently. Most important it's still a "Smile Car" as my wife call's it. And regardless at what it does at the shows as far as winning, it always wins the hearts of the people. It is a true Italian car with the heart of the a BMW.

Owners Ginger & George Ramsey, Key Auto Werks

The Ultimate Calendar

For the most current events listing, visit houston-bmwcca.com and check the up-to-date version of the calendar

Dec 18
Saturday, 9:00am - 1:00pm
Coffee Meet-Up

Cedar Creek - In the Heights, 1034 W 20th St
Houston, TX 77008 - (713) 808-9623
Be sure and bring a friend along!

Dec 19
Sunday, 8:30am - 3:30pm
Houston BMW CCA Autocross

Houston Police Academy
17000 Aldine Westfield, Houston, TX 77073
(Visit the website's 'Autocross' tab to sign-up)

Jan 22
Saturday, 6:00pm - 10:00pm
2011 Annual Dinner

Houston City Club
1 City Club Drive, Houston, TX 77046
Please see flyer on page 6 or on the website for details, deadline for tickets and raffle info. Don't miss the Chapter's social highlight of the year!

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

Hair Of the Dog Drive

Back in the previous millennium, DougM and FredR started a little tradition and guess what. It's almost that time again!

The Hair Of the Dog (HOD) is an easy drive up north of Houston with a few dozen of your Bimmer friends. Of course, it's called the Hair Of the Dog Drive because it is on New Years Day. This has become one of our more popular drives. Past years have included:

- * The year the temperature never got above 32 degrees,*
- * The year when it rained so hard you couldn't see the car in front of you,*
- * And of course, the year one of the roads flooded out.*

Last year we had over 60 bimmers and around 100 people. Doesn't that sound like fun?

We will meet at a civilized hour in a less than civilized place, cruise around some of the back roads then stop for lunch. After that, we'll all get back in our cars and take some twisty roads home.

Date: January 1st (of course) • Time: 8:30 AM

Where: Walmart parking lot behind Burger King, ¼ mile west of I-45 on SH242 (About 2 miles north of The Woodlands)

Questions: WarCamp@swbell.net

Late? Call WarCamp's Cell 281-703-7688 • Bring your FSR radio and GPS – if you have one.

Be sure to fill up with enough gas to go about 200 to 250 miles. There is a filling station adjacent to the Burger King that will probably be open. For that matter, the Burger King might be open as well. We might take that route that goes past the flooded area, near the gorillas, so bring your camera.

We should be back about 3:00 PM.

Civilized? Of course!

See you there! - Warren Campbell



2011 Houston Chapter BMW CCA Annual Dinner
Saturday, January 22, 2011
Houston City Club
One City Club Drive
Houston, Texas 77046
713-840-9001

Please join us for the Annual Houston Chapter BMW CCA Dinner
Attire: Festive

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Registration, Social Hour (Cash Bar)
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Dinner
8:30 pm - 10:00 pm
Officer Elections
Year in review slideshow
Autocross Awards
Raffle Prizes (can you say tires)
And more!

For payments received on or before January 1st, 2011 tickets will be \$45.00 per person for members, associate members and 1 guest (2 guests or more - \$55 per person)
\$55.00 per person - If payment is received after 1/1/11
Members and associate members will receive five raffle tickets with their ticket
Additional raffle tickets may be purchased at the dinner.
(Sorry, raffle tickets are for Club members and Associate members only)

RSVP by mailing your check (payable to Houston BMWCCA) and this completed form to:
David Dalton
c/o Houston BMWCCA
P.O. Box 56763
Houston, Texas 77256-6763

Or bring your payment to the Hair of the Dog Drive on 1/1/11

Name: _____

Member # _____

Guest Name: _____

Guest Name: _____

Questions: email socialevents@houston-bmwcca.com

Self parking in garage at no charge.

Visit Houston City Club's website at www.houstoncityclub.com

BMW CCA Officer Election Ballot

2011 Ballot Instructions

Please select your candidate for the following elected position: Treasurer.

Only one vote per membership number is allowed. Place an 'X' in front of your selection and include your membership number at the bottom of the form. Please mail or bring it with you to the annual dinner. **Blank ballots will not be available at the annual dinner.**

Voting can also be done online at www.houston-bmwcca.com. Please be sure and vote promptly so your vote will be counted. All ballots will be counted at the January 22th dinner and the 2011 officers will be named that evening.

Treasurer

_____ Sarah Nowak

Membership Number _____
_____ (Required)

Bio: Sarah Nowak, Running for Treasurer

“My husband, Dennis and I joined Houston BMW CCA in 2007 after purchasing our first BMW, a Z3. While enjoying many club events, I decided I wanted to give back to the club. So, in 2010, I was appointed as the social events chairperson where I set up and organized club drives, dinners, and tech sessions. I have enjoyed being the social events chair, however; I feel I can contribute more to the club as treasurer because of my business background.



I have been a business owner for the past twenty years. As a business owner I am responsible for all of my company's financial aspects, including; tax returns, financial and payroll reports, purchasing, contracts, etc. I also use the same accounting program as the club on a daily basis. I feel I have a lot to offer as the club treasurer with regards to handling all treasurer responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner as well as utilizing my negotiating skills if necessary.

I believe Chris Stokes has done a great job as treasurer and I look forward to building upon his progress.”

3 DAYS... 1,000 PLUS MILES AND TONS OF FUN

By James Saynay

It was your typical hot, humid, August in Houston Friday morning, the kind of morning that fogs your glasses and makes your clothes stick to your skin. After a quick meet up at the local Starbucks (where else?!), David Dalton and I departed for our long awaited destination to Hot Springs where we would soon be enjoying the twists and turns on Hwy 7 through two scenic mountain ranges in Arkansas. Our goal: escape the hustle and bustle of Houston and enjoy the hell out of our BMW's by simply driving them the way God had intended... and relish every minute of it.

This was not a BMW CCA sanctioned drive, but it's funny the things you remember to do BECAUSE of your involvement with the club; (tire pressure – check, 2-way radio – check, planned route – check, and the list goes on...). This was an ad-hoc get out of the city and run 'em like you mean it trip. The drive into Hot Springs was un-eventful with the exception of the low oil light that the lesser of the seasoned drivers encountered (guess I didn't remember to check everything). We passed through all of the small towns along Highway 59, stopping in at a few places along the way for rest and the occasional energy drink. Not all fill up stations are equal mind you. At some, the pump doesn't work, some don't take debit cards, some aren't even stocked on bathroom necessities, but looking back all this gave us some laughs and helped make the trip memorable. Cruising into Texarkana we stopped at Bryce's Cafeteria (known for their peach pie), where we began to feel that good old fashioned country charm. We even got a big hearty "thanks for coming" after lunch – already we felt the change from the gruffness of the city.

After a quick Wal-Mart stop for some last minute personal items such as socks, socks, socks, (oh and did I mention... ..socks?), we hit the last leg down Highway 30 into Arkansas.

Finally arriving at our condo that would be home for the next few days on Lake Hamilton, we were tired, but could smell the laid back nature of the Ozarks at our necks.

Everywhere we went the local folks were pleasant, warm and friendly. Dinner in Hot Springs revealed the quaintness of this tourist destination. While enjoying a very tasty Hibachi dish at a local Japanese Steakhouse we surveyed fashions from the 80's, 90's and 2000's adorned by those sitting around us. After dinner, it was back to the condo for a good night's rest as Saturday would be the 'drive of drives': Scenic Highway 7 in Western Arkansas.

Highway 7 is unique because it takes drivers through not

just one, but two scenic mountain ranges. The Ozarks dominate the northern section of the highway, while south of the Arkansas River the road passes through the equally beautiful Ouachita Mountains. Beginning high in the Ozarks it continues south for 290 miles past waterfalls, streams, mountains, valleys, rivers and historic sites. Named as one of the ten most beautiful drives in the nation, it is an exceptional way to explore the history and scenic wonders of the Natural State. Our trek would take us from Hot Springs to Harrison and back, for what felt like an adrenaline surge for over 300 miles... all in one day. There are several photo opportunities along the way; so many in fact that it's difficult to choose. Driving a BMW through this stretch of highway is a thrill that would be very hard to replicate. For every stretch of straight road there seemed to be two or three curves thrown our way and yet regardless of your driving style, you cannot help but admire what nature has created. Choose spirited driving and you will be challenged with hairpin curves followed by undulating terrain. Choose a more relaxed style and you will notice all of the subtle nuances that nature has created – the rock cliffs cut out over time from past glaciers, the dense and colorful forest, the clean mountain air, and even some manmade structures that bring back the old world feeling of when this country was explored.

We stopped halfway on our journey up to Harrison in Russellville – of course at the local Starbucks! I started to question if we needed the caffeine after such an adrenaline rush from our first leg of the drive just as I was putting the can of Rockstar to my lips (a big Homer DOH!). After a quick stop and some laughs we headed up to Harrison – a great town known for their walking tours. We circled back for the drive south wondering how we

were going handle so much exhilaration yet again. On the way we stopped at The Boardwalk Café that specializes in exotic game and organic foods. As we exited the cars we were greeted with the words "Welcome, we've been waiting for you". We wondered what that meant only to find out a few minutes later a few members of the local BMWCCA Chapter were arriving there that afternoon. The café was adjacent to a quaint hotel of the same architecture (fully booked by our BMW brethren). A great meal it was and after the finishing course featuring a double chocolate cookie and organic ice cream (try the mint chocolate chip) we were on our way back to Russellville and our (newly) favorite Starbucks. Again – everyone in all of these



Continued on page 12



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Fredericksburg Drive

Report by Jerry Streeter

As the sun rose in the eastern sky Friday morning 34 freshly washed kidney grills and one guest from Stuttgart awoke from their overnight slumbers to bright clear cool skies with the weatherman's promise of a delightful weekend. When the sun had warmed the morning air to a perfect temperature they turned their grills westward seeking the best twisties the Texas Hill Country can offer. The first stop for many was Buc-ee's in Cypress where the early risers grouped for the trip to Fredericksburg. They enjoyed some warm up twisties, just enough to stretch their sway bars, along the way. After a lunch stop lunch in Bastrop the group arrive at the Inn on Baron's Creek about 4:30 where the drivers and passengers set up the official greeting point on the patio. Several of us stragglers arrived a bit later having made our own way to Fredericksburg. There were no group dinner plans for Friday so everyone was on their own, thanks to extensive research by Diane and Jeff I can attest that the Cabernet Grill is a 5 star eatery.

Just as the weatherman promised Saturday was delightful, jackets were in order for the 9:00 AM departure but the sun was shiny brightly and the air warmed before we knew it, Texas weather is so predictable and boring.

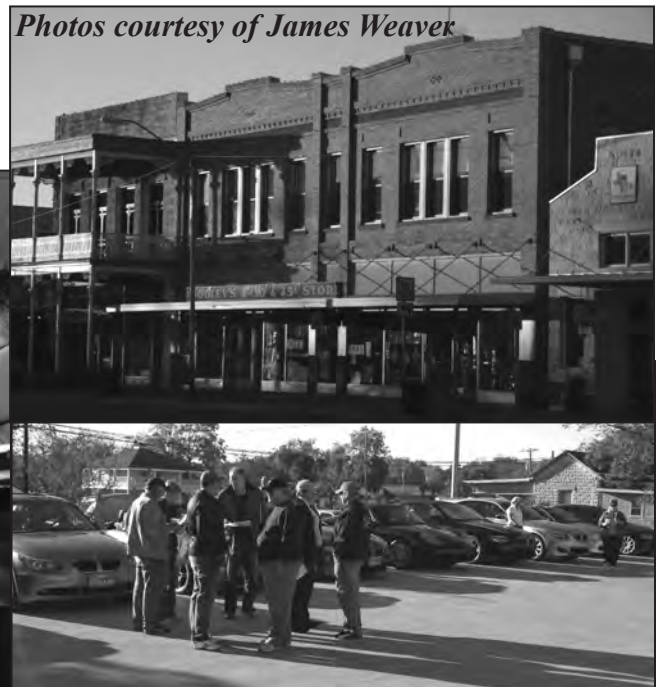


After much scurrying about to purchase picnic supplies and top off gas tanks, we divided into two groups to keep the drive manageable and safe; each group had a designated lead and tail car. We headed south out of Fredericksburg and made our way to the Apple Store in Medina. As we entered Medina we found ourselves in the midst of a homecoming parade, a quick circle around town showed that to circumvent the parade we'd have to drive back to Kerrville, so everyone parked and enjoyed the parade, and then we drove the last 100 yards to the Apple Store. The Apple Ice Cream, yes apple ice cream, is to die for. The strudel and pie isn't bad either but the ice cream is tops.



After stuffing ourselves with apples in every imaginable form, did I mention the apple ice cream; we made our way to Garner State Park via Leakey. Did you know Texas has 10 mph curves? Stopping at a state park for a picnic became a tradition for the Houston Group about 4 years ago, this was the first year for Garner State Park and I suspect it isn't the last. We sat on a stone wall overlooking the crystal clear Frio River, I don't know about the others but I had a vision of wading in the river with a fishing rod catching small mouth bass. We definitely put Garner State Park on our list of places to go back to and spend a few days. Of course wherever Bimmers and their admirers gather, cameras are sure to follow so many pictures were taken after lunch. Before we left the park a quick discussion lead us to shorten the route back to Fredericksburg as we had dinner reservations.

The afternoon drive was filled with more curves and twisties and a beautiful drive along the Guadalupe River into Kerrville. This point in the drive leads to two questions:



Photos courtesy of James Weaver

1. How can two groups independently arrive at a decision to make an impromptu stop at Starbucks. Even more puzzling, one of the cars that decided to leave Garner State Park to drive directly back to the hotel, made the same stop and arrived after the 2nd group?
2. How can the 2nd drive group, which leaves after the 1st drive group, and drives slower, arrive at the destination and the impromptu stop before the 1st drive group?

Continued on page 13

Saturday evening dinner was at the Sunset Grill. We enjoyed a wonderful meal on the patio, which we had to ourselves. Costumes were optional as this was Halloween Eve, Pam took top honors. Then it was back to the hotel where a hotly contested game of charades sprung up, movie titles was the theme. How would you act out Ratatouille?

Sunday was a late morning and saw the group heading back to Houston via Driftwood where we enjoyed another good meal at Salt Lick BBQ. The official drive ended here with small groups finding their own way back to Houston. Three of us decided to return via US290, something about a shopping mall on the outskirts of Houston, so I, the one with the Garmin, plugged in a route with a via point of 130 and 290. Idea was to avoid the congestion of Austin by speeding around the outskirts on the new toll road. After passing a sign to Buda just yards from the restaurant we

motored into the Austin. Then moved into the lane clearly marked exit only to US 290 and 71 only to realize the Garmin wasn't telling us to exit, so I lead the group pass a obviously exit into the heart of Austin, onto city streets and then finally to US 290. I had been Garminized.

For those who haven't made a drive with the club, you need to come out. This year saw a few M cars, a 328, 135, Z3, and Z4s and the oldest a beautiful 633. While driving is the theme, I gained 3 pounds, so eating must be close second if not the primary theme. Dennis and Sarah have elevated the drives into something we do to get to the event not just the event. Thank you Dennis and Sarah, we've really enjoyed your efforts!

Now back to the trivia, put your answers onto the forum, those that guess correctly will get a 'pat on the back' message. ☺

The Houston BMW CCA met at Go-Kart Raceway on West Mount Houston Road to enjoy go-carting. Unfortunately the "Super Go-Karts" were not as fast as some speed demons would have liked. Maybe we will try MSR next year.



Looking good in any kind of car.



"I know I can take him!"

Continued from page 8

towns were friendly and polite. Even the local Shell station greeted us with a big smile. A quick fill up, a quick latté and we were on our way back to Hot Springs.

Saturday night in Hot Springs proves to be a busy place. You cannot help but be reminded of the European charm the city holds. Outdoor cafés, live music, and of course the natural spa's that the city is so named after. A couple more photo ops of the downtown district and some local custom cars and we headed to dinner. We admittedly got turned around a time or two near downtown, but a local said it best when she recommended to 'just stay in the same lane'. Like all enthusiasts, we talked about how great the cars performed over dinner. You simply can't do this drive and appreciate the relationship between man and machine if it's not in a BMW.

Back at the condo we enjoyed our favorite libation and continued to discuss the aspects of the drive. There was a certain feeling of having conquered ol' 7 that convinced us this would not be our last drive on that incredible stretch of road. Another drink and a bunch more laughs and it was time to call it a night – tomorrow was the dreaded drive home, but we left knowing we accomplished our goal over three days, with an exciting long drive, a lot of laughs and some wonderful food and scenery. We could not help but to feel lucky for the opportunity to drive Highway 7 in one of the finest automobiles made.



"Man! This traffic is terrible!!"



Photos by David Dalton

ON THE ROAD AGAIN.... Oktoberfest 2010

Article and photos by Blake LaGrone

Saturday morning dawned hot and humid like most August days here in Houston Texas. I know I was looking forward to driving towards some cooler weather for a breather. We gathered at a Chevron off of 2920 and I got introduced to "Vinnie" the Vinyl Road Monkey. I was to be his caretaker as I am the "new guy". By the time I got him blown up and ready for the road most everyone had arrived and we blasted off by 8:30am. I hung out near the rear of the pack and it sure was a pretty sight seeing all of these good looking Bimmers all in a line.



The time goes fast when your in a caravan like this, between the good natured radio chatter and trying to keep Vinnie in his seat (you know how Monkeys are). In no time we were pulling into the lunch stop at Jefferson TX, then on to our first overnight stop at Tenkiller Lodge at Lake Tenkiller Oklahoma. We pulled in before dusk and our lodge was a nice place to park it after all day on the road. I know I was ready for a stop and Vinnie just lay slumped in his seat unable to move. He cheered right up though when he saw that we had all arrived safely, and were stopped for the night. We had a good dinner and then off to bed to recover.

Day 2 (Sunday) saw us in Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri. The roads were fun and the terrain was getting more interesting the further north we went. Lunch stop was at a town called either Iconium (if you look at the tee shirts we got) or Osceola, Missouri (Population 18). Either way, we arrived at a restaurant called the "Toad Suck Grill". I don't know about everyone one else, but Vinnie and I were a little concerned about what type of fair we might find at a place called "Toad Suck"...Not to worry, the food was very good (and I didn't even see Toads on the menu). This little grill is only open in the summer as it is actually a working cattle ranch. The owners open the grill in the summer after all of the cattle have been moved to the summer range and close it down again when its time to move them back. The owner

was on hand to give us a very interesting talk about the history of the area. We were treated royally and even the Iconium Chamber of Commerce showed up to take pictures of our caravan. We caused quite a stir while we were there, but the good natured folks of Iconium took it in stride.



So, well fed, and rested (and reinflated.....poor Vinnie, his health was starting to fail), we headed on to our second overnight stay at Fort Madison Missouri, right on the banks of the Mighty Mississippi. The hotel was interesting, each room was decorated after someone famous (or infamous) from U.S. history. Thanks to Dan and Valerie Baker, all of our hotel accommodations were interesting, great job folks. I split off from the main group who stopped for dinner and went straight to the hotel. I was beat and I had to attempt to resuscitate Vinnie who was slipping away from us.

The next morning I was sitting outside the hotel. It was a beautiful cool morning and I was enjoying a cappuccino when I heard the most horrible noise emanating from the foyer of the hotel. People started running around and shoving stuff into cars. Their haste made me wonder if the noise and their behavior were connected somehow. Wandering inside I found LaRita blowing for all she is worth on some sort of horn.... apparently this is also tradition for the start of our road day. Thanks LaRita!

Continued on next page



I headed upstairs to check on Vinnie, hoping a good nights rest had helped him somewhat. It seems the horn had a rejuvenating affect on him and he was ready to go, with one small caveat. He said the Mississippi reminded him of his home on the Amazon and he wouldn't leave until he had his picture taken in front of it.



And shortly after we saw that sign... we saw this...

Now that Vinnie is satisfied we are off on Day 3 (Monday) of our journey. It's a gorgeous day and we are on our last leg. The good weather and knowing our destination was in reach seems to have perked everyone up a bit. We found some fun roads on this section, some pretty twisties in thick forest. Thanks to Ken and Vicky Finley for laying out our route, it was fun. I certainly wasn't bored and I don't think we ever got lost. Next stop is Mineral Point WI (Yay! we are finally in Wisconsin!) and the Café Ellie for lunch. We seem to make a stir whenever we arrive in mass like that and this time is no different. We were able find a good place to do a group picture here so we took the opportunity....First we had to find a photographer.....Ah, here we go, Gerald to the Rescue!!!



We had passed Road America on the way in to the Osthoff Resort. It was really a nice venue for our gathering and quite comfortable. I was really glad to see this place, we had a long but fun drive and here is our new home for the next week.



And, thanks to Gerald's photo skills, here's the intrepid folks who call themselves "Road Monkeys", all lined up and smiling cause once again.....we are on the road!

The experienced Road Monkeys started seeing folks they knew right away and reconnecting with friends they hadn't seen in a while. Even though I really knew no one other than my group, I felt welcome there. The next several days

Continued on page 16

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were a blur of activity. I had two intense DE days and an Autocross day. The classroom instruction was invaluable and I drew instructors that were very helpful. I don't think I scared them too badly, no spinouts or offtrack excursions. I haven't driven many tracks before this, but Road America is one of the best in my limited experience.



And the Autocross, it was on a smaller road course! Very few cones, just drive the course, I was in Heaven! I wish they had given us more runs, but it was a wonderful course. The days were filled with driving and hanging out with other enthusiasts of the BMW marque, and what enthusiasts they are. I saw some amazing examples of cars that were not new by any means, but you couldn't tell it by looking at them. The Concours gave up fine examples of cars from almost every age in BMW's history in pristine shape. I fell in love with a red M1.....drool....



Speaking of the Concours d' Elegance. ...Congratulation to Barry Norman for his 1st place win in the Super Clean Z cars category. Way to go Barry!...

I got lucky and won a trophy, I placed first in my Autocross category (7B)....now if they would just send me the trophy...

On a sad note, Vinnie expired the day after arriving in Lake Elkart, he was just losing it all over and even. I even got the Gorilla patch kit hoping to give him a little more time. Unfortunately this was not to be, his seams had just let go. So long Vinnie, R.I. P., we will miss you but you will not be forgotten! I believe he is to be buried with honors by our brothers and sisters in the Badger Bimmers chapter.....

Oktoberfest was a wonderful time of getting to know my new friends and meeting a host of others too. I am so glad I decided this year to give myself this trip as a birthday present (that's August 25th for anyone interested). I wouldn't have missed it for the world and have already made my reservations for next years Road Monkey Run!

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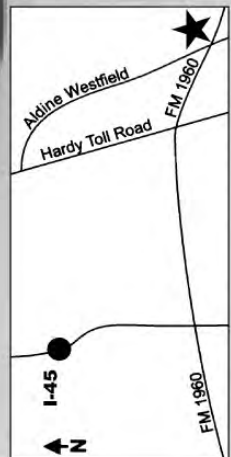
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October Fest 2010

Report and photos by Bill Elwell and Pam Standley

It's August and plenty hot in Houston. Why not head to Wisconsin and BMW O'fest in Elkhart Lake and the Road America Track to cool off a bit. We were late making a decision to join the Road Monkeys for the journey and many of the driving events at the Track were filled along with the accommodations at the Osthoff Resort. Fortunate for us we were able to pick up room reservations from a club member who had a change of plans, (sorry you couldn't make it Chris and LeAnn). With that we were set for the drive. In years past (about 9 of them) we've steered the Z3 toward Spartanburg, South Carolina and Roadster Homecoming. Last year it was Z'Fest in Cincinnati, so we're no strangers to road trips, but this was our first trip traveling in Road Monkey style.

We met the group on Rte 59 on the north side of town to start the journey. We were a group of about 15 cars, and after a quick visit with the rest of the group, coffee and fuel, an unexpected exchange of monkey goodies, the sound of LaRita's horn, (likely borrowed from a Viking on a previous trip) was the call for drivers to start their engines and we were off. Our route, planned by Ken Finley, kept us on the back roads for the most part, with stops at great little spots for lunch and dinners and very nice accommodations that were arranged by Valerie Baker.

The days were full as the route brought us zig zagging across the Mississippi River on our way north. We made it up to the Osthoff resort in time to pick up our registration packet and attend the first timers meeting. We had read the literature so there weren't too many surprises on things to do. There was a fun rally, a TSD rally which we suppose is also fun. The gymkhana sounded interesting. We were told it wasn't a competitive event and was just for fun, but if it has a clock on it, it is a competitive event to us, more on that later. Then we were off to find the rest of the group and have dinner by the lake.

The Osthoff (photo top right) is an amazing facility. Our room had a view of the back courtyard and on out over the lake. The gardens were all in prime shape for the event, the



sun was shining, temps were in the 70's., and we're driving a roadster. Even after driving 1500 miles on the back roads to get here, on Tuesday morning we took the time to use the washing stations to shine up the car, waved to the concurs competitors getting ready to line up, and headed out for a 300 mile tour of Door County and the various parks on the peninsula.

Wednesday was the first day at Road America and we were there for the day. We started out with the Michelin driving event where we got to drive a car with street tires and then one with track tires.



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The volunteers picking up cones were in for a long day based on the what we saw during our visit. Lot's of fun, and a noticeable difference with the track tires, but the car will still hit cones either way. We spent some time watching the cars on the main track and took some test drives out on the open road in an X6 and a 1 series from the fleet of cars that BMWNA had brought for the attendees to sample. We had a lunch of local fare, (brats of course) and then on to the gymkhana. As expected the clock was working and so the competition was on. We did see a few folks out for just a good time, and plenty scouting out the course to figure out how to shave a few seconds off each stop, which way to turn, etc. By the end of the afternoon there was more rubber on the course than over at the Michelin test drive venue. There was a mid course stop box with a change to reverse. The event videographer was lined up by the stop line while we came in for a full ABS stop for added incentive to assure that the brake pedal was fully engaged. We stopped in plenty of time and proceeded to wipe out a cheese cone in the reverse slalom, but hey it's just for fun. We did manage to finish in the top 10 and learned some new techniques for next time.

The day wrapped up with dinner at the track and a drive in movie set up on the hill side. We were kind of hoping for sitting in the car with the top down, but it was just on benches. It was a nice close to a busy day with the moon rising over the trees. And the odd thing was it was August and we needed a long sleeve shirt and a light jacket.



Thursday and Friday we stopped by the track to watch the other Road Monkeys at the autocross and track events and then hit the road for some more touring in the area.

We made a rendezvous back with the group for dinner and to compare stories of the days activities. The final banquet was held out by the lake, awards were given for all the events, and we got a sneak peek at a 1 series M coupe. It was a nice evening to finish off the week.

We said our good byes to Wisconsin and were off again on the two day express route back to Houston. The heat and humidity were waiting for us upon our return. It was a great week on the road. Thanks to all the planning of the senior road monkeys and to the rest of our fellow travelers for such a fun trip.

My Ofest 2010:

**Drive to 1st lunch stop in Jefferson, TX.
Wave "bye-bye" to the Road Monkeys.
Ride the roll-back wrecker home.
But I'm not bitter!**

- Jim Moffitt

*Jim's water pump croaked
200 miles into the trip.*

Twas Halloween weekend
The clubs big fall event,
Maps had been drawn
And emails were sent.

At Bucees we met
and assembled in masse,
drank lots of coffee
some folks got gas.

In a long line
out 290 we flew,
most kept up
we lost only a few.

To Bastrop for lunch
And a Roadhouse stop,
Where's the dang bathroom
My bladders gonna pop.

The weather is perfect
Sun shining bright,
Onward to Fredericksburg
For that most frightful night.

The roads get better,
Some twisties please,
Not a trick in sight,
For the 3's 5's and Z's

We roar into town,
To prepare for the fun,
Where to meet, and should
we eat,
It's morning before some
souls are all done.

Saturday dawns brisk and
clear,
The nights taken its toll,
but Gardner State Park
awaits,
Groups 1 and 2... "lets roll".

The Apple Store is stop
number one,
Not for electronics on old
Santas list,

No, it's for ice cream and pasteries,
And a parade not to be missed.

Ready for more treats,
But not this trick,
Through the hill country curves,
The fastest red Z did the Constable
pick.

Lunch at the park,
And times running out,
With not enough hours,
We do a reroute.

So around the 3 sisters,
The Roundels did run,
And back to the hotel,
Tonight we have our own spooky fun.

The Sunset Grill was a scary place to
be,
Pirate, Goddess, Witch, and more,
You never know what duct tape
creation,
Might walk through the door.

Great service and food,
And some triva to make you think,
"what year did BMW make that" or
"blue pumpkins" indeed.
Don't you google it or look for a link.

Later that night charades were played,
and I'm told big fun was had,
Remember to use your "inside voices",
Or you'll make the hotel staff mad.

Sunday morning is here too quick,
All of us have things to do,
I'm headed to Austin,
For the rest it's Bar B Que.

So it's done,
And I feel beat,
All I can say,
This was one very sweet treat.

- James Weaver

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Tire Rack Street Survival School 2010 – or “How I let my teen prepare for driving the streets of Houston”

Article and photos by David Meaux

On Saturday, October 23rd, the Houston chapter ran its second Tire Rack Street Survival school of 2010. I've lost count of how many of these schools the club has run over the years and I've volunteered to help out at a number of them. However, this year I took a special interest. With a daughter having just turned 16, wanting a license and her independence to navigate the streets of Houston I was transformed into a worried parent (more than usual). The easy answer was to just tell her she couldn't drive – ever! That would surely keep her safe. I wish it were that easy. Sooner or later she is going to be driving. She would do that with my help or without it. What is a nervous dad to do?



ones required to get a license. We let her drive when she was 15 with a learner's permit, nervous mom or dad in the passenger seat, ready to stomp on the phantom 'passenger' brake at the slightest sign of trouble. We've required that she avoid busy streets. We've told her to stay off Highway 6, 1960 and the freeways. We've limited her to the residential streets, or the direct route to, and from high school. We cross our fingers that with 'seat' time she'll improve her skills and be able to avert the risk of a serious accident. We hope that with the skills we've taught her and with her own good judgment she'll avert anything serious. We still worry. What is a nervous dad to do?

We've sent her to the mandatory driver schools, the

I've enjoyed the benefits of BMW CCA membership for a long time. Most of that has come in the form the fun of social drives, the intensity of autocross events, or in

Continued on next page

Photos from Steve Amos of O'Fest race activities: The red M3 below is Steve's car.



Above: The Texas race crowd and our paddock area trackside. We have three class wins among us.

Below: The BMW Corral that was set up next to the track for the American Le Mans race the weekend before O'Fest. BMW won the GT class.



the good friends I have made over the years. However, probably the most thanks I give to the club is for organizing and making available the Street Survival School series. When the club first brought the school to Houston a few years back under Dan Dan Baker's leadership, I just figured it was another good deed we were doing. I helped out and enjoyed myself just like any other event. I got a kick out of helping the kids and hoped they would get something out of it. I kind of noticed the nervous parents watching from the sidelines, I think.

The school was originally formed in 2002 by the BMW Car Club of America Foundation. Corporate sponsors



limitations of the car they drive daily. Sounds good to me. We signed her up!



Amie has taken the school twice. That's because the club held it two times in 2010. The \$75 investment each time was a paltry amount compared to the life-saving skills she has gotten out of the course. Ultimately, what the school does is teach young drivers how to maintain control of their vehicles under uncertain or unexpected circumstances. Some of the things the course covers include practice at keeping their car under control in a skid, simultaneously braking and turning in an emergency accident avoidance maneuver and learning how to use and trust anti-lock brakes. It also builds confidence. As an instructor it was hard not to notice the gradual increase in confidence and skill each student experienced during the course.

include Tire Rack, BMW of North America, ZF Corporation and Liberty Mutual Insurance. What makes it work is the commitment of club membership volunteers and the financial resources of the corporate sponsors. The school's stated goal is to go beyond today's required driver education and give teens across the U.S. the driving tools and hands-on experience to become safer, smarter drivers. Its not a course for learning how to drive your car at high speeds. Safety and car control are the objectives. The program teaches students to avoid accidents by thinking and looking ahead. The school is unique in that it offers students instruction in their own cars so that they learn the

There will always be risks associated with driving and even the best drivers have accidents. However, the Street Survival school teaches survival skills, and it helps a nervous parent feel just a little bit better.



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