

Winter 2011

der **BAYERISCHE** **briet**

GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA



MINI returns to the World Rally Championship Page 6

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As I write my last president's message, I reflect on the past four plus years as president of this great chapter. I enjoyed working with so many unselfish and great volunteers and I have to admit – it's really not a tough job due to a very hard working and dedicated extended board which does a lot of the heavy lifting.

As I reflect back on my term, I can't help but admire the level of excellence that the GVC family maintains year after year. We have expanded our non-driving activities over the past few years and, thanks to Gail Davis and Elaine Lanni, we have tried a number of new ideas such as the chili cook-off, meetings at Holtz and Towne BMW, and a holiday party at The Strong museum.

Thanks to Bill O'Neill and Dave Lanni, our driver schools – both in WGI and Mosport – are some of the best run. I have continuously heard from people around the US that GVC's turn at hosting Oktoberfest 2008 was certainly the high watermark for O'fests – Thanks Mel!

Dan Mack maintains our ITS program as the model for the rest of the CCA chapters, and our autocross program is always rated as the most fun – thanks Andy, Tim and Bill. Finally, with a daughter who turns 16 this year, I am excited to have a child who will participate in our Street Survival school this summer – Ike, God help you if she has any of my driving skills!

Seth and Elaine, thanks for the hard work and quality job on the newsletter each month. I'm sure it will come as no surprise to each of you that I won't miss writing the president's message.

The Stan Parker Memorial race is a must-do race for many of the racers in the Northeast and Canada. Stan was a pioneer in BMW Club Racing and a well respected competition steward. Johnny B and his team take a bunch of grief, but are always smiling and as a result have a ton of

repeat customers.

As many of you probably don't know, Gene Skic stepped into the thankless role of securing ads and sponsors and has raised the bar to a level that will be hard to beat. And please support our sponsors; they support us.

We also have acknowledged that the computer is here to stay; Jim Dresser has the web site humming, and as a chapter we are using event registrations via www.motorsport.reg. And, drawing on Karla's marketing background and experience; we are now focused in the right direction. As the past treasurer, I have to send special thanks to my fellow – and our current – bean counter, Joe Burke. He has continued to improve our accounting and budgeting.

Lastly, thanks to Gary Moore. He has no official title or official job responsibility in the chapter, but is the first one at the track, the last one to leave and adds value at every meeting.

Perhaps most rewarding as President is the recognition from National highlighting our donations each year - especially when you consider that many of the chapters we beat are much, much larger than us.

The hard part about a thank you is you always leave someone out and for that I apologize.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as "el Presidente" and for all the help that you've provided to make it one of the most active and successful BMW CCA chapters.

As I reflect back on my term,
I can't help but admire the
level of excellence that the GVC
family maintains year after year.

Correction

In the Fall 2010 Issue of *der Bayerische Brief*, photo credits for the cover and Targa Newfoundland should have gone to Gordon Sleigh, not Ken Buschner. The Editorial staff regrets the error.

Membership in BMW Car Club of America

Membership cost is only \$48 for one year, \$91 for two years, or \$134 for three years! You will receive the monthly *Roundel*, our informative 140 page magazine, which many consider to be the world's best car club publication. You'll become a member in one of our 67 local chapters which publish newsletters, conduct driving schools, tech sessions, social events, and assist you in servicing and enjoying your BMW. In addition, BMW CCA offers a long list of additional benefits & services.

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Racing Towards the Future



Every global mainstream sports car manufacturer – including Audi, BMW, Ferrari, Mercedes, and Porsche – is heavily involved in racing. It is a simple ratification of the old saying, “Race on Sunday – sell on Monday.” However, the future of racing is cloudy because of many countervailing forces. First of all, racing is politically incorrect within the rising forces of environmentalism, and secondly, racing is becoming too expensive – both for the participants and the manufacturers. The current world-wide recession has caused many automobile manufacturers to rethink their racing programs. None make a profit on their direct factory teams so that the losses must be charged to marketing.

The most difficult part of this conundrum, however, calls for the manufacturers to outguess the best racing venues, and then trying to figure out the winning engine and drive trains that will take them to the checkered flag. Oh, and add to the equation, the fact that Formula One will be completely changing engine regulations in 2013, and you have enough guessing to give those in charge of the various racing programs a heavy duty industrial grade case of ulcers.

Here is my guess about the players mentioned above and their probable playing fields for the next few years:

- Audi will likely stay with their winning formula of the past twelve years, which is the turbo-diesel LMP1, and the Le Mans 24 hour endurance race as the venue. They will also help fund some privateers who race their production sports cars.
- BMW bailed out of Formula One two years ago because the board decided it was just too expensive (Toyota and Renault have also terminated their factory teams). They will concentrate on running their beautiful and winning M3 at the American Le Mans circuit, and various European sports car racing venues. Munich's future hopes are wrapped up in the Vision Hybrid

that will reportedly replace the M3 (see Perspektive, Winter 2009). This mid-engine 2+2 with a 1.5 liter 3 pot diesel engine feeding a battery pack should (almost) equal the performance of the current car. Frankly, I'm holding on to my E92 M3.

- Ferrari and Mercedes are locked into Formula One as their chief racing venue for the foreseeable future. They are in a locked-horn battle with each other for driver's championship and manufacturer's championship with hardly anyone else in sight. Look for exiting racing to ensue and only lip-service towards the development of 'green' racing cars.
- Porsche is the real wild card of the bunch. They enjoy 20 percent of the global sports car market – much more than any of the others – and their major marketing tool is racing. The only problem (and it's a big one) is that Audi is now their sibling, and Volkswagen is the mother church. Consequently, they are not masters of their destiny. Right now their main squeeze is the newly minted 911 GT3 Hybrid, which made its debut at the Petit Le Mans last October. As far as future racing programs – they might develop an LMP1 or LMP2 for the 24 hours of Le Mans and the American Le Mans circuit or they might take a run at Formula One – it's anybody's guess.

Whatever the outcome of this guessing game, let it be known that as long as there are racetracks and race cars to run on them, those of us with racing in our blood will be out there racing and watching. On any given Sunday our eyes will be glued to SpeedVision, or our butts will be planted on the grandstands at the Glen and other road racing tracks around the world. Our hearts will beat a little faster as two beautifully prepared racing machines piloted by two gladiators competing for the same piece of real estate at the same time. This is the very essence of sports car racing – which will never die.



THE
Legend
Returns



MINI lines up in the FIA WRC in 2011

Munich, 2nd February 2011. The countdown is on to the return of MINI on the international motorsport stage. This season, the new MINI WRC Team will compete at selected rounds in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). The aim is to gain valuable experience, in order to be perfectly prepared for the complete 2012 World Championship season. The MINI WRC has been developed by Prodrive, based on the MINI Countryman. It is equipped with a 1.6-litre turbo engine derived from the MINI production models, which was developed by BMW Motorsport for use in series run according to FIA Super2000 regulations, including the World Touring Car Championship. As well as its works involvement with the MINI WRC Team, Prodrive is supplying the customer car to private rally teams, who will also run the car in the S2000 class of the World Rally Championship.

“The FIA World Rally Championship is the pinnacle of rallying, making it the ideal platform for demonstrating the competitive spirit of our brand,” says Ian Robertson, Member of the Board of Management, Sales and Marketing BMW Group. “Experience is a very important factor in motorsport. For that reason it is essential we learn as much as possible within a very short time, in order to make up ground on our rivals. The new regulations mean the gap to the top is smaller than it would have been at another time. We want to annoy the opposition as soon as possible.”

The MINI WRC Team will be putting its faith in experienced drivers when it faces up to the challenge of the WRC for the first time in 2011. Kris Meeke (GB) and his co-driver Paul Nagle (IR) have proven their ability in impressive style, listing the 2009 Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) title as just one of their achievements. Daniel “Dani” Sordo (ES), who will compete alongside his new co-driver Carlos del Barrio (ES) in 2011, has many years of World Championship experience. Twenty nine podium finishes from 84 starts in the WRC just go to show the former Citroën works driver has what it takes to battle it out at the top.

Rallying is far from new territory for MINI. In the past, success in this popular motorsport discipline has played a crucial role in defining the brand’s image. Three victories at the Rally Monte Carlo in the 1960s made the MINI Cooper S a true legend. MINI also competed in the European Rally Championship, where it once again notched up countless triumphs.

“MINI can look back on a successful tradition in rallying,” says Dr Wolfgang Armbrecht, Senior Vice President Brand Management MINI. “Even up to the present day, there is a core group within the MINI community for which MINI and motorsport just



belong together. The WRC provides an excellent communications platform for the MINI Countryman, upon which the MINI WRC is based."

The latest phase of developments for the MINI WRC are currently undergoing an intensive testing programme. The car to be used in the 2011 World Rally Championship will be presented at the official Team Launch on 13th April 2011 at the MINI Plant Oxford.

Prodrive, an experienced motorsport operation, was chosen as the partner in the quest to continue the brand's success story. The company, founded by David Richards, is viewed as one of the most respected and successful in rallying. "This project is a truly passionate opportunity," believes Richards. "MINI is a cult brand which left a lasting impression during its previous motorsport campaigns. We are both extremely happy and proud to be on board as a partner when MINI returns to rallying. We aim to use 2011 as a preparatory year, amassing experience in order to ensure we are fully competitive from the start of the following season. But let's not underestimate the task ahead of us nor the stiff competition we will face on the way. However, our target is firmly set on winning the World Championship title again with MINI."

Prodrive was founded in 1984, and has established itself as one of motorsport's leading independent teams. Currently employing about 500 staff, the company is based in Banbury (GB). Among other successes, Prodrive has to-date won six World Rally Championships, five British Touring Car titles, and scored three class victories in France's classic Le Mans 24 Hours.

The MINI Countryman is the youngest MINI model and also the first to be equipped with an all-wheel-drive system. Therefore this model provided the logical basis for a competitive rally

derivative. The flagship MINI Cooper S Countryman is powered by a 1,6-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine, supplemented not only by a twin-scroll turbocharger and direct fuel injection, but also fully variable valve management – so offering by far the best relationship between engine power and fuel consumption in its class. The engine produces an impressive 135 kW / 184 bhp, and accelerates the MINI Cooper S Countryman from 0 to 100 km/h in 7.6 seconds. As part of the MINIMALISM concept, a range of fuel- and emission-reducing features are fitted as standard and/or in appropriate combinations, including Brake Energy Regeneration, the Auto Start/Stop function, Shift Point Display and the need-based operation of ancillary components.

All MINI Cooper S Countryman and MINI Cooper D Countryman are optionally available with permanent MINI ALL4 all-wheel drive, with an electro-hydraulic differential positioned directly on the final drive varying the distribution from front to rear in an infinite process. Under normal driving conditions up to 50 per cent of the engine's power goes to the rear wheels; under extreme conditions up to 100 per cent, offering a new, high-traction rendition of the agile handling so typical of MINI.

"MINI powered by BMW Motorsport": The heart of the MINI WRC is the 1.6-litre, four-cylinder Di turbo engine, which is also available in the MINI production models. The production engine was further developed by BMW Motorsport for the use in various categories according to FIA Super2000 regulations. The power transmission takes place via an Xtrac 6-speed, sequential gearbox. For its outings on the rally stages, the MINI Countryman chassis has been fitted with a roll cage developed by Prodrive, which exceeds the strict safety requirements of the International Automobile Federation (FIA). ■

Ian Robertson: "MINI is returning to its roots."



Ian Robertson, Member of the Board of Management, Sales and Marketing BMW Group, speaks about the importance of motorsport for the MINI brand, the goals in the World Rally Championship and the MINI Countryman, on which the MINI WRC is based.

Mr Robertson, MINI is back in motorsport. What does this move mean for the brand?

Ian Robertson: "Our involvement in the World Rally Championship effectively sees MINI returning to its roots. In the early years, success in the world of motorsport contributed significantly to the rapid rise of the MINI. Back then, people saw that this little car not only looked good in everyday traffic, but also had a sporty side. This has not changed since then. We chose the World Rally Championship for our stage in order to prove the sportiness of MINI cars to today's generation of drivers. The commitment also reinforces the key values of the MINI brand, 'excitement' and 'energy' as well as underlining the manly side of the brand."

Why is the MINI brand so well suited to rallying?

Robertson: "On the one hand, MINI can look back on a unique success story. On the other hand, MINI is the epitome of excitement for millions of fans around the world and thrills them with

its energy. This is precisely what we are able to authentically and sustainably represent through our motorsport involvement in the World Rally Championship. Thrilling rally events, ultimate performances by man and machine, and as much success as possible, of course: motorsport is pure emotion – just as MINI is for its fans."

How are the roles distributed in the World Rally Championship involvement?

Robertson: "MINI is the manufacturer of the MINI Countryman series car. It forms the basis for the MINI WRC, which has been developed by Prodrive since the start of 2009. MINI is also playing the role of Team Partner. The 1.6-litre turbo engine derived from the MINI production models was developed by BMW Motorsport in Munich for the use in various motorsport series. Prodrive is also responsible for our appearances in the WRC and the production of customer rally cars."

What goals have you set for the first season in 2011?

Robertson: "Anyone wanting to be successful in a World Championship must first gain experience and put in a lot of hard work. We will do that together with our partner Prodrive. David Richards' team is very familiar with the World Rally Championship, so

we can start at a very high level. Several rallies are planned for this year. In 2012 we will compete for the full season. It goes without saying we want to be competitive as quickly as possible, and I am optimistic we will succeed."

When do you think you will be able to challenge Ford and Citroën for the title?

Robertson: "Experience is a very important factor in motorsport. For that reason it is essential we learn as much as possible within a very short time, in order to make up ground on our rivals. The new regulations mean the gap to the top is smaller than it would have been at another time. We want to annoy the opposition as soon as possible. You can plan your own performance in motorsport, but not a title win. All you can do is work as hard as possible to move closer to your goal. Our goal is to win the World Championship."

What are the outstanding characteristics of the MINI Countryman, on which the MINI WRC is based?

Robertson: "The MINI Countryman is a car, the type of which there has never been before in the history of MINI. As a crossover

it combines the classic MINI concept with the characteristics of a Sports Activity Vehicle – in a MINI that is at home far beyond the boundaries of the urban environment. It is the first MINI with four-wheel drive, which makes it predestined for the World Rally Championship. With its four doors and four seats it fits the motto: MINI on the outside, maxi on the inside. Because it is a true MINI, the Countryman is particularly low on fuel and emissions."

What will MINI's involvement in the Rally World Championship cost?

Robertson: "The costs of developing a car and running it in the World Rally Championship have fallen significantly since the introduction of the new regulations. We assume the costs will be about 25 percent lower than would have been the case in previous years. This was a huge influence on our decision to become involved. The 1.6-litre turbo engine can not only be used in the WRC, but also in other categories as the World Touring Car Championship. In addition, the sale of customer rally cars has a positive effect on the total calculation. The WRC offers MINI an attractive platform – with manageable costs. The cost/performance ratio is excellent." ■

The MINI WRC: Technical Specifications

Dimensions:

Length: 4,110 mm

Width: 1,820 mm

Weight: 1,200 kg (FIA minimum weight)

Engine:

"MINI powered by BMW Motorsport"

1,600 cc, four-cylinder direct injection petrol engine

Garrett turbocharger - maximum boost 2.5 bar

Dry sump

Transmission:

Permanent four wheel drive

Gearbox: Xtrac 6-speed sequential

AP Racing sintered twin plate clutch

Plated limited slip (front and rear axle)

Steering:

Hydraulic power assisted

Chassis:

MINI Countryman bodyshell with Prodrive roll cage exceeding FIA regulations

Suspension:

Prodrive Öhlins Macpherson strut, 3 way adjustable damper (front and rear axle)

Wheels/Tyres:

ATS wheels and Michelin tyres

Gravel: 15" diameter

Tarmac: 18" diameter

Brakes:

AP Racing

Gravel: four piston, 300 mm (front and rear axle)

Tarmac: four piston, 355 mm (front and rear axle)

Castrol brake fluid (SFX)

Lubricants and coolants:

Castrol

Seats:

Sparco race seats and safety belt system



OU60 FRC

holiday

Photos by Mel Dillon



party 2010





celebrate

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Adrienne became involved with the GVC chapter about 15 years ago. (She also has 19 years of experience with the SCCA, where she has been involved with autocross and rallying.) She has experienced the One Lap four times, the last one as a navigator in a car with Roy Hopkins. With the last name of Hughes (Karl "ice racing" Hughes is her brother), I wonder if there truly is an automotive gene! GVC has been lucky to have her as a driving instructor, driving committee member, rallymeister and president. There are few events that she misses, and, if she's absent, it's probably because she's maneuvering a vehicle on the ice or out on a rally course somewhere – day or night. She's a go-to person at our driving schools.

Outside of the automotive arena, Adrienne studied the culinary arts in Paris, France and at Johnson & Wales University. She is a connoisseur of single malt scotch whiskey



Adrienne Hughes

GVC has been lucky to have Adrienne Hughes as a driving instructor, driving committee member, rallymeister and president. There are few events that she misses, and, if she's absent, it's probably because she's maneuvering a vehicle on the ice or out on a rally course somewhere – day or night.

and has been known to travel to Scotland in pursuit of shares of a barrel of a fine brand.

I won't carry on here about her "three-peat" fame at Targa Newfoundland, as hopefully you've read about that in *der Bayerische Brief*, the *Roundel*, or experienced first-hand a presentation that she and Roy provide.

She spends her 8-5 (and then some) hours at Eksten's Autoworks as their office manager. Adrienne resides in Spencerport with Roy Hopkins and currently drives a blue

M3. Other vehicles in her eclectic fleet have included a Ford Pinto wagon, Toyota Tercel Suburban, Ford Escort, Rambler Ambassador, Ford Fairlane, Pontiac "Lemons," Chevrolet Cavalier, Suzuki Samurai and a Renault cinq (I do seem to recall her also driving a Dodge Neon from time to time!)

The next time you see her, do thank her for all she does for your club! (Perhaps a single malt or the offer of a new BMW to drive for 2011 Targa would be appropriate!)

2011 Calendar of Events

April	16th Saturday 17th Sunday	Instructor Seminar Car Tech
May	7th & 8th Saturday & Sunday	Ultimate Driving School – Watkins Glen
July	25th & 26th Monday & Tuesday	Ultimate Driving School – Mosport
August	24th & 25th Wednesday & Thursday	Ultimate Driving School – Watkins Glen
September	24th & 25th Saturday & Sunday	Ultimate Driving School – Watkins Glen

Please visit our web site for late breaking news and updates!

www.gvc-bmwcca.org

Winter has arrived in southern Germany!



When I leased my 120d back in June, one of the incentives thrown in was a set of used winter tires on steel wheels. I've grown up changing my own wheels for winter, keeping the unused set nicely stacked in my basement. But here in Germany a large portion of residents are apartment dwellers and have limited space to store another set of wheels and tires - myself included. So it's normal for dealerships or car-work garages to offer both winter wheel sale and storage. All-season tires really don't exist here on mainstream cars. For the most part there are only performance tires to keep you stuck to the autobahn above 100 mph, and winter tires for times when the temperature drops and the inevitable snow arrives. A driver can be fined if using summer tires in the winter, and, if you get into an accident in the winter without winter tires, the insurance company likely will not cover your claim (regardless of who is at fault).

Knowing the snow would be coming, I called my BMW dealership to schedule an appointment for the wheel swap. I had a nice certificate from BMW Financial to redeem for the use of a loaner vehicle, but my salesman offered me his car instead. This immediately started me thinking. What might Mr. Kaucic be driving? He stands well over six feet, so a 1-series seemed out of the question. On my way to the dealer to drop my car, I did a quick survey of their parking lot from the road to guess what I might be driving back to work that morning. There were plenty of cars in the lot: 3er's, X5's, Minis. A nice black X6 caught my eye; I thought that might be a nice change of pace. Hopeful, but really having no idea what might be in store, I walked in and found Mr. Kaucic. We traded keys - and his key tag proudly read, "X6 4.0d."

"Oh," I said, trying to keep my cool, "you have an X6?" He winked at me and said with genuine love and passion, "It's a great car."

As I climbed in and moved the seat forward what seemed like several feet, I tried to figure out how best to maximize my short time with the X6. It was only a 10 minute drive in traffic back to the office...unless I took an indirect route. Snow was starting to fall, so I didn't want to go too out of my way. Smartly, Kaucic left barely enough fuel in the tank, so a quick autobahn run was out of the question too. I decided to take the "scenic" route back to work, by way of my apartment so I could grab a camera and take a picture.

Contrasting the black exterior was a beautiful light brown interior. It was equipped with iDrive, and within a minute I could tune the radio, set the navigation, call someone in my synced phonebook, and check the traction at each wheel. The system has become that intuitive. As the key tag indicated, as did the door badge, this was a 4.0d model. This means a 3.0 liter diesel engine making 301 hp and 443 lb-ft of torque. I have marveled at the torque in my 120d, and the car never felt underpowered or unable to move in a hurry - until after I drove the X6. Less than sixty total minutes behind the wheel and it already made everything else I've driven feel weak. Talk

"Oh," I said, trying to keep my cool, "you have an X6?"
He winked at me and said with genuine love and passion,
"It's a great car."



about addicting. For fun I would grab the wheel, floor the accelerator, and simply hang on as I was thrown in to the seatback. I started to think, "Snow tires...xDrive...I wonder how fast I can go around this traffic circle sideways." And the noise - brutal, in a grin-inducing way. Combine a BMW inline 6 growl with a Mack truck recording, then insult the engine's mother to make it angry, and that's how it sounded at wide-open throttle (or in diesel terms, full-fuel-injection). I couldn't get enough.

Begrudgingly I returned to the office, laughing like a lunatic the entire way. I sat down at my desk and casually said to my co-worker (and 118d driver) Andi that I had an X6 on loan. I know how he loves the X-sechs. He spun around and started at me for three beats. "What?? You're joking me, man." He was incredulous, so I told him not to make lunch plans and we'd drive together back to the dealer. A little while later, without looking over at me, he asks, "Russ...is it black?" I smiled and confirmed it was. "Man, I'm loving it."

On our ride back to the dealer, Andi thoroughly enjoyed the brutal acceleration, iDrive, and the general feeling of opulence which comes from cruising a small town in an all-black X6. We were the *Straßekönige*. I tried my best to break the X6 of its stronghold on the pavement. At one traffic light, we were on an incline, first in line to turn right into a wide lane, and the road was wet. When the light turned green, I tightened my grip on the wheel, aimed in the general intended direction, and planted my foot on the floor.

Astonishing. We were pushed into the seats, and for the briefest moment the steering wheel was a little squirrely. But then

the computers kicked in and any thoughts of sideways drama passed: we were in a straight line, at full acceleration potential (which is to say, accelerating quickly). That's pretty much how our journey went from stoplight to stoplight.

Back at the dealer, I reluctantly swapped keys again. Andi and I browsed the showroom, looking at a new X3, a 10th Anniversary Edition X5, and a 7-series Hybrid. The price stickers kept us dreaming, for now.

I shouldn't have parked the X6 next to my 120 in the parking lot; seeing them side-by-side made getting into the 120 that much more difficult. In fact it really seemed quite difficult, feeling like we both had to cram ourselves into the ample-yet-sufficient confines of the hatchback. Pre-X6 the car had enough room and enough power. Post-X6, well...

And then my wife and I traveled home to the US for Christmas, and spent a week with a new VW Jetta rental car. Great car, for the most part, but I found myself at times longing for my 120 (especially when I would instinctively punch the console looking for the Start/Stop button rather than turning the key. Habits form quickly!). So when we came back to Germany in January, the 120 felt just right again: powerful, taut, connected. It's good to be back.

I'm hoping when spring comes and it's time to swap wheels again, Mr. Kaucic might have upgraded to, oh, say, an X6 M, or a 760i, or a 1 M Coupe, or something else grossly overpowered. But this time I know to find something underpowered to drive before hopping back into the 120, so that everything will feel just right again.

GVC Autocross

by Andy Blake

The cold of winter seems to cause everything to slow down. There's less traction on the roads so the driving is usually slower and we often see evidence of those who lacked the proper tires or skills to adjust to the conditions in the form of snow-covered cars turned to interesting angles along the roadside. It seems to take longer to get anything done when the thermometer dips into the single digits (or below!). It's hard to get motivated to grab a cold wrench and get the off-season maintenance items underway, especially when a warm couch in front of a TV screen and maybe a cold beer offer a more comfortable alternative. But we all know spring is coming, and soon enough we'll be able to fire up dormant motors and warm up cold tires.

As the autocross season wound down last year, the battle for Top Gun points saw close competition among the cone-chasing regulars. At our fourth event, held at Seneca Army Depot, Bill Hicks co-drove my E36 M3 since Tim Moriarty was away on vacation. Mel Dillon brought his revitalized burgundy E30 325 to the event to shake out some of the final tweaking needed on his mega-squirt injection system. The morning runs had me leading the BMW class, but the little voice in my head that suggested I re-torque the wheels during the lunch break went unheeded and we encountered one of those problems that should never occur, but does anyway. While Bill was taking his second run of the afternoon, he heard a loud banging from the rear and brought the car to a stop on the concrete loop off of the main runway. I was doing timing and a radio call came in that we needed a jack and a wheel brought out on course. It took me a few seconds to sort out which car was having the trouble that caused the course to be red-flagged, but the realization that it was my car got me scrambling for my spare tire and a jack. At about the same time Mel walked up with a lug bolt he found sitting in the grid area – not good! We were able to get the car rolling with the original wheel although one bolt was sheared off and the others that were left had ground the aluminum wheel holes from round into slightly oval shapes. This left me with a car I could drive home somewhat safely, but was not suited for any more hard runs on the course that day. So, I had to sit it out and hope my morning times were good enough to hold off the others. Steve Lawless came close to catching my best time in his E36 M3, but came up six tenths of a sec-

ond shy and settled for second place among the BMWs. Mel took third in his E30, apparently a little out of practice with rear-wheel power after spending a couple years competing only in his front-wheel drive Mini.

Our fifth event, at Cherry Valley, saw Tim back in top form with his E30 318is and gunning to regain lost ground in the points race. We both put in our fastest times in our eighth and final run, but Tim edged me by less than three one-hundredths of a second for the win. Mel, competing again in his Mini Cooper S, was less than two tenths back to take third place, edging out Karl Hughes in his E30 325 by about five hundredths. The first place finish moved Tim into third place in the season standings, just six points behind Mel with one event remaining.

Our final event of the year was held at Seneca Army Depot. Hopefully, it won't be our last event there, but so far the outlook for holding more events at that great site is looking bleak. This event was also designated Mini Day in recognition of our sponsorship by Towne BMW-MINI. We had thirteen entrants driving Minis and the weather made for a great event. This day it was Tim's turn to have mechanical issues. On his last run of the morning session a hard shift into third locked up the tranny internals but good and his car was done for the day. As the afternoon runs wound down, I felt gracious enough to offer my car for Tim to drive, even sacrificing my last run so that he could go out before everyone else was



finished. It can be a pretty risky move offering a working car to a competitor that's out of contention for the moment. At that point I had just put down the fastest time for BMWs and Mel was just behind with his final run in his Mini. In the back of my mind I felt it would take someone more than three runs to get the hang of driving an M3 at the limit effectively. I may have underestimated the caliber of the driver in this case. Mel and I sat with growing anxiety as we watched Tim's times in his first two runs approach the marks we had set, his second run being faster than both of ours but penalized two seconds each for hitting a couple cones. I was hoping I wouldn't have to apologize to Mel for costing him a position in the season standings by helping Tim. His third run came up a couple tenths of a second short of Mel's and we both breathed a sigh of relief. With all the drama associated with these runs, I failed to notice that Steve Lawless in his M3 took the fastest BMW time on his final run, and with it first place points for the day. It shows how many talented drivers we have in our club when you see how close the finishing times in these events are and the number of different first-place finishers we've had over the course of the year.

When the dust had finally settled from our season of autocross competition, I found myself at the top of the points standings, finally dethroning Tim Moriarty, who has held the Top Gun trophy every year since its inception some eight years or so ago. Tim still managed to edge out Mel for second place season points, even without beating Mel's best time at

the last event.

So now another season is behind us and while we're waiting for the snow to melt, we're also scrambling to see if we can find other suitable sites to continue holding our autocross events. Also during the off season we're making a transition in leadership of the program. I don't have any thoughts of retiring from autocross at this point; however I am turning over the reins of Autocross Chair to Mel Dillon for 2011. I have been honored with the nomination for GVC club president and (with positive election results) am planning to tackle those duties with the same level of attention I have given in running the autocross program for the past four years. I hope I can prove myself worthy of the challenge and privilege.

See you at the races.



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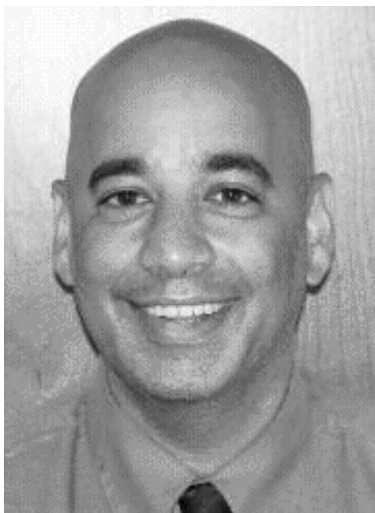


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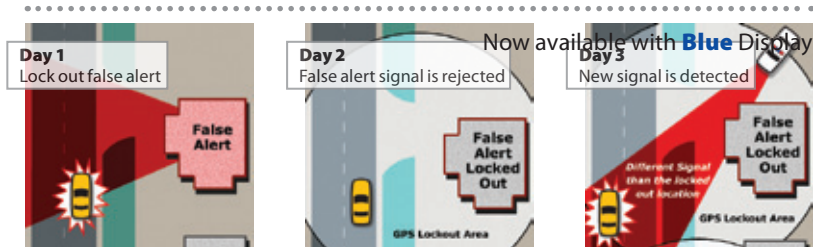
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