

der BAYERISCHE brief

Genesee Valley Chapter
BMW Car Club of America
MARCH 2005





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BMW Car Club of America

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Credits

Images and text with BMW have been taken from the BMW Press Club web site.

Greetings! I hope you had a good winter and are ready for the spring and summer driving seasons. Dusting the BMW off and starting it for the first time if you store it will allow you to put the Porsche back in the garage. As we have seen from the list but it makes a difference where you store your Porsche outside for the winter. Icicles don't just bounce off the body work without leaving a nice impression. We have in the Brief one of our advertisers who can take care of your body work needs and is a club member.

The events at the Glen are sooner than we oftentimes think. Start buying your parts, making recommended repairs and have the car thoroughly inspected at one of the Dealers or Independent Dealers that support your BMW club. We have a list on the Web site or check the advertisements in the Brief. If you choose one of these businesses make sure you tell them your are a GVC BMW CCA member. It is very important that they know the club is supporting them so that they can continue their efforts to help us.

We are looking for volunteers for

various positions in the club and at club events. Pick your favorite event and volunteer by e mailing or calling the Event Chairperson. Keep the Brief handy or look on our website for all our current posted events and contact persons listings.

The Ultimate Driving Schools are for car lovers and offer technical skills as well as social interaction. We offer an outstanding beginners program which will give you skills you can use on the street or use to advance to a higher driving level. If you have never attended one of the Ultimate Driver Schools and have had a secret desire to experience the Track at Watkins go ahead and indulge yourself and sign up for one of the schools. The skills you learn could save your life and the life of your loved ones.

For those who know they are attending the Ultimate Drivers School make sure you read the packet and understand all the information. Communication is the critical element between the School Staff, Driver and Instructor. Understanding the track, corners, layout and track talk are all elements of this line of communication. If you have problems at the track with health, car, parts, etc., talk to your instructor or the event staff so that they can help you have a successful school. Safety is paramount. You are the ultimate person responsible for your car so refresh your knowledge of what is expected of you by reviewing your packet. Thanks to all of you who attend our schools.

We are in the process of digesting our survey so that we can better serve you. The changes to our schedule will be posted in the Brief and on our Web site.

the president's message

by dan mack



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September 17 - 23, 2005

Oktoberfest

Tarheel Chapter BMW CCA



Host Hotel
Sheraton/Koury
Convention Center
Greensboro, North Carolina

Join your BMW friends & family in North Carolina and Southern Virginia for Oktoberfest 2005. Enjoy North Carolina's mild climate, scenic rolling hills and the most amount of paved roads in North America.



Making Memories...
Enjoy sharing all the exciting events planned with your BMW friends.

The host hotel and accommodations are located in Greensboro, NC, a city known for its parks and gardens, upscale shopping and dining, and a growing cultural community, including the professional theater, Triad Stage, the Greensboro Symphony and galleries galore. All track events will take place at the famous **VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY**. VIR is located on 1200 acres of park-like grounds with modern facilities. We'll guarantee the 3.27-mile course, with 20 turns & 130 feet of elevation change, will be a learning experience you'll never forget!



Driving Events will be held at the beautiful Virginia International Raceway in Danville, Virginia

- Events Include:**
- Club Racing**
 - Club Race School & Instructor Orientation**
 - Driver's School**
 - Autocross**
 - Safety School**
 - Motorsport's Banquet**
 - TSD Rally**
 - Concourse**
 - Fun Rally**



BMW CCA Club Race
Watch some of the top talent that CCA Club Racing has to offer.

- Other Events:
- Swap Meet**
 - Vendor Booths**
 - North Carolina Zoo**
 - Shopping** at the Four Season's Town Center (adjacent to the host hotel)
 - Old Salem Tour**
- Enjoy some of North Carolina's famous country roads while taking a **Wine Country Expedition**, many wineries are located very near the famous **Blue Ridge Parkway**.



Fun Rally
Navigate country roads through the foothills of the Blue Ridge Pkwy. & Great Smoky Mountains.

Please join us for this exciting and unforgettable experience.



Safety & Drivers School
Learn car control and what it takes to drive at high speeds at the historic Virginia International Raceway



O'Fest—What It's All About

by Paul Hoecke

By now you should be well aware that we, this Chapter, will be hosting OKTOBERFEST 2005 next September. At least we hope you've heard the news. After all, we did announce this way back in May, and you couldn't have missed subsequent notices—the full-page ad featuring our poster boy, Buff Bimmerhead, in the August Footnotes, or the ads in the Roundel. But ads don't tell the whole story, meaning this message has probably met with a mixed reception.

Clearly, those of us who have attended previous editions of this annual BMW CCA bash (including the one we co-hosted in 2000) know what it's all about, and have greeted the news with considerable pleasure, if not unbridled enthusiasm. Which is only to be expected. Believe you me, once you've been to one or two of these national events you tend to develop a real taste for the experience. But I suspect some members don't share this attitude, while others haven't formed an opinion. And I can't fault either group.

For one thing, it's a safe guess that many of you have never been to any O'fest, and so you're not quite sure what to expect. And there may be some of you who take a ho-hum view of the whole affair. What's the big deal, you might say. After all, you figure, it's only going to be another big gathering of BMW nuts, milling around and talking car talk, sort of like a dealership's open house. Well, let me assure you, it isn't like that. It's bigger and has much more to offer.

So, whichever of these two groups you may fall into, this seems like a good excuse to give you a little preview of what OKTOBERFEST 2005 has in store for you. Mind you, it's just a thumbnail sketch. You can't do an event like that justice in a couple of pages. But we hope it will tell you enough to convince you to attend this great event.

Basically, Oktoberfest is a weeklong national event, an annual gathering for the Club as a whole, a sort of family reunion for Club members from all over the country. Anyway, that's the intent. In practice, attendees tend to come largely from areas within 'reasonable' driving distance from the event site. Which is one reason why Oktoberfest moves around the country from one year to the next; and why there's often a trophy for longest distance driven to O'fest. (Clearly, if it's O'fest, there are always some members who consider a 1,000-plus mile drive quite reasonable!)

Of course, whatever the site, Oktoberfest is always a terrific opportunity to meet Club members from all over, socialize, talk shop, and hobnob with National officers. But its greatest appeal is probably the fact that its activities program has something for everyone. Whether you're a fan of Club Racing, or love driver schools, or prefer other driving events such as autocross, road rallies or tours, O'fest's got it. The same goes if you need tips for maintaining your late-model BMW, or restoring a Classic. All that, and more, takes place under one roof, as it were.

That's the concept behind every O'fest, and a great concept it is. But we—your O'FEST 2005 Committee—feel next year's event will have even greater appeal for you. One big bonus, to start with, is that it's going to happen right here in our own backyard. In other words, your trip to O'fest won't take any more time than a drive to one of our regular chapter events. So what if that takes you out of the running for the long distance trophy. There are lots more trophies to compete for.

What's more, the hotels chosen as O'fest headquarters are centrally located in the Triad, and all activities will be based there or at VIR. Which means most of your driving will be as part of one O'fest event or another, not while commuting between widely scattered event sites. I mean, O'fest is supposed to be fun, not a replay of your daily grind.

But the real treat is the events schedule. Sure, on paper, it looks pretty much like any other O'fest calendar of events. That's by design. But we like to think it's the quality of the sites and events we have scheduled that will make our Oktoberfest stand out. Here's what you can look forward to:

VIR, where OKTOBERFEST 2005 will kick off with a Club Race and a driver school, is arguably one of the nicest tracks in the country. It's challenging, yet safe for drivers, and its park-like layout and modern facilities make it about as spectator-friendly as a racetrack can be. So whether you're driving or watching, you just can't beat a day or two at VIR.

If running solo against the clock is your thing, O'FEST '05 will provide two opportunities to do so – an autocross and a straight-line slalom contest. Having held dozens of such events in our Joe Autocross series over the years, this chapter's experience in this type of competition guarantees you won't be disappointed. And if you prefer doing this in a more sedate, family-style kind of way, we'll have a Gymkhana, too—sort of an autocross and egg race combined. (Don't take this last part too literally. The details haven't been worked out yet.)

Both O'FEST '05 road rallies—a Time/Speed/Distance (TSD) rally for the more serious competitors and a fun rally-cum-tour—will take you into the foothills of the Blue Ridge and the Smoky Mountains. That alone is pretty special. After all, the brilliant spectacle of foliage in the fall is something folks from all over the Eastern Seaboard come to see and enjoy. And having an experienced team of rally planners lay out the rally routes will ensure you'll have a great time, whether you're a novice or an experienced rallyist.

If you're raring to show off your Bimmer to a really big audience, you should enter the O'FEST '05 Concours d'Elegance. It will be held on the spacious grounds of one of the O'fest hotels, the Grandover Resort. As always, it will feature several classes ranging from basic Clean Car to all-out, not a speck inside and out, pristine Concours, with allowances for the age of your BMW. It's an awesome spectacle, to see hundreds of spic and span BMWs, including rare classics, arrayed on the lawn, as crowds of fans stroll leisurely amongst them. We guarantee you'll love the show, the background music, the judging, the festive atmosphere, and the trophies – even if you don't enter your car.

As always, O'FEST '05 will feature two more or less formal dining occasions, the Motorsports Banquet mid-week and the Awards Banquet finale. But the central location of the main O'fest hotel, the Sheraton Four Seasons in Greensboro, will also let you avail yourself of lots of places to eat, drink and socialize between events. And many of them are within the Koury complex itself, just an elevator ride and a short walk from your room.

These are just highlights. Other attractions will include a swap meet; a driver safety school; tech sessions with nationally known BMW experts; a Little Car exhibit featuring collections of BMW models; a photo contest; opportunities to visit nearby attractions or attend a dinner theater presentation; and exhibits and demos by national and local vendors, some of whom—especially Billy Revis of Motorsports Connections—have already been extremely helpful by assisting us in developing our OKTOBERFEST 2005 Campaign. (Thanks, Billy!)

In short, OKTOBERFEST 2005 will be a unique opportunity to savor all the Club has to offer, right here in our state. And it's not too soon to start thinking about attending, since registration forms will start showing up alongside our ads in the Roundel early next spring. Meanwhile, be sure to mark September 17 through 23, 2005 on your calendar. And if you feel like helping us make CAROLINA O'FEST '05 a success as a volunteer worker, contact any Chapter officer. But either way, do make plans to show up!

BMW CCA Membership

Membership cost is only \$35 for one year, \$67 for two years, or \$99 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 63 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.

Contact National Office: BMW CCA,
640 S. Main Street, Suite 201,
Greenville, SC 29601.

questions@bmwcca.org or call 864-250-0022

GVC Board Meeting – 1/19/05 TSX

Business Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

Present: Seth Berlfein, Patty Perkins, Nancy Becker, Dan Mack, Gary Moore, Bill O'Neill, Adrienne Hughes, Mel Dillon, Tim Moriarty, Roy Hopkins, Bill Hicks, Vince Leo, Gary Matteson, Amanda Kellogg, Stu Sacks.

Member Survey (Seth): 830 mailed, about 100 replied to date (13-14%). Seth will send out results as a report before discussion at another board meeting

Driving Schools: Bill will send meeting minutes out from the Planning meeting held last Sunday.

Instructor Training Seminar (Patty): March 12 at Mario's Via Abruzzi. Newsletter (Seth): February 28 next deadline, with end of March target for publication. Finances (Vince): Total revenues 208K, about 11K profit. Compared to previous years, we were in line with revenues from 2001-2002. 2002-3 had extra driving school income and anniversary party expense so these are bad years to compare to. Budget projections are beginning to come together. Year-end balance about \$83K. Since 2000, account is up by about \$20K. Consensus of most experts is to maintain • to 1 year's revenue in reserve. Vince suggested having a 3-5 year budget plan to allow for future capital expenses (e.g., auto-x timing/scoring equip, anniversary parties, etc). Discussed funding a tool library: is there a demand? Are newer cars being worked on by owners? Should discuss in article in newsletter, request opinions.

Autocross: Tim brought hardcopy of auto-x meeting minutes. Six auto-x set for next year, 3 at MCC, 3 at BIMP. BMW CCA auto-x standards are currently under review and taking feedback from chapters. We mostly follow guidelines but we need to upgrade in a few areas, e.g., using wristbands to identify participants. Committee has drafted replies to the guidelines, and will send back to 'CCA. Tim got approval to send dates into Roundel.

Insurance/Roundel: Mel got a promise from 'CCA office that they will finally change the address of the chapter in Roundel. No quotes yet on insurance costs for events. Adrienne mentioned getting the Club Race info into the Roundel along with the info for schools. Annual Meeting: Mar. 5 at Del Monte Inn, Pittsford. Amanda will send out flyer early February. Pancake run is set for April 3. Spring cleanup not set: no venue as yet.

Monthly Meeting: Will become a general meeting, and will move to Pulse nightclub on Scottsville Rd., beginning in April. Meeting will be held every third Wed. of month.

Board Elections: Will be held at annual meeting. Ballot will be made by Mel. Submit nominations to him. Feb. 21 deadline.

Adjourned 7:42 PM

GVC Board Meeting – 2/16/05 TSX

Business Meeting called to order at 6:45 PM by Mel Dillon

Present: Seth Berlfein, Patty Perkins, Nancy Becker, Dan Mack, Gary Moore, Bill O'Neill, Adrienne Hughes, Mel Dillon, Bill Hicks, Gary Matteson, Amanda Kellogg, Chuck DeRoller, Stu Sacks, Dave Lanni.

Financials: Vince filed this report in absentia, prior to meeting.

- All bills have been paid.
- Reimbursements to Jim Dresser and Dave Lanni have been mailed
- The WGI deposit checks have been sent to Dave - he will in-turn send the checks with the contracts.
- The ZF award info was faxed over to National last week which is prior to the 2/15 deadline

Newsletter: Seth reports he received his first article. Deadline at

end of month. Chuck said he might have something, Bill H. said Tim should have autox article/schedule. Bill O. reminded Seth to publish meeting minutes for past 3-4 meetings. Approved ads for TSX.

Survey: Seth reported that the data are not yet compiled.

Respondents at last month's end totaled 170 (considered good for survey).

Annual Meeting: Nancy reported we are indeed having a meeting March 5. Prizes need to be sorted. Mel passed out ballot samples for inspection. Presentation by an un-named source requiring sound system and DVD projection might be negotiated.

Marketing/Advertising: The board wished to thank our advertisers who have donated door prizes for the annual meeting. Chuck is looking for the autox schedule. Will set up a marketing committee meeting to work out details. We are attempting to go "annual" with all our advertisers, except new ones who might want a trial period of one or two issues. T-shirt advertisers for the upcoming driving schools are already up to 4 (of 6). Adrienne volunteered one more (Ekstens). New members to the chapter will be acknowledged in the newsletter, and Dan provided that list to Seth. Bill O. suggested that we advertise when we do charitable events or other public services. Seth was asked if he could do this as newsletter editor, and he agreed. Need contact names in the local press. Marketing meeting Saturday February 19 at Chuck's.

Logo: Gary Moore has revised and updated the logo and everyone who has seen it has been impressed.

Insurance: CCA reported a 15% increase for event insurance. Mel will budget with that figure in mind.

Event calendar: Nancy reviewed the yearly schedule. Tried to settle on a picnic/go-kart date for July 16. Nancy will investigate permit for Egypt Park. Bill chairs pancakes, Dan picnic. Holtz German Marque Car show (Mel): No meetings yet, but target date is early August.

Driving School: Dave reviewed new stipulations from WGI regarding vendors. Logo is usable only with permission, and with royalty fees owed (not a problem for us for our shirts, but would apply to our club paraphernalia if we used WGI trademarks). Chuck will inform HMS to make sure they are aware of fees and licenses. DS dates are now firm, and Dave just got checks from Vince for deposits. WGI will allow camping at any event, but they require \$250 for security. Additional ambulance is \$1000 (up from \$400). Patty says there are presently 40 instructors for the May school. Information regarding the Club support race for Grand Am weekend was erroneous in the Roundel. Vince notified CR via their newsletter. HSR is interested in having us back (June 17-19). Vince says there's no NE CR from mid-May to mid-August, so competition is low for such an event.

Instructor Seminar (March 12): Patty, Jim Tulloch, and Tim Rizzo will be presenting. Patty will review novice classroom, Jim will do advanced, Tim will go over paddock exercises. Nancy will make arrangements with Mario's via Abruzzi for the event. Breakfast at 9:00 – 9:45, meeting begins at 10:00AM.

Audit: Adrienne was asked to audit the checkbook, and she agreed.

Adjourned 8:30 PM

board meeting minutes

by seth
berlfein



The 2005 GVC BMW CCA & Niagara PCA Autocross Series is Taking Shape

By Tim Moriarty

This year's Autocross season is shaping up to be an equal parts parking lot cone maneuvers and closed course track time. We have locked in three dates at MCC and three at Batavia International Motorsport Park (BIMP).

MCC is a family friendly site with a relatively large parking lot that allows us to create a variety of courses to test our cone evading skills. My co-chair Bill Hicks and myself try to set up flowing, road course like tracks that aren't memory tests.

BIMP is a closed course with lots of turns and elevation changes (kind of like a mini-Watkins Glen) that we can gauge our driving progress during the course of the year. Gino and Mike Romeo, the proprietors of BIMP have agreed to rent us go-karts for use during our events at their track. These go-karts are the same go-karts used in BIMP's Mini Indy League (for details on BIMP's Mini Indy League go to www.bataviamotorsports.com). We will run the go-karts as a separate class. BIMP will also have their concession stand open for our convenience.

We welcome back Towne BMW - Mini for a second year as a series sponsor and, at this writing are working with Holtz Porsche to return for their fourth year.



Last year, mother nature, or more precisely, the weatherman was not very good to us. For virtually every event, the weather forecast was miserable. But, for all the predicted gloom and doom, we ran less than a half an event in the rain. The bottom line is we run rain or shine and to be honest, you can learn a lot more about car control when it's wet. You reach the limits of traction at much lower speeds in the wet. This allows you to teeter on the edge of control at a much tamer speed. So, this year if the weatherman calls for rain, look at it as a learning opportunity and come on out, I guarantee it will be exciting!

We will be running BMW, Porsche and Other Classes again this year but we will be adding a Race Prep Class to even the playing field a bit. The details are still being ironed out but the intent is to break out the highly modified cars (like mine!) so that the more "stock" vehicles can be competitive amongst themselves. We will continue the Top Gun Championship this year, details to follow.

The schedule looks like this:

Date	Location
April 17th	BIMP
May 29th	MCC
June 26th	MCC
July 23rd	BIMP
August 14th	MCC
September 17th	BIMP

So mark your calendars and come on out and see what you can do against the clock and while your at it pick up a great series t-shirt from T-Shirt Express. Entry fees for all events will be \$20 for club members and \$25 for non-members. Go-kart rental at BIMP will be an additional \$15.



As always we can use your help, programs like this take a huge effort to put on and run smoothly. Simple things like picking up cones at the end of the day or helping with setup in the morning makes the day more enjoyable for everyone.

Anyone that is planning to be at a majority of the events and would like to take on one of the Chiefs of Specialties (Registration, Timing, Tech, Course Work,...) please contact Bill Hicks at 585-594-1622 (whicks2@rochester.rr.com) or myself at 585-723-4617 (tgmsm@frontiernet.net).

Keep an eye on the GVC web site www.gvc-bmwcca.org for details.

Meeting Notice

The April general membership meeting will be held on Wednesday the 20th from 6:00 to 9:00 at Pulse nightclub at 1509 Scottsville Road. Pulse will be open exclusively to Genesee Valley members and their guests. Genesee Valley will be providing Pizza and Pulse will have full bar service available. This is a new location for the monthly meeting and we hope to see a lot of members!

Come on down! Renew old relationships and find out what everyone has been doing to stave off cabin fever during the winter months. We are looking for ideas on monthly meeting themes. Come and share your ideas!



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Buying From A Dealer - YIKES!

by Gail Davis

I have bought a lot of cars in the 40 + years I have had my license, and most of those times I bought from a dealer have not been pleasant. For the last 15 years or so, I have only bought cars from other Chapter members and have been very happy with those experiences. Try buying a car from Joe Ajavon, for example! He used to get mad at me if I took my 633 csi to Eksten's instead of calling him if anything went wrong in all the years I had it!

This year my winter VW Golf was trying to tell me it was tired. 155,000 miles, most of them in the snow...and frankly, I was not looking forward to getting into the car each morning and driving in the dark and the snow to get to work. I had a happy co-worker, however, who always showed up with a smile on her face to tell me what a great ride she had on her way to work in her new Mini Cooper.

That did it! I was off to Towne Mini in Williamsville. Normally, I would not plug a dealership, and this is not an ad. But I was treated so well that there are barely words for it. I called first to see if they had any used Minis. Cars.com showed none within 250 miles of home, so I did not expect much, but they had just had one come in at the end of a lease to trade in on a new one. I told the salesman, Greg, that I would be in on Saturday if the weather was not too bad. He said that was the best time to test drive a Mini, so Kurt and I headed west into the worst storm of the winter to look at this car. Through near zero visibility and lots of snow and ice, Greg navigated and I drove (with only one "interesting" corner!); I quick-



ly realized that this is a great car in the snow, and it did not even have snow tires on it. Greg even gave me some good autocross tips ("You can downshift into first at 15 mph to get out of the corners quickly.") for the upcoming season.

I told Greg that I had not worked with a deal-

er in a long time and I didn't want any heavy duty negotiating. Just tell me the lowest price on this car and I'll tell you if I will buy it for that. With one trip to the back office, he gave me a firm price and I bought the car. We said we'd be back the next Saturday to pick it up. When we got there, our "new" car was all dolled up and facing out in the very front of the showroom. Kurt nearly walked right past it thinking it was a new showroom car. Greg gave us a couple of T-shirts and sent us off with big grins. A few days later, I received a gift in the mail...a personalized Mini Cooper mug filled with candy (how did he know??).

So now every day has a reason to get up at 5:00 am and I look forward to the snowy drive! And in the summer...BIMP, here we come!

APRIL

3, Sunday. Annual Pancake Breakfast Drive: Join us for our annual spirited drive to scenic Short Tract, NY, in southern Livingston County to enjoy pancakes and fresh maple syrup at the famous Maple Tree Inn. For those of you in the Rochester metro area, we will be departing from the Rush Park & Ride off Exit 11 of I390 (first exit south of the NYS Thruway) at 8:30 AM sharp. (Please try to be there at 8:15, we will leave at 8:30) We will convoy down I390 to Mt. Morris, where we will then take back roads the rest of the way to the restaurant.

The drive down will be spirited, but not wildly extra-legal, in the hope of getting to the place early enough to avoid a long wait to be seated.

The restaurant serves pancakes and appropriate side-dishes family style, and it's all you can eat for about \$5.00. The pancakes and maple syrup are first-class.

Following breakfast, those inclined to enjoy the scenery of Livingston County can follow us up to nearby Letchworth State Park, the "Grand Canyon of the East", for a quiet drive through the park, stopping to see the spectacular sites along the Genesee River gorge. The Upper, Middle, and Lower Falls are at there most spectacular during the spring thaw, and shouldn't be missed. The tour will end in early afternoon with a drive home to Rochester via Geneseo.

Be prepared for some muddy and unpaved roads on the drive (i.e., leave the concours car at home, and bring the winter rat). Also bring lots of warm clothes and footwear that can get muddy, even if it seems like the weather will be warm. It can still be real cold in Short Tract even if it seems warm in Rochester, as those who have done this before will attest.

The event runs rain or shine.

Contact Bill O'Neill by email or phone for further details, or if you want to make your way down to the restaurant on your own and need a map sent to you beforehand.

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17, Sunday. Autocross at BIMP: See page 8 for details.

MAY

14-15, Sat-Sun. Ultimate Driving School at Watkins Glen: We will accept 130 students for this school. Students accepted into this school must fit into one of the following run groups: Very Advanced 'A' Group (25+ days), Advanced 'B' Group (16-25 days), Intermediate 'C' Group (5-15 Days), or Novice 'D' Group (0-4 Days). The number of days of experience is approximate and will also be based on your past evaluations. Cost for this schools is \$375 (BMW Club Member Price), and includes Saturday night hospitality and one of our famous 'Ultimate Driving School' T-shirts. The Novice Group will also participate in 'safety school' exercises. *Mail your application in on Friday, April 8th.*

29, Sunday. Autocross at MCC: See page 8 for details.

JUNE

26, Sunday. Autocross at MCC: See page 8 for details.

JULY

16, Saturday. GVC Annual Picnic: White Brook Park, 250 Aldrich Road in Perinton

10

the
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Motor Racing in Paradise

by Chuck Denoller

The idyllic isles of Polynesia- Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji. The mere mention of these iconic locations evokes dreams of endless beaches, palm trees swaying in the breeze, and brilliant blue seas. Truly an adventurers' paradise, ideal for diving, sailing, and a romantic getaway. A land where snow is known only from childhood textbooks, and men wear lava lava skirts. A place where time has stood still, excepting the visits by lavish cruise ships. But on the island of Viti Levu in Fiji lurks a well known western-society evil- motor racing.

Viti Levu, the main island of Fiji, is roughly the size of Rhode Island and is the home to roughly half of Fiji's 700,000 inhabitants. The interior is made up of great volcanic peaks, covered by dense, unexplored tropical rainforest. The island is ringed by a single road, known as the Queen's Road on the south side, and King's Road on the north side. The capital, Suva, is an airline hub for the South Pacific, and the primary stop for cruise ships. Suva is a busy town, with fine dining, paved roads, and Holiday Inn style accommodations. The remainder of the island, and the country, is far more rustic and relaxed.

I first met the brothers Autar (Arvind and Mohit) quite by accident a few years ago when Arvind saw my MZ3 on my computer. "We race cars here too", he said. Yeah, right. Well, my American ignorance was soon to be proven wrong. You see, the Fiji Car Club (politically correct motto: "Better Skills, Safer Driving") is alive and well. After all, if one lives with beaches and palm trees, that may be the last thing one wants to do on the weekend.

It turns out that motor racing has a cult following in Fiji, as most anywhere else. They have two courses, an autocross course and a drag strip. While not what one would expect in USA, they certainly do the job!

The autocross course is not built for your average Miata. The base is dirt, and cut over a meter deep through the field as a result of so much use. Sporting tight turns, long straights, and challenging water pits, it is not for those who want to keep the car neat and clean. No cones here- only dirt berms. To go off course means you've got some major work to do.

By far more popular, the drag strip is located in Pacific Harbor, about half way between Nadi and Suva. Actually, it's a public road which parallels the main Queen's Road along the coast. Lined by coconut trees, it's definitely not something you'd see in USA- Ralph Nader would have a conniption. But the idea is the same- warm up the tires, tree goes green, then run as fast as possible! While



nobody has gone off in recent memory, no doubt if it happens it will be a mercifully short end. And it sure as heck makes a beautiful setting for a race.

The Autar brothers live in a modest home in the suburbs. Arvind, the FCC secretary, does the planning. Mohit, the primary wrencher and driver, is an auto mechanics instructor at Fiji Institute of Technology. They are car fanatics. In fact, they can't tell you how many cars they have. Driving throughout the Suva area, they constantly point out vehicles stored on other properties. Minis galore, a Nissan 240, ex-police motorcycles, fire trucks, etc. If they can buy it, they do. There's no stopping these auto gluttons. Their garage is a simple steel roofed open-air bure, loaded with motors, transmissions, and everything you can imagine. Want a Dual Solex or Weber Side Draft? Got it. 318 block? Got that too. Everything imaginable under the tropical sun. Lighting is provided by one 25 watt fluorescent tube and handheld lights. No air tools, no power tools. Yet in this hidden workshop miracles are performed. For example, in four hours we once converted a Toyota twin turbo rice rocket into a Solex dual carb setup. This required a hand-made aluminum intake manifold "adapter", carb connections, etc. They are truly amazingly adaptive at creating what is needed- with bare minimum tools. And it works.

Avondale Motors is a windshield and radiator shop in Suva owned by Dev Singh's family. Certainly not a tourist destination, it is missed by serious automotive collectors and

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motorheads arriving on cruise ships from Australia and New Zealand. The proof is in the inventory. You see, until 30 years ago Fiji was a protectorate/territory of England. During those colonial times, the few imported cars were of Australian origin- Holdens (GM) and Aussie Fords. At the time, Holdens were essentially Aussie-built Chevells/Skylark chassis with monster Detroit engines. Once Fiji became independent, the ex-pats left, and Fiji was on its own. Avondale at the time stocked replacement Holden parts- and still does; the same ones they had in 1972. The place is a museum of high performance Holden parts, along with rare fenders, lights, and other parts that are virtually non-existent today in Australia. If Dev were to Ebay this stuff, he could retire, but he's so nonplussed about it, and after all, this is Fiji...

The Queen's Road from Nadi to Suva is some 180km of twisting blind turns with great elevation changes. Definitely a tarmac rally driver's paradise. Running along the southern coast, the views of both inland mountains and 500 foot drops to breaking surf are fabulous. Unfortunately, it was cut through coastal villages which have installed speed humps. When the sign says "30 kph" they mean it; bottoming out after running one of the humps earns some mighty nasty looks from the villagers. Double yellow lines are a suggestion, and passing on blind corners is a regular occurrence- traffic will politely part to let you through.

The speed limit is 80 kph, roughly 50mph. Traffic and speed laws are enforced by police with radar. The road patrol has but two brightly marked Mitsubishis donated by the New Zealand government, of which they are very proud. Realistically, most experienced drivers could outrun these Mitsus, but the police maintain barricades in front of the roadside police stations along the way. Facing a 6-foot, four-inch Fijian policeman weighing 350 pounds and armed with a Daewoo K2 machinegun is not what one wants to do.

Many of the performance vehicles in Fiji are either seventies-vintage Holden or Mopar muscle cars, or Japanese auctioned late-vintage rice rockets. FCC's members race everything from Minis to Nissans. Viti Levu even has a Porsche 928 and an E46 M3 that participate in the races. Generally though, most race cars are hybrid mis-

matches of whatever happens to be available on the island.

Things are different here. We were once brainstorming overheating problems on a second generation RX-7. The exhaust manifold glowed a brilliant cherry red. Maybe it was because the motor wasn't the stock 13B, but a Chevy 350 with a B&M supercharger and nitrous? Tauz, the owner told me of a time he was in the rain, motor-ing too fast down a hill into Suva and spun the car. Didn't the police have a problem with that, I asked? No, he's the head of the Fiji National Traffic Safety Authority!

Besides the gorgeous Queen's road, the northern King's Road offers magnificent coastal views as well as journeys through the interior. As of a couple years ago, most of it was unpaved. Tourist books caution people about treacherous driving conditions, including one-lane wood bridges over rivers. Preparing to drive from Rakiraki to Suva, some 70 miles, the hotel proprietor told me the King's Road would be rough, but safe, as long as it didn't rain, and it hadn't rained in three months. Of course, that night a monsoon came through. Starting off, I picked up a young Fijian hitchhiker (it's both safe and legal) and proceeded. The road was an absolute wreck, with running water over some sections of the mud road. I can still hear the BANG CLUNK of rocks in the mud pounding into the undercarriage. There was only one way to get through some sections- full throttle. I rounded one 90 degree turn with the car in a nice drift, only to be dumped on a one-lane bridge slightly off angle. The tire hit the 2x4 on the side, which bounced us over to the other side, but the car got straight and we made it (six months later a bus did the same thing, and went over. A half-dozen people died in the flooded river). Even during quieter moments, I couldn't get my poor passenger to converse. He was scared almost to death. Ultimately, a rock in the mud separated the exhaust, terminating conversation. An inadvertent drift into a tree left a divot in the front fender. Some three hours later, we made it into Korovu outside of Suva, where my quiet passenger meekly disembarked with nary a "Bula". Arriving at the Holiday Inn Suva, \$2 got the rental car washed, and Avis never mentioned the exhaust or dents.

The Sigatoka river, half way between

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Suva and Nadi (and filming site of the new "Anaconda" movie) offers a great drive inland. The eastern dirt road has been dubbed by my tourist friends as "The Sigatoka River Rally" for the way we thrash our rental cars through the water traps and wood bridges.

Heading into Suva one time at only 20kph over speed, I was flagged down by a Arvind and FCC friends going in the opposite direction at a good 100mph. How the recognized me in a rental, I don't know. They had a new toy- a GTech- which they didn't know how to operate. I explained the mechanics of a GTech to my friends, and they ran a couple 16.5 quarters. Jumping in with the owner, I ran a few 15.3 quarters with the transmission in death's quarters. Now it was their turn. Saving weight, I got out, and watched them run a few 15.1 quarters. A native, Josepha, returning from the bush dropped his batch of coconuts and asked what we were doing. He watched a few runs. Then, not quite understanding, he retrieved his coconut batch and machete, and disappeared into the jungle. We went on to Autar's garage to swap the Toyota's fuel injection for the twin-Solex carb. No doubt Josepha relaxed with a traditional meal of coconut, fish and rice to watch the sunset over Suva Bay.

Most people visit Fiji by air or cruise ship. Should you have the occasion, rent a car and drive it. Remember, Fiji is a former British colony, so driving is on the right. Driving habits may seem at first dangerous (OK, they are by our standards) but you'll quickly learn that drivers are courteous and friendly. Just keep your eyes off the sights, and on the road. And if you happen into Suva, make sure you drop by Avondale Motors to say "Bula Bula!".

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Stephen Polizzi
Eric Potts
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Sheridan Vincent

GVC Monthly Board Meeting & New Member Meet and Greet

Date: Wednesday, April 20th 2005
Time: 6pm to 9pm
Place: Pulse Night Club
1509 Scottsville Rd.
Rochester, NY
Cost: FREE

Attention ALL GVC club members, you are cordially invited to join us for a New Member Meet and Greet/Open board meeting. (Plus, check out the new GVC monthly board meeting location!) Meet other BMW enthusiasts and the GVC Board, learn more about the club, the various sub-committees, 2005 events, and how to get involved. Refreshments and appetizers will be provided. Check out the GVC website at <http://www.gvc-bmwcca.org/> for more details. Please RSVP to akellog2@rochester.rr.com or call 585-415-3261.

Yes folks it's true after 9 years Doug Hood has "retired" as Editor & Art Director of our Newsletter, and I've agreed to take over. Doug will be sorely missed and I've got huge shoes to fill, so please bear with me as I get my feet wet.

As you know we have recently conducted a membership survey and the results will be published in the next issue. At this time I'd like to conduct an unofficial opinion poll regarding this Newsletter. Please tell me what you like, what you don't like, and what new topics you'd like covered. Don't hold back, give me the good, the bad, and the ugly; remember this newsletter belongs to all of us. Please send your comments to me at: m6seth@frontier-net.net. Any member can submit an article or photo for publication. The deadline for the June issue is May 31th. Please send your submissions to my email address above.

One of the changes I'm planning to make is an Editors / Editorial column in each issue. I don't plan on making it "too" controversial. I'll mostly be talking about car related topics and what's going on nationally. So for my first column I'll tell you a little bit about myself. I moved to Rochester in 1993 and work for Xerox as a Financial Systems Analyst. My car at that time was a 1987 Acura Integra, Gray 4 door hatchback. I Loved that car, never had a problem until the timing belt broke at 120K miles on Interstate 90 in Syracuse. A sad demise for a great car. I then purchased a 1997 Acura Integra, a white 2 door hatchback, another great car until two accidents latter; I was rear ended on the Throgs Neck Bridge by a guy in a Honda Mini van. The damage was severe, but I managed to drive home. Funny how people keep there distance when the car their following has rear end damage. Then about a year later a 16 year old girl driving in the opposite direction turned in front of me going through an intersection. My right front hit her right side from fender to fender. After that, the car was never the same so I sold it and went 6 weeks with no car at all. At that point I decided to upgrade - too old for the import seen.

I've been a member of GVC for 3 years, I joined after purchasing my first BMW, a 2002 330Ci (the blue one with the Dinan badge on the trunk). My salesman (yes he is a male) as part of his sales pitch, talked about the local chapter of the BMW CCA, and their driving schools at Watkins Glen. I thought cool, drive as fast as you can, on a real race track, and with no cops, can't be true. Well I was wrong, it is true, as I hope most of you have discovered for yourselves.

Well after 3 years and 20 days at Watkins Glen I've reached the point where I needed to make a decision; keep modifying my daily driver or bite the bullet and build a track car. I'll let you know my decision in the next issue.

new
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der BAYERISCHE brief

March 2005
Volume 48 • Issue 1

classifieds

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