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Driver School at
New Jersey Motorsport Park



Photos by Paul Ngai

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The Cone Catcher

By Larry Engel

It's late Saturday afternoon and the lights just went out. The only things working are battery operated stuff and candles. I was watching the Rutgers game, but since that requires electricity and cable, I'm doing the next best thing - writing this column. (If you believe that...) My laptop has a full charge, and the column is due in a week, anyway. I might as well get to it.

Life wasn't interesting enough, so we're having what will surely be known as the "great October storm". A good old fashioned nor'easter has blown up along the coast just as cold air has approached from the west. Although the initial estimates called for two to four inches here in central Jersey suburban paradise, there's already five or six on the ground and no end in sight. The biggest problem is that the trees still hold most of their leaves, and branches are snapping with dizzying frequency. Our power held until about 5:00 this evening, but I knew we were electrified on borrowed time.

I ordered a winter wheel and tire package from TireRack this past Wednesday. Much to my surprise, it arrived on my doorstep Thursday afternoon. Logistics are impressive at TireRack, thanks to UPS. I marvel at how technology allows me to track my shipment at every step of the way. First of all, I was pretty impressed that after speaking to Ben on the sales desk at a little after 2:00 in the afternoon, my Blizzak WS-70's had been mounted on Rial Salerno wheels along with TPMS monitors, balanced with the latest road force equipment, and sent out the door of their Delaware warehouse by the end of the business day.

UPS acknowledged receipt at their Lawnside, NJ operation later that evening. At about 1:30 AM Thursday, the wheels and tires left Lawnside and arrived at Bound Brook at 3:14 AM. They were out for delivery a little after 5:00AM and on my doorstep by 2:30 that afternoon. Aside from the speed and efficiency of processing and delivering my order, it dawned on me that there were probably a lot of people literally up all night to make it happen.

People were up all night so that I could have my winter tire package on a late October afternoon and be ready for the Great October Storm. All I had to do was throw them on the car and I'd be ready for anything Mother Nature could throw at me. Do you think I put them on the car? Of course not, they're sitting in a pile in my garage and it's snowing like mad! On Thursday I was thinking I'd look silly driving around in a car with snow tires in October. Oh, well. I guess I have a reference point to compare the snow tires to.

I'll have to stop writing now and finish this column at a later date. I have to batten down the hatches for what might be a long, cold adventure.....

.....I'm back. It's the following Friday and I'm writing this at 6:30 AM in a dark hotel room in Dunn, NC. We spent the night here; Karin's still sleeping and the M3 is snoozing in the parking lot. We're not here because we couldn't stand the screwy New Jersey weather anymore and decided to head south. We're on our way to Hilton Head on a previously planned trip to see the Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance. BMW is the featured marque, and it's nice to find warmer weather.

We were fairly lucky with the snow storm. Our power was out for about 28 hours, just enough time to make everything in the freezer thaw beyond the safe point. We hadn't fully restocked after Irene, so we didn't have too much to throw out.

The X3 was superb in the snow, even without the winter tires. I was able to drive a little bit on unplowed streets and I was really impressed with how well the X-drive controls the car. I almost couldn't tell I was on snow, and I had to keep reminding myself to take it easy because I didn't know how well the all season tires would grip under braking.

One of the reasons I bought the X3 was so I could throw the snow blower in the back and drive to my mother's house to clear the driveway and walk. It turned out to be a very tight fit. The frame of the hatch

contacts the chute when closed. I'll try to cut a half inch off the plastic adjusting blade on top of the chute, and it should take care of the problem. Hopefully I won't need to use the snow blower too much this year, but I have a feeling that it's wishful thinking.

On this trip we've taken the M3 because it seems more fitting when attending a BMW event where their racing heritage will be celebrated. The M3 is a comfortable cruiser, but I ordered it lightly optioned and the better equipped X3 has spoiled me after only six months. Two options in particular that I already miss are the navigation system and Sirius radio. We sat in bumper to bumper traffic for 70 minutes on I-95 in Virginia yesterday, while they cleared the road of a tractor trailer that had lost its load of coiled metal. The nav system on the X3 would have warned us of the delay and rerouted us around it. The portable unit in the M3 doesn't have that feature.

I've been spoiled with Sirius, too. It's a nice change of pace when I get tired of hearing the same CDs all the time. We were able to entertain ourselves by playing Pandora though Karin's I-phone and hooking it into the car's sound system. For those of you who like music and haven't tried Pandora, it's a phenomenal system. You enter an artist's name and it will play songs by that artist, as well as songs by other artists that are somehow related musically to the one you chose. It's very cool. The only problem is that it requires a good cell signal, and it began to fade when we entered areas where our carrier has thin coverage. Despite this, it may bring me to the thing I've been resisting. I may have to get an I-phone for myself.

Aside from those two deficiencies, there's only one other problem with the M3 - it's the only car I've ever owned that needs to stop more often than I do on a road trip. It loves gasoline. 22 MPG on a trip is the price you pay for 414 rip-snorting horses under the hood. For this car, five hours is the practical fill-up interval. The X3 can probably go two hours longer without needing a fill-up.

On the plus side, there aren't many cars that have the range of capabilities possessed by the M3. Three weeks ago I was using it to tear around Lightning Raceway at speeds up to 140 mph. This week we're using it to carry us in comfort on a long road trip, and we'll be able to provide two additional passengers with a door of their own - should the need arise. The only things I changed to turn it into an uber-capable track car were the brake pads and the tires.

The E90 M3 went out of production last month. Although the coupe and convertible will be made in 2012, you won't be able to buy a new M3 sedan for a couple of years. They've just introduced the next generation 3 Series sedan, and you'll be able to buy one next spring. If history is a guide, you'll be able to buy the M3 version in a couple of years. It probably won't have the wonderful (if thirsty) S-65 4 liter V-8 that defines the current generation. In this day and age it's pretty difficult to have your cake and eat it, too. I'm personally a little concerned about some of the rumors about the next generation M3's power plant. I know it will probably be turbocharged, but I hope BMW doesn't go where Buick was 30 years ago by blowing a V-6. It just wouldn't seem right. I'm hoping that if it's 6 cylinders, they're all in a row. If they bring a V-6, they know they'll have their work cut out for them trying to convince the true faithful that it was the right thing to do.

At any rate, enough with the editorializing! What does my opinion count for, anyway? From all of us on the NJ BMW CCA Board, we wish you and yours a very healthy and happy Holiday season! Until next time, keep the cones standing!





Philes' Forum

By Vic Lucariello

Hello, Bimmerphiles! With this column, *Philes' Forum* has been appearing in the NJ Bulletin for *twenty-five* years! Be sure not to miss the commemorative column in the January, 2010 NJ Bulletin!

If perchance you fail the NJMVC emissions inspection, I would very much like to receive a copy of the inspection report. You can either mail a photocopy of your report (preferred), or simply email the test data. (Include your name, too, if you want to be famous and be mentioned in *Philes' Forum*!) Please include both the test results for each pollutant along with your exact model (e.g., 328i, not 3-Series) and year, transmission type, and mileage. If you know at what mileages your oxygen sensors and spark plugs were last replaced, include that as well. For OBDII failures, please include the trouble codes. Please indicate what, if any, modifications have been made to your motor (aftermarket "chip" or software, intake, exhaust, etc.).

The last three installments of *Philes'* were devoted to brake-fluid bleeding and flushing. From reader feedback it seems that these columns were among the most popular in the history of the column. By this I mean that I actually received a few emails commenting on the columns or, better yet, asking questions. Hardly a groundswell of response, but appreciated nonetheless.

So, I am willing to risk the wrath of my readership by devoting yet another column to brake fluid; this time to brake-fluid testing.

The main point of the "brake-fluid" columns is that the DOT [Department of Transportation] 3 and 4 brake fluids found in virtually every vehicle on the road are *hygroscopic*, meaning that they tend to absorb moisture. Given that a new, quality brake fluid will have a boiling point of over 500 F [degrees Fahrenheit] and that water of course boils at 212 F, as the moisture content of the fluid increases, its boiling point should decrease. In stopping your Bimmer, your brakes get hot as they convert the vehicle's energy of motion [kinetic energy to you tech-types] into heat. If the brakes get hot enough to boil the brake fluid in your calipers, you will experience a low, "spongy" brake pedal. Or, in the extreme case, no pedal at all! This is much more likely to happen at the race track than on the street, where successive hard stops are the exception rather than the rule for most of us.

For many years I have been wondering about a number of things concerning brake fluid, such as:

- How quickly does the boiling point degrade with time?
- Does it degrade more quickly in the vehicle as opposed to in an opened but capped container?
- How much does the boiling point degrade over time when the brake fluid is left in its original sealed container?
- Just how high is the boiling point of the expensive, "boutique" brake fluids?
- Does an expensive fluid's boiling point decrease more quickly than the boiling points of lesser fluids?
- How much variation is there in the "right-out-of-the-can" boiling point of various fluids?
- Does brake fluid in metal cans degrade less quickly "on the shelf" than brake fluid that comes in "plastic" bottles?
- Does brake fluid have a "shelf life"?

Recently I found a device that may be able to answer some of these, and other, brake-fluid questions. It is the "OTC Brake Fluid Safety Meter" shown in Photo #1. Unlike other available devices which infer the water content [hence the approximate expected degradation of boiling point] of brake fluid either by sensing electrical conductivity or by refractive methods, the OTC device actually boils a sample of brake fluid to determine its boiling point. There are also brake fluid "test

strips" that sense the change in chemical composition of brake fluid as it ages, but these strips are aimed more towards predicting the increased brake-system corrosion that is associated with aging brake fluid.

Although the OTC meter does not provide scientific levels of precision



Photo #1 — OTC Brake Fluid Safety Meter

and accuracy, results thus far suggest that we will get some answers to the questions posed above. I will have the meter at all NJ Chapter driver schools, where on a *strictly voluntary basis*, we will test your brake fluid if you are interested. Let me emphasize that this will be entirely voluntary, and for yours and our information only. I can assure you that the fluid that gets tested the most is mine!

Also, if there is interest, I can bring the meter to monthly meetings.

If you would like to have your fluid tested [it takes about a minute], please email me. You can also bring a sample of brake fluid for testing. When erstwhile treasurer and inveterate Tech worker Warren Brown found out about the tester, he immediately brought me 4 different samples of brake fluid [some new, some used] to test!

While I have not yet accumulated sufficient data to draw many conclusions, as we have been told, brake fluid boiling point does in fact decrease with time in service. Thus far, the best fresh fluids I have tested indicate boiling points of 520 F or more. The worst used fluid so far? I'm glad you asked: 326 F [No, it wasn't one of my cars.] Which fluid would you rather have in your car??

That's all for now Bimmerphiles, see you next time!

Anyone wishing to contribute to *Philes' Forum* can contact me at vic.sr@njbmwcca.org. I'm interested in tech tips, repair /maintenance questions, repair horror stories, emissions-inspection sagas, product evaluations, etc.

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Finish Lines

By Thom Rossi

Regrets, I've had a few. Example? I wish I had grown my hair into dreadlocks back when I still had hair. I also wish I had the creativity to figure out what kind of tattoo to get when I was in my 20's back when nobody was getting tattoos. But more relevant to this column, I wish I hadn't sold my E30 KP race car this past Spring.

I had a theory, of course. When I originally took on the new race car build I had every intention of building to the HP class in BMW CCA. My plan was simple: fix the body damage on the rolled e46 M3 I had bought - bringing it up to racing standard cosmetics; strip the interior; throw in a cage; bolt on a new exhaust; add cams; a suspension, and; drive. Target build completion: April 2011.

According to that plan, selling the E30 when I did made perfect sense. I was to use the money from that sale to pay for the body work or perhaps the complete suspension. I wouldn't need the E30 because I'd be out on the track soon enough with the new car. I didn't want to campaign in two classes and didn't want to have to maintain two race cars. I didn't see the point of trying one last time for the KP national championship since I had been relegated two years in a row to runner up by the faster car/driver combo of John Negus in his KP E30.

Of course, that's not what actually happened. I started talking with the "wrong people" about my project. The more we talked, the more I realized that the prepared class had too many limitations that I didn't want to live with. Can't tie the roll cage into the front shock towers, can't have remote reservoir shocks, can't do this, can't do that. Bummer. Maybe my biggest mistake was talking to David Weaver. If you don't know David, maybe the best way I can describe him is to recommend that you watch the show "Junkyard Warriors". It's a perfect fit for his creative personality. He treats the world of e-bay as his personal junkyard.

One day I got an e-mail from David with an e-bay link to a BMW factory body with roll cage, for sale cheap as an unused leftover from a Grand Am racing team. I figure that was the inflection point that tipped the whole project away from its originally intended direction. The cage design was not legal for the prepared class. Buying, transporting, and modifying the cage to suit my purposes was cheaper by far than doing the repair work on the body I already had and building a roll cage from scratch. This line of reasoning was my "gateway drug" getting me hooked on a much more elaborate, costly, and time consuming, build than I had originally envisioned. Not that I regret that at all, it's just my explanation for how things got on a different track.

I originally planned on selling the E30 in the fall of 2010. But, there were precious few buyers with serious interest when I started advertising. E-bay was a disaster for me. Three times I tried various

approaches on reserves, no-reserves, buy-it-now pricing, etc... Each time, the auctions got "punked" by phony buyers who managed to put a winning bid in at the last minute and followed up with e-mails explaining that they couldn't pay by PayPal or money order because they were "in France on an extended business trip", "on a cruise ship for the next three weeks", or otherwise "unable to get access to a US bank". But if I could kindly let them know where to pick up the "wonderful item" their "agents" would be happy to show up check in hand. The best one infused a sense of urgency into taking delivery of the wonderful item because it was a gift for their aging and frail father who always "wanted one". Awww, what a nice sentiment. In the end, e-bay worked, but only because the buyer contacted me outside of e-bay and we did the transaction 1:1. By that time, I was happy to meet the one person in the country who was not a charlatan running an e-bay scam and with a genuine interest in the car. So I figured the right time to sell the car was the exact moment when I could find a buyer. That was early in the Spring.



I occasionally get reports on the health status of the old number 34. The new owner is a member at NJMP and every once in a while Larry Engel reports back on a sighting. Last I heard, she broke another rocker arm. I must admit, I miss her.

The regrets piled up higher when I started thinking about what might have been. Recently, I was watching a video on line of some spec E30

guys dicing it up. Oh man, I wanted to be in that crowd so bad - and I could have been had I kept number 34 and converted her to comply with Spec E30. To add to my regrets, I see that John Negus didn't campaign his KP car this year. So this might have been my chance to grab the national championship for once. Drats! That's the way the cookie crumbles, I guess.

Have I had regrets about the build itself: only a few small ones. For example, I wish I hadn't sold the steering wheel before the crashed body was permanently in place in the garage bay. Mrs. R. was stubbornly uncooperative when I asked her to stand next to the front tires and kick them into position so I could line the car up to get it on the lift. She got a good laugh out of seeing me do it, though. Yes. Regrets, I've had a few. But I did it... my way.

Driver School Report – Finishing with a Flourish

For the third year in a row we ended the Driver School season with our Introduction to the Track event on the Lightning track at New Jersey Motorsports Park. While in previous years this was a single day event, this year we had the opportunity to structure it as a two-day event on Sunday and Monday Oct. 16-17. Two-day events are favored by our experienced drivers and this was amply demonstrated by registrations that filled all three experienced student run groups. Moreover, the two-day structure allowed us to offer both a 1-day or 2-day option for the first-timers. The effect of this was that we could accommodate a greater number of first-time students than we had the previous two years: 44 total first-timers! So, those students who could not take a Monday off work, came down just for Sunday, other students were able to take advantage of the lower registration fee for Monday-only and the truly wise (or fortunate) who were able to attend both days experienced first-hand the exponential rise in skill that happens when students can work for two days.

For those who do not know, this event is designed to help people who are interested in track events, get over that first hurdle and give driver schools a try. The “first-timers” have a dedicated run group so that they are on track with only other first-timers. We have separate classroom sessions for these students and have car control exercises in the skid pad area of the paddock so that students can experience concepts such as weight transfer, oversteer and understeer at low speeds in a safe, controlled environment. Students are able to learn the terminology of braking point, turn-in, apex, track-out and then translate the excellent classroom instruction provided by Richmond Shreve to the “real-world” of driving on the track. Speeds started slow but by the end of the day, the group had spread out and everyone was driving at a good pace. Not surprisingly, at our end-of-the day wrap-up sessions, every student remarked how much fun they had, how much they learned and how amazed they were at what they and their car could do on the track. These are the reasons we hold this event. If you are thinking about coming to the track but are hesitant, I urge you to talk to other members who have taken the plunge. You won’t regret it.

Not to be outdone by the novice students, our experienced students

had an equally great time. The combination of near perfect weather, well-spaced run groups and an absence of incidents made for the ideal way to end the 2011 driving season. Rounding out the event was a Sunday evening dinner held at the NJMP clubhouse. Students and instructors swapped stories and told tall tales over a beverage, or two, and a nice dinner.

To gain a better appreciation for the success of this event, a review of some numbers is in order. In addition to the 44 first-time students, we had 60 experienced students for a total of 104. Our instructors showed up in record numbers such that 59 instructors were available for on-track, skid-pad and classroom instruction. Both of these figures exceed by far any of the other events we held in 2011. Looking beyond simple registration numbers, of the approximately 150 cars that were used on the track, there were 15 different marques and just within BMW there were 24 different models. This is a huge testimony both to our excellent crew of Tech workers, who were able to get all of the cars through Tech with minimal delays, and to our instructors who are able to help students regardless of the car they drive. Compare this to what we, as a chapter, did 25 years ago when students were only allowed to drive BMWs and there were perhaps 5-7 different models at any given event.

We also want to give a special thank-you to our sponsor for this event: Plymouth Rock Assurance (formerly known as High Point Insurance). Their sponsorship is a key factor in being able to offer the school with pricing that encourages first-timers to attend.

And so our spectacularly successful 2011 driving season is over. I want to thank every student who attended a school this year, all of our tireless and dedicated instructors and, most particularly, the volunteer workers without whom none of this would be possible. Planning for 2012 is already underway; please watch the chapter website and the newsletter for schedule announcements. Have a great holiday off-season (a new helmet, driving gloves or shoes are great gift ideas). I look forward to seeing everyone back at Lightning in the Spring.

Jeff White



Photos by Paul Ngai



Flemington BMW Hosts Ultimate Meeting

Flemington BMW hosted the New Jersey Chapter in mid-October for what turned out to be a memorable chapter meeting. The evening began with a catered dinner, continued with a tour of the dealership's impressive facility, went on with a presentation by BMW North America M brand manager Matt Russell, and ended with a drawing that sent three members home with M watches and sent one very lucky member to Spartanburg for a BMW driving school.

When visitors arrived at the dealership on Route 202 in Flemington they were invited to park their cars indoors for display. Among the stellar array of cars on hand were two 1M coupes, a row representing three generations of 5-Series cars, several M3s, some nicely turned out E30s, and a Z4 2.8 roadster (a BMW press car brought by Roundel and Bimmer scribe David Haueter). Matt Russell brought one of the 1M coupes. It was the first example in the country, repainted at the port as soon as it came off the boat (overspray clearly visible under the hood), and then driven to Daytona by Russell, where it served as the pace car for the Rolex 24.

After parking their cars, members found their way into the dealership's huge showroom, where tables were set up for dinner amidst a selection of cars from Flemington's inventory.

Dinner was followed by a tour of the facility conducted by general manager Byron T. Brisby, Jr. and service manager Mike Riccardi. Members saw the indoor parking area for service, the state-of-the-art shop (heated by used oil as part of the dealership's green presence), the showroom, the comfortable waiting area for service customers, and

the parts department, which was open for business with member discounts in place.

Members were then escorted downstairs to a meeting/training room for Matt Russell's presentation. Matt, an active Jersey chapter member, talked about the M-car market, his trip to Daytona in the 1M, and current and future offerings from M. He then fielded questions from the audience.

After the talk it was back upstairs for the drawing for an exceptional assortment of prizes. The grand prize, a BMW 101 experience in Spartanburg, went to Charles Craig, who had just completed his first New Jersey Chapter driving school at New Jersey Motorsports Park. His BMW 101 Experience will include a two-hour technical briefing about current BMW models, two hours of on-track driving with a BMW instructor, and a two hour tour of the Spartanburg Assembly plant and Museum. Air travel, a one- night hotel stay, and lunch were part of the package.

Once the drawing was completed members went into the area where the cars were parked for a group shot and some informal conversation. It was a nice way to wind down a great evening at Flemington BMW. If you missed it, you can check out the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aOK7JGDhfw>.

The chapter would like to thank Byron Brisby, Jr., Mike Riccardi, Matt Russell, and all of the people at the dealership who helped put on what had to be the ultimate chapter meeting.



So many smiles.

Members and staff pose at the end of a great evening.



Charles Craig won the grand prize; a BMW 101 experience in Spartanburg.



M brand manager Matt Russell addressed the members and answered questions.

Photos by Brian Morgan



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NJ CHAPTER CALENDAR

January 2012

Wednesday, January 25th

Our January meeting will be at Unique Photo in Fairfield NJ (123 Rt 46W). Klaus Schnitzer - chief photographer for Roundel magazine will be our guest speaker. Klaus is a wonderful speaker and his slide shows are truly amazing with photos of BMWs all over the world. Please come out and join us. Meeting starts at 7:00pm.

February 2012

Tuesday, February 21st

Union Police will present at the Deutscher Club in Clark NJ.

March 2012

Saturday, March 24th

Meeting at the BMW Vehicle Distribution Center in Jersey City. Pre-registered members only. Details to follow.



NJ BULLETIN STAFF

EDITOR Jerry Faber
jerryfaber@njbmwcca.org
TECH EDITOR Vic Lucariello
vic.sr@njbmwcca.org
BUSINESS MANAGER Douglas Feigel
douglasfeigel@njbmwcca.org

CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Larry Engel
larryengel@njbmwcca.org
VICE PRESIDENT Paul Ngai
pkngai@yahoo.com
DRIVING EVENTS Jamie Kavalieros
jimkavo@optonline.net
SOCIAL EVENTS Al Drugos
glad1auto@netzero.net
TREASURER Mark Mallory
mm9516@att.com
SECRETARY David Allaway
david@allaway.us
WEBMASTER Colin Vozeh
colin@availabledark.com
MEMBER AT LARGE Douglas Feigel
douglasfeigel@njbmwcca.org
MEMBER AT LARGE Deb Kolar
deborahkolar@yahoo.com
MEMBER AT LARGE Jeff White
jwhite@njbmwcca.org
MEMBER AT LARGE Ross Karlin
rosskarlin@njbmwcca.org

CHAPTER TOOLBOX

ken@bimmertools.com
MEMBERSHIP Neil Gambony
neilgambony@njbmwcca.org
DEALER LIASON Douglas Feigel
douglasfeigel@njbmwcca.org
LEGAL COUNSEL Brian Corrigan
briancm3racer@aol.com
CHAPTER LIBRARY Neil Gambony
neilgambony@njbmwcca.org
TECH TIPS Vic Lucariello
vic.sr@njbmwcca.org

DRIVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Chairman Jeff White
Chief Tech Advisor Vic Lucariello
Chief Instructor Barry Stevens
barrystevens@njbmwcca.org
Registrar Jamie Kavalieros
jimkavo@optonline.net
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Member Warren Brown
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Chairman Ross Karlin
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Vic Lucariello

AUTOCROSS COMMITTEE

Elihu Savad drautox@comcast.net
Brent Jerolomic autox@bjerols.com
Chris Graf frafff1@gmail.com
David Ngo dnto@commvault.com
Douglas Feigel douglas2499@gmail.com
Ed Walters edw@teamdfl.com
Ivan LeGrand ivanlegrand@gmail.com
Jim Kavalieros jimkavo@optonline.net
Larry Engel larryengel@njbmwcca.org
Mark Mallory mmallory@att.com
Mo Karamat manko@optonline.net
Robert Steele steele@whafh.com
Steve Pulvers sbpulvers@msn.com
Walter Baliko balticvid@msn.com

HOTLINE: 908-322-2758

<http://www.njbmwcca.org>

Deutscher Club (DC)



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MEMBERSHIP MEETING INFORMATION

The New Jersey Chapter's monthly membership meetings begin at 8pm and are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Deutscher Club of Clark. However, special topics often result in a different date and/or location. Please check the calendar of upcoming events (or the Club's website).

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

All membership applications, renewals, and address changes can be done via the BMW CCA National website: www.bmwcca.org or can be sent to:

BMW CCA National Office, 640 South Main Street, Suite 201, Greenville, SC 29601
800-878-9292 (Mastercard or Visa)

Annual BMW CCA and New Jersey Chapter dues: \$48.00.

New Jersey Chapter Dues and Bulletin Subscription ("dual citizenship" for primary members of other chapters): \$15.30.

Please do not send applications, renewals, and address changes to the newsletter, the PO Box or any of the club's officers; contact the National office. Members of other BMW CCA local chapters may additionally join the New Jersey Chapter. Contact the National BMW CCA office for details.

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