



# NEWSWERKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHAPTER BMW CCA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005

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## MPG in Your BMW

by Doug Wittkowski

So you would like to get maximum miles per gallon with your BMW. First of all, pat yourself on the back for driving a BMW to begin with and not caving into the recent mad rush to three-ton SUVs and trucks. Most of us enjoy very good mileage in the 20-30+ mpg even for M model BMWs. Here are a few tips to get the maximum from your gallon of petrol.

**#1** Something we should all be watching regardless of gas prices is our **Tire Pressure**. Having properly inflated tires reduces rolling resistance and thus increases gas mileage. I recommend setting your tire pressure to the maximum pressure printed on the door sticker for your model. That goes for any tire or wheel combination you have on your car.

**#2** is your **Air Filter**. When was the last time you changed yours? No, blowing the chunks out or taping it on the ground is not the same as replacement. The big particles are easy to see, the small dust particles are the ones that restrict your airflow. Replace that filter or consider a high-performance permanent foam replacement that really gets the job done.

**#3** is your **Wheel Alignment**. Yes, you read that correctly. If your wheels are out of alignment you are in effect dragging them along, thus increasing rolling resistance and using power and fuel inefficiently.

**#4** is **Oil and Lubricants**. Using high-quality synthetic lubricants reduces frictional losses, generates horsepower, and increases mileage. Use the lightest weight synthetic motor oil your

car is approved to use. Use approved synthetic lubricants in your transmission and rear axle.

**#5** is **Engine Tune**. Not much to go wrong here, but for peak efficiency in BMWs with 60k+ miles, spark plugs and fresh post-catalytic converter oxygen sensors will allow your engine to run correctly and increase mileage.

**#6** is your **Driving Style**. Do not let your car idle to warm up. Start your car and gently drive away ASAP. The quicker your car's engine and engine management system gets up to operating temperature the better. By the way, idling when the car is warm uses very minimum amounts of fuel, so that is not a big deal.

**#7** Roll up those windows! Your car is designed aerodynamically to run on the highway with all windows closed. Believe me, it is much cheaper to run the HVAC system than upset the aerodynamics with open windows.

And the final tip is smooth driving when the goal is driving for mileage or lap times. Anticipating when you will need to stop or turn, thinking ahead. Accelerate slowly, deliberately, and evenly while getting the car into top gear as quickly as possible.

You can also learn to bump-draft semi trailers on I-80, slip your car into neutral on long hills, or lower your car to the ground to avoid lift, but that is taking it to unsafe extremes, gas isn't that expensive... YET.

## Member Marketplace

Pre-Owned Vehicles, Parts, and Accessories for Sale by Club Members

### VEHICLES FOR SALE

**1995 BMW M3**, Concours Show Car – **Rare** individual with many special features 22k miles  
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**2000 BMW 323Ci WBABM3349YJN85600**, Silver / Black Leather, 29k miles, CPO. Premium, Sport, and Cold weather packages, CD Changer, Navigation, Xenon, Steptronic, No mods or track. Extremely nice, all records and manuals. \$25,000. Dale at 515-238-9118

**2001 BMW 530** White/Black, 5 speed, 47K miles, CPO, Premium & Cold Weather package, CD changer, new tires. \$27,500. Dave at 866-395-9121 or cell 319-350-3000

**2001 Porsche Boxster S**, 6 speed, Meridian Silver w/ black interior. 24K miles – [www.eurowerkzlc.com](http://www.eurowerkzlc.com)

### PARTS & ACCESSORIES FOR SALE

**Set of 4 15" steel wheels & BMW wheelcovers** in good shape for E36 3 Series. Fitted with 185-65 Blizzak winter tires w/some tread left \$100 OBO Steve at 402-690-8655 or [stevewilliams@ced9671.com](mailto:stevewilliams@ced9671.com)

**Track Tires and Wheels New BF Goodrich Comp T/A R1's 235/245/45/17** [new] mounted on excellent stock E36 M3 double spoke staggered wheels, picture available \$1,000 shipping included. Contact David 319-362-9076 or [djiruska@yahoo.com](mailto:djiruska@yahoo.com)

### MARKETPLACE REQUIREMENTS

- Marketplace classified ads are free to club members. Send your ad to: [wittawerks@lisco.com](mailto:wittawerks@lisco.com)
- **NEWSWERKS** is published six times per year and ads must be received by the 10th of the month for placement in the next issue. Please include your membership number.

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

## BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter Issues Call for Nominations to its Board of Directors

As outlined in the Chapter bylaws, BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter encourages members to nominate individuals to serve on its Board of Directors. There are four officer positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer and three At-Large positions.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors or would like to nominate a fellow club member, please submit your nomination via mail or e-mail to the Chapter's Secretary, David Trachtenberg at: 3514 SE 20th Street, Des Moines, IA 50320; or via e-mail at: [david.trachtenberg@mchsi.com](mailto:david.trachtenberg@mchsi.com)

## NEWSWERKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHAPTER BMW CCA

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To become a member of the Iowa Chapter BMW CCA visit our Web site at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org)

Please submit material suitable for publication to: Martha Wittkowski at: [wittawerks@lisco.com](mailto:wittawerks@lisco.com)

## 2005 Street Survival & Safety School

The teens and adults that attended the Street Survival and Safety School had a very educational and fun Saturday in September. As one father and club member reported after the event:

"At times we put on events, and it's hard to tell how well they're received. Not this time. I just about had to pick my daughter up and throw her in the trunk to get her to come to today's event. She hasn't stopped talking about today's activities since she got home. She not only feels more confident behind the wheel, but I can tell that she is actually starting to enjoy driving. My hat is off to all of you that helped put on this event, and a special thanks to Don, Jordan's wonderful instructor. If you've accomplished nothing else today, know that you made a difference in a kid's life."

Need we say more?

A special thank you to our local sponsor EuropeanMotorcars Des Moines, the National BMW CCA Foundation, and the instructors and "worker bees" for making this event possible.



**"At times, we put on events, and it's hard to tell how well they're received. Not this time... If you've accomplished nothing else today, know that you made a difference in a kid's life."**





## BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter Helps Hurricane Katrina Victims

Following Hurricane Katrina, the Board of Directors of the BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter held a special board meeting to discuss what the club could do to help those affected by this disaster. It was decided that we should contact a couple of the Bayou Chapter members to see if the club needed any specific help or if they had a club member and family that needed help. After several e-mails back and forth, the Bayou Chapter recommended that our donation would do the most good if given to Heart to Heart International. This organization was on site in Louisiana and Texas providing aid and medical care to the victims of the hurricane.

Based on their recommendation, the Iowa Chapter made a \$500 donation in honor of the Bayou Chapter BMW CCA to Heart to Heart International. One can only imagine the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina, but we know that our donation was put to good use and helped Heart to Heart provide emergency medical services to thousands of people.

Our thoughts continue to be with the people of the Gulf Coast region.

## BMW Winter Checklist

by Doug Wittkowski

Yes, our favorite time of year is just around the corner. Is your BMW ready for winter? We'll assume all the major things are up to snuff. Here is the mandatory checklist for great winter driving.

**#1** The most important thing you can do for your safety as well as for pure fun is to install winter tires on your BMW. Forget the all-season tires, they are helpless on a BMW in the winter. Buy and install four winter tires and you will be able to enjoy the great BMW balance and handling all winter long. Go for the most aggressive traction compound you can find, this is the upper Midwest after all. You might even leave the family SUV parked all winter. Yes, BMWs are that good on snow and ice with the proper tires installed.

**#2** Have your battery checked. Most modern batteries are over taxed these days with all the electrical loads we place on them. Have your BMW battery tested before the sub-zero weather hits. Better yet, if it is over four years old, just replace it for peace of mind.

**#3** Have a small survival kit in your car. Nothing major, but at the minimum, a cell phone with recharger, some emergency phone numbers, a bottle or two of water, a small first aid kit, some energy bars, a blanket and a pint of Brandy...

**#4** Driving skills. Did you forget what you learned during last year's winter driving? Smooth is fast and smooth is also mandatory for driving on snow and ice. I didn't see any BMWs in the ditch last winter. Please leave that to the over-confident drivers in the four-wheel drive trucks and SUVs for this winter. Read point number one again and enjoy your winter.

# Homecoming 2005

story and photos by Lynne and Fred Bell



Want a change from the usual Labor Day picnics? Ever wonder where your Z3 or Z4 really came from? Check out Homecoming. Not your high school or college homecoming – this is Roadster Homecoming. Held in Greenville/Spartanburg, SC at the BMW factory and environs, this is a return for your baby to where it was born. It's a three-day bash for all Z3 and M roadster and coupe owners, along with the Z4s. (There were a couple of Z8s there too, but they really can't claim Spartanburg as home!) The good folks at BMW NA and the factory host all this, taking care of about 500 cars and an almost equal number of couples descending on Spartanburg each Labor Day weekend. Homecoming kicks off with a reception on Thursday night, and concludes with a lunch gathering on Sunday before everyone heads back home again.

From Des Moines, it's about an 1,100-mile jaunt. This year's weather made the event a little dicey as well. Katrina roared through the Gulf on the Sunday before we left home, and the remnants were still pushing up through Indiana and Ohio as we passed through the area on the following Wednesday. Its after-effects on drivers are well known now – mainly gas price roulette. If you didn't like the price one place, try a couple blocks down the street and it might be 20 cents a gallon cheaper - or not! We found very few shortages, but one place in South Carolina had only regular available. Other attendees said they found entire towns without gas on their way through Virginia and the Carolinas. Still, it was a pleasant trip except for the persistent pain in the wallet. A three-day transit from home meant enough time along the way to stop for visits with friends, a little sightseeing in Kentucky (bourbon, anyone?), and even a little fishing in Tennessee.

Since this was a driving trip, we had to do a little spirited driving – in this case, the Tail of the Dragon. The Dragon is a section of US Highway 129, featuring 318 turns in 11 miles of Great Smoky Mountains road in Tennessee and North Carolina. Many Homecoming attendees plan their trip to include the Dragon as part of the itinerary, in some cases doing it both directions! We didn't see any other cars heading for Spartanburg on our trip until we got to Knoxville TN, about an hour away from the Dragon. We then met up

with an M Roadster that was coming out the west side on Thursday morning, clearly ready to do the return trip back east on the Dragon or on the similarly curvy Cherohala Skyway that roughly parallels it, in time to get to Spartanburg for happy hour. We also met a group of 10 or so Alabama Z3s and Z4s at a scenic turnout near the top of the pass. Members told us that they do this side trip every year on the way to Homecoming – and it sure seemed like it, from the way they pulled away on the remainder of the run!

At the headquarters hotel in Greenville, we were greeted by the sight of at least a couple hundred Z3s and Z4s, and a handful of coupes clustered together. We of course took our M Coupe over to Coupeville, got unloaded, and checked in at the opening reception. This was just the first of several functions hosted by the factory team. It was obvious that many of the attendees knew each other from previous Homecomings, and many are members of ZSCCA, the Z-Series Car Club of America. Interestingly, there was little BMW CCA presence. We saw few members of other CCA chapters that we knew, probably because our biggest interaction with other chapters is from driving schools, and roadsters for the most part do not participate in those events.

Friday's and Saturday's events are selected ahead of time by the participants. We chose a factory and Zentrum (museum) tour for Friday morning, to be followed by a little time at the Performance Center that afternoon. If you've never done a BMW factory tour, it's way better than your average American, tort-lawyer-proofed, once-over-lightly-from-a-goodly-distance sort of tour. Here, you're right up close and personal with the assembly process – so much so that one person in our group was jumping back from the welders' flying sparks!

We grabbed a quick lunch at the factory cafeteria after the tour, then joined the throng of factory techs and HC visitors drooling over the entryway decorations: a new Rolls Royce! The factory employees were every bit as curious as any of us car club aficionados, poking and peering and playing with knobs.

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## Homecoming 2005

story and photos by Lynne and Fred Bell (continued from page 5)



We got chatting with one tech around the Rolls, who gave us a little bit of Homecoming history. One of the usual Saturday events is the Tech Tent, where factory techs work on HC cars to fix whatever ails them – all free of charge! He said that in earlier years, the techs just ran back into the factory to grab whatever parts they needed – even an entire instrument panel in one case. With the changeover to the Z4, the factory no longer has Z3 parts on hand, and the dreaded corporate controls have cut back on the largesse somewhat, but the Tech Tent still survives. All the techs at the Tech Tent volunteer their time, giving up a Saturday on a holiday weekend. This was the first of several examples we saw about how unique the relationship between the factory folks and the car owners is. Can you imagine any other carmaker whose employees would donate their time just to be with and help out owners of their factory's product?

The Performance Center event is a highlight for many attendees. It's a two-hour session, either using your own car or one from the Center's fleet. We elected to use up BMWs gas, so after a 30-minute quickie classroom on car dynamics, similar to what we teach in Street Survival safety schools, the group was sent out to do a couple laps in X3s and X5s on the all-terrain (read: obstacle) course. The next exercise was a mini-autocross in the Center's 330s, and then a cat-and-mouse competition using SMG-equipped Z4s starting on opposite sides of a wet-down elliptical course. Autocross awards are handed out at the closing banquet. We can proudly report that one of your humble scribes not only won the heat in the Z4, but also took third in class on the autocross, while the other barely squeezed any of the color out of the armrest of the X3!

Friday night's dinner was at the hotel and features live music and dancing for those so inclined. It's a good opportunity to meet other attendees and find out some of the event history. Homecoming has been held for nine years, started by a small group of Atlanta Z3

owners who thought it might be fun to go back to the factory over Labor Day weekend the year after the plant opened in 1996. Someone at BMW NA said yes to the idea, and it's been going ever since, getting a little bigger and more organized each time.

Saturday's highlight is a panoramic shot of all the cars, arranged on the factory lawn. With 500 cars, finding yourself in the photo later is challenging unless you're up front, so competition for those spots is fierce. There is a charity raffle for several of the front spots, and some people also head out to the factory right after the end of the Friday night shindig (sobriety check, please!) to spend the night to get a good spot in line. Of course, others play the game by getting there right before the picture is taken, and sometimes that garners a front spot too, just because it's the easiest place to add one more car! Ours was placed back somewhere approaching North Carolina, I believe... Anyway, the photographers do another panoramic shot just for our little fraternity of coupes, and with only 26 of us, it was quite a bit more cozy.



Besides the Tech Tent time, we also got some other work done with the help of fellow enthusiasts. All Z3 variants have a known problem with rubber bushings in the power seat tracks wearing out prematurely, causing a back-and-forth seat movement as the car starts and stops. A Texas owner came up with a fix using Delrin bushings, which he has manufactured and provided free for anyone who asked. We got back to the hotel on Saturday afternoon to find perhaps a half dozen cars lined up at the curb outside, with assorted seats and parts scattered about the lawn, and owners replacing the bushings. We talked to a couple of the folks involved, and they offered up tools, bushings, and help if we wanted to give it a go. Since Lynne had been complaining about the passenger seat sliding a bit while we were on the Dragon, we decided to have at it. In less than an hour, we'd pulled out the seat, vacuumed up all the stray

popcorn and pocketed the loose change, taken apart the seat track mechanisms and replaced the bushings, and put it all back together in good working order. Many thanks to the guys from Ohio and Texas that helped us – another example of the spirit that pervades Homecoming as well as our club.

Saturday night's banquet is held at the factory floor, in this case at the site of the old Z3 body shop. There's such a sense of history and relationship with the owner group and BMW Manufacturing, that the factory delayed the installation of new equipment in that area of the plant for a week just to keep it clear for the banquet. The theme for the evening was 60's and 70's, so a number of attendees showed up in beads, headbands, leisure suits, and similar weird attire. Even the "suits" on hand from BMW in Germany participated in the theme – quite entertaining to see the expected stolid Germans in hippie garb, grooving away to the band with the best of them. Kenn Sparks, director of corporate communications for BMW at Spartanburg, hosted the event, and he's a master at the mike. Noteworthy among his comments was that they had allowed 518 entrants this year, and this was the first year that the factory had not been able to get everyone off of the waiting list and into the event. He discussed the issue with colleagues in Munich, and was asked about cutting back on advertising to keep the growth under control. The problem: Homecoming has NEVER been advertised; it's gotten around the



country from its Atlanta origins strictly by word of mouth. Signup was online, the first Saturday in June, and all 500 spots were gone in a few hours. Another banquet event is recognition of participants who have attended multiple times. Perhaps 20 percent of the crowd was at their first, as we were, but many have attended multiple times, and about 25 had gone to all nine events. Due to location, the group is tilted toward the South, however one of the convoys attending HC came from the West Coast, making a three-week trip focused around the three days in South Carolina. That's a lot of time in a two-seater with a trunk the size of the Z3!

*continues on page 10*



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# Calendar of Events > November 2005-June 2006

Events, Club activities and all happenings BMW

**Saturday, November 12, 2005**

**Annual Holiday Party – Social and Charity Event**

Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center  
5291 Stoney Creek Court, Johnston  
(I-80 and 86th Street – North of Wynnsong movie complex)  
Event begins at 7:30 p.m.

Event Chairman and Chef Extraordinaire, Don VanLengen will be catering the event and your first beverage is on the Club. Holiday desserts will be auctioned off to benefit Animal Lifeline of Iowa, a special needs, no-kill animal shelter.

**Cost:** \$10 per person donation to Animal Lifeline or bring items from their wish list ([www.animal-lifeline.com](http://www.animal-lifeline.com))

**RSVP by:** Monday, November 7 to Don at: [dvanlengen@mchsi.com](mailto:dvanlengen@mchsi.com)

**Saturday, January 28, 2006**

**Third Annual Chili Cookoff**

Coe College, Clark Alumni House  
1220 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids  
Bring your best chili for a little friendly competition or join us to vote for your favorite. A great social event

**Cost:** Free will donation to go to a charity selected by the event chair. Four categories: Red Chili, Exotic, Best Display and Chairperson's Award  
Setup from 10 a.m. to Noon; Judging (and tasting) at Noon; Awards Presentation at 2:30 p.m.

**RSVP to:** Mike Bengel at [mdbenge@mchsi.com](mailto:mdbenge@mchsi.com)

**Saturday, February 18, 2006**

**Annual Meeting & Banquet**

Holiday Inn at the Amana Colonies  
5:30 p.m.

**March 23-26, 2006**

Gateway Tech – Everything BMW  
25th Anniversary – Hosted by St. Louis Chapter BMW CCA  
St. Charles Convention Center, St. Charles, MO

**April 8 – 9, 2006**

Missouri Valley Chapter BMW CCA Driving School  
Mid America Motorplex, Pacific Junction, IA

**May 2006**

Annual Clean Car Concours

**June 9 – 11, 2006**

Iowa Chapter Longest Day Driving School  
Mid America Motorplex, Pacific Junction, IA

Updated information will be posted on the website as it becomes available. Be sure to check for current information at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org)  
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## Homecoming 2005

story and photos by Lynne and Fred Bell (continued from page 7)



People headed out on Sunday, including an optional trip through the mountains up to Brevard, NC for those whose routes can accommodate the side jaunt. Brevard is a quiet resort town known for its music camp. They close off the entire main drag downtown for the benefit of the Homecoming group, so Z3s and Z4s are parked side by side for several blocks. Participants can just stroll around, examine any unusual (car) specimens not seen in the previous couple days, get a little lunch, and generally kick back before starting the drive for home. Another 1,100 miles, some more sightseeing, some more fishing (OK, not catching), and we were home on Tuesday.

Homecoming is a great event, and the camaraderie between owners and Spartanburg factory people at all levels has to be seen to be understood. Owners aren't just customers, they're part of the family. It's well worth the amount of driving to do the event, and we'll certainly be back again. If you want to sign up, keep an eye on the Homecoming website, [www.bmwroadsterhomecoming.com](http://www.bmwroadsterhomecoming.com), in the spring. Somewhere in April or May, they'll post the date when registration will open. On the registration date, you sign up for the event, the sessions you want to do when you get there (tours, Performance Center, etc.) pay them a whole \$40.00 per car, and you're set.

By the way, that's all the factory charges – you pay for your own hotel, and of course all the transportation, but the factory covers the two big dinner parties, the reception, a memento for each registrant, the Tech Tent, the tours et. al., all for the one fee. Fun with cars, great people, fun with cars, food, fun with cars, free car repairs, fun with cars – what a deal!

### Photography notes:

**Page 5** > Panographic shot of the 2005 Homecoming attendees

**Page 6** > Left: Z series BMWs line the streets

**Page 7** > Right: A Brevard Z coupe

**Page 8** > A BMW 507 display inside the Zentrum

**Page 10** > The Zentrum Museum

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