



# NEWSWERKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHAPTER BMW CCA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

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## Message from the President

by Dana Schrader

As my tenure as President draws to a close, I wanted to share with you what a wonderful time I have had representing the club and how I appreciate all the support given to me during the past three years. I am proud of what we have accomplished and hope you are as excited about the club as I am. I've decided it's time to step aside, but don't worry, I do enjoy being involved with the club and will continue to stay involved in other ways.

As I attempted to put together a "fantastic" final article, I am amazed at just how much has happened since the Iowa Chapter was resurrected in 1999. Everyone involved has done a fabulous job. The accomplishments of the club are noticeable because of those involved and I think the results speak for themselves. The passion and commitment of the club members never ceases to amaze me.

As I've stated many times before, this club is about the members. I hope every club member feels that we are doing the types of events that they can get to participate in and get involved with. Over the past few years, we have tried to diversify the number and type of events we do. Please continue to make the Board aware of

what you want your club to be. I have met many new people over the past six years as a direct result of my involvement with the club. I've made many new friends and it is a great group of people. I hope many more of you are able to say the same.

I would also like to take this opportunity to again thank EuropeanMotorcars Des Moines (EMC) for all they have done over the years for our chapter. Whether through purchasing club memberships for new BMW car buyers, discounts on parts and labor, sponsorship of events, hosting events or donating door prizes, their support has been instrumental in the growth of the club. My personal thanks go to EMC and specifically Robert Cuillo and Dave Dean for all of their support.

My biggest thanks go to my fellow chapter Board members who have managed to put up with me. Their support and encouragement has been humbling. It has been a wonderful experience and one that I will not soon forget.

Thank you!

## Iowa Chapter Shirts for Sale

Iowa Chapter shirts are available for sale in limited quantities and sizes. All styles have the chapter logo embroidered on them.

Unisex sweatshirts in royal blue or copper are \$29; Unisex mock neck long-sleeved tees in navy

blue are \$25; and women's ribbed long-sleeved tees in light blue or red are \$24.

Contact Martha at [wittawerks@lisco.com](mailto:wittawerks@lisco.com) for more information or to purchase.

# Member Marketplace

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

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**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)

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**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)

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## 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.
- Members may also post their ads on the Chapter's Web site forum at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org)

## NEWSWERKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHAPTER BMW CCA

NEWSWERKS is published by VIVAMEDIA, Inc. for the Iowa Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America.

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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)

# If Not a BMW, Then What?

by Doug Wittkowski

I have been accused of being too much of a BMW junkie, even to the point of being accused of not being able to admit that there are other great cars in the world besides BMWs or at the very least from Germany. Well, in an attempt to show that I do indeed keep abreast of what is out there, here is my list of notable non-BMWs in various market segments. Keep in mind that I have not always been a BMW-phile. Some of us are just slow learners.

**Sports Sedan:** So much competition in this class of cars. Notable makers include Lexus, Infiniti and Audi. However, the Acura TL with the S package is quite an impressive car. I have always thought that Honda was the Japanese company that really came close to "getting it." This car is a winner for sure.

**Luxury Sedan:** In the luxury cruiser category Mercedes was once the world standard, bar none, no contest. I think they are on a comeback now that they have gotten over the financial drain (read mistake) of buying Chrysler. However, The Lexus LS 430 is *the* car in this class and it is easy to see why. Unflappable reliability, supreme comfort, a sound system second to none, and all at a very reasonable price. Now, if it only had some soul.

**Coupe:** Unlike the sedan class there are very few notables that match up or even come close to their BMW counterparts. Therefore by way of slight default, as well as being a capable entry in its own right, both in the coupe and sedan category...the winner is the Infiniti G-35. Expect the next generation to be even better.

**Performance bang for the buck:** This was without a doubt my most difficult category to make a call. At one time, not too long ago, it this was a war against the Ford Mustang GT and its many performance derivatives and

the Chevrolet Corvette. Two of our countries favorites for sure, but something strange has happened to both that eliminated them from serious consideration. The Mustang, the car I grew up loving and working on has gone retro and downscale.

When I saw that they went back to the low-tech solid-axle rear suspension, even in the upcoming high-performance models I had to say Nein! Certainly a good car for the money, but a solid axle in 2005? Oh, General Motors? Once the 800 lb. gorilla of the auto industry and now just a shadow of itself. May you rest in peace. The Corvette has now officially become a limited production play thing for the so-called engineers at General Motors. Nothing wrong with that, except instead of costing a few thousand dollars more than the Mustang, prices range from the high 40's to near \$70k? Yes, the new Z-06 puts out some great numbers, but have you looked at the depreciation schedules for recent Corvettes? This might well be the most expensive sports car in the world to own when it is all said and done. I'm sorry, I will not join the bandwagon on this one. This is a CHEVROLET folks, a \$70k friggin' Chevrolet? My recent experience in a C6 Corvette was so disappointing from a quality standpoint that I cannot put it into words, and at those prices if the thing gave free rides to the moon and back it wouldn't be worthy of that price. So, without further ranting, the clear winner in this category is again, Japanese. See a trend here? The Subaru WRX STI is without doubt the super deal in a performance car. I'm not wild about the styling, but take one for a drive sometime. Check that sticker? Enough said.

**Fun Car:** Okay I said no BMWs and officially it is not, but this, unlike the previous category, was oh so easy. The Mini Cooper S! What a car, cute, quick, high level of quality, great craftsmanship, unbelievably roomy despite its

size. A completely loaded S model for the mid-20's and the highest resale value percentage of any car sold in America, making it the one and only NEW car I would recommend to buy. What's not to like?

**Pickup Truck:** I'm safe in this category, as BMW does not make a pickup. I have done more time in pickups than I care to remember, but there is only one pickup truck, if you really need a truck, and unfortunately we all do from time to time. The Ford F series is the hands down winner in every category from luxury daily driver to trailer hauling hulkster. Finally, a domestic winner! But wait, there's some extremely formidable competition from Japan and soon from Korea. This will very soon be a hard fought battle for a winner. Place your bets?

**SUV:** Sorry, I don't do SUVs, EVER!

**Minivan:** Read above.

**Sports Car:** Of all the categories covered, isn't this the one that really matters? I mean, do we fantasize about driving a sedan when there is a sports car in our dream car garage? Again, we can talk about Ferraris on the high price end and the Miata on the low. We can compare claimed Nurburing lap times and horsepower to weight ratios until we are blue in the face. All said and done there is really only one sports car built by a company that until recently had never built anything else (read big mistake). From James Dean to Tom Cruise who said it correctly, "There is no substitute..." Porsche and notably the newest 911 Carrera rein supreme as a no-holes-barred sports car. Looking for a great luxury ride or a trick navigation system? This is not your car. Looking for something to drive to work and back and take to the track on the same day for some very quick laps (also, read M3)? The Porsche 911 and all its many derivatives win. *The* sports car in 1956 and in 2006.



## BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter Fall Color Tour

Great cars, great people, great food and great wine. What more could you ask for? The fall colors were not quite at their peak, but the roads were great and the weekend is now a wonderful memory for those who attended. The addition of visiting some local area wineries made the trip very interesting and exciting. It was decided that we really don't go on the fall color tour to see the color of the leaves – we go for the driving and to commiserate with our fellow club members. Next year's event is already being planned, so mark you calendars for October 14 and 15 and get ready for a fantastic time!

## 2005 Holiday Party

The Annual Holiday Party was held on November 12 and while it was a little early this year, it did get all of those that attended in the spirit of the season! Chairman Don made some great food and the cheesecakes and cakes that were auctioned off were wonderful! We all had the opportunity to taste them as Don had made two of each one! In total, \$410 in contributions and about \$100 worth of items were collected for Animal Lifeline of Iowa, Inc. a special needs, no-kill animal shelter. Thank you and we hope your holidays were filled with fun, laughter and joy.

## BMW CCA - Iowa Chapter Official Ballot

All members and associate members in good standing may cast a ballot.  
Mail your completed ballot to: Iowa Chapter BMWCCA, PO Box 42113 Urbandale, IA 50323  
or bring it to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 18, 2006.

**President:**

Mike Bengé, Cedar Rapids

**Vice President: (Vote for One)**

Dave Brighton, Fort Dodge

Dave Brennan, West Des Moines

**Treasurer:**

Fred Bell, West Des Moines

**Secretary:**

David Trachtenberg, Des Moines

**Directors-at-Large:**

Doug Wittkowski, Pleasantville

Don VanLengen, Des Moines

Brian Smith, Osceola

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

## Meet the BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter Board Candidates

Each candidate was requested to submit a short essay on themselves. Their responses are featured below.

### Mike Benge

I'm a fanatic about virtually anything that has a motor attached to it! I've owned several interesting cars, from a '69 Chevelle SS 396 to a '78 280Z to a '85 BMW 635 CSI. My dream BMW would be a museum quality '88 M6.

I was honored when I was selected as the 2002 Member of the Year and was asked to join the Board of Directors the following year. I have served as the Vice President since 2003. I have also served as Co-Chairman for our annual Clean Car Concours and the Chili Cook-Off and I am the guy you see "on the grid" at our Longest Day Driving School.

### Dave Brennan

I am proud to be a 25-year active member of BMW CCA, founding president of the current Iowa Chapter, and past member of the original Iowa Chapter. I have participated in national, regional and local club driving, social and organizational events, and have initiated policies and procedures that have helped our chapter to grow from 115 members to almost 1,000. I have served as our Chairman for the "Drive for the Cure" participation, our first holiday party and trips to the BMW Performance Center in Spartanburg. I have also served on many of the annual meeting committees and secured door prizes.

As Iowa Chapter vice president, I will continue to use my experience and enthusiasm to continuously improve the level and range of activities and promote the growth and the involvement of our membership.

### David Brighton

I have been an Iowa Chapter BMW CCA member since 1999 and am currently serving as an At-Large board member. I served as Co-Chair of the 2004 Fall Color Tour in western Iowa and am Chairman for the 2006 Annual Meeting. I have been involved with many aspects of the club from volunteering at driving events, participating at car shows, attending club socials, transporting cars for the Susan Koman Drive and helping shape the future of the Club as a member of the board of directors. I have also been instrumental in the development of my son, Kolin, becoming active and involved in the club and the development of younger members. I currently own a red 1989 325is and a silver 1997 328i. I have also owned a black 2001 330ci and a black 1994 325i.

### Fred Bell

I've been a BMW CCA member since 1999, a few months after buying one of the first M Coupes in the state. When the Chapter was formed, I became a charter member along with volunteering to be Treasurer. Professionally, I've been helping manage other people's money for over 20 years, as a bond analyst, portfolio manager, research supervisor and now head of my own investment and financial advisory firm.

I participate in chapter functions across a variety of interest groups: driving schools, autocross, concours, social events, etc. I've chaired the Street Survival safety school and a Fall Colors rally/tour recently, and serve on the driving school committee. At the national level, I've attended Oktoberfest and Gateway Tech a couple of times each. I enjoy helping out with the Board activities and would be happy to serve as Treasurer for another year. I am married to Lynne and we have two grown daughters and two BMWs.

### David Trachtenberg

I recently celebrated my 10th year with the BMW CCA and was one of the original members of the Iowa Chapter. Since 2004, I have served on the Board as Secretary and enjoy participating in and helping plan the various chapter events. My baby is my 1991 BMW 525i that has about 145,000 miles on it and still looks and runs great.

I live in Des Moines with my wife Brenda, and 17-year-old daughter, Jordan. A car to my wife and daughter is an object that gets them from point A to point B. I haven't convinced them that it's not getting there that counts...it's how you get there. I did take a step in the right direction this year, and forced Jordan to take the "Street Survival" course. She finally has an appreciation of what a car can do. Professionally, I am an Account Manager for United Airlines covering Iowa. I've been with United for 20 years...I haven't decided if I'm loyal or just crazy.

### Brian Smith

I've been a BMW CCA member since the 1987 after the acquisition of my Bavaria ("Mr. W"), who still resides with us. I've enjoyed high speed driving instruction, both in Mr. W, and in an E30 M3 ("Junior"). I like driving - a lot - but also like the folks I've met at our club events. As a Board member, I remain especially interested in our driver's education opportunities, whether low speed ("Street Survival") or at a faster pace. My automotive tastes are varied (my dream garage would house a Citroen DS-21), and the BMWs and an original Mini regularly challenge my mechanical abilities. I am married to Sal and we reside in Osceola along with several feline friends.

## Meet the BMW CCA – Iowa Chapter Board Candidates

Each candidate was requested to submit a short essay on themselves. Their responses are featured below.

### Don VanLengen

I have been a member since 2002 and was proud to be selected as the 2004 Member of the Year. I have been serving on the Board as an At-Large member and have chaired several club events including several of the annual picnics, 2005 fall color tour and holiday party. Many of you know me as the “guy that makes great BBQ” and I do have a passion for cooking. I participate in a variety of events and enjoy driving schools and the club social events. My wife Stacy and son Derick, are also members of the chapter. We live in Des Moines along with our dogs and cats and a 98 M3 and 97 318ti.

### Doug Wittkowski

Born many years ago in the Motor City, I spent my first 30 years living and breathing everything automotive related, both on a professional and amateur level. A professional hiatus and move to rural Iowa provided a much needed automotive rest to regain my marginal sanity. A newfound love of European cars along with a mission to share that joy has led myself and my wife Martha, down the path to co-founding the present day Iowa Chapter. I have served proudly on the Board of Directors since the inception of the club and have also served as the newsletter editor and chairman of many chapter events. I look forward to helping guide the Iowa Chapter and its members to further success along with fun and exciting events in the future.

## New Chapter Web Site Unveiled at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org)

If you haven't been to the Chapter's Web site in the last two months, you better check it out at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org). Earlier this fall, the Board decided it was time for a redesign and upgrade and following some research, we contracted with **VIVAMEDIA** to oversee the project.

Our goal was to not only make the Web site look fantastic, but we really wanted it to be “user friendly.” Last November, the new and improved site was up and running. We hope you like the changes, find the site easier to navigate, and agree that the creative folks at **VIVAMEDIA** did a great job. Don't forget to use the forum for discussions with your fellow club members and to post your comments.



## Iowa Chapter Member Takes Delivery of New M5

Mark Miller of Clive and Marco Island Florida recently took delivery of his new 2006 M5, which he ordered almost four years ago from EuropeanMotorcars Des Moines. He tells us that when the car was delivered in Florida, there were about 60 people gathered around to watch it come off the truck.

“The car is somewhat of a sleeper in that it does not look as aggressive as a 500HP car might normally look. I wish BMW had designed a more aggressive hood. The 19" wheels look awesome! I have had several BMW and MB cars. This will go down as one of my favorites, but in all honesty, I know this will not measure up to my Z8 or my SLs for quality and driving fun. Then again, this is a sedan and maybe the best in the world,” said Mark. The car was ordered with every factory option available and many of us are anxious to see it at a club event this spring/summer.



**Congratulations Mark! Have fun driving your new “baby.”**

# 2006 BMW CCA - Iowa Chapter Annual Meeting & Banquet Reservation Form

## Saturday, February 18, 2006

Amana Colonies Holiday Inn • I-80 at Exit 225 • 319-668-1175  
5:30 p.m. – Reception with Cash Bar  
6:30 p.m. – Buffet Dinner, Program and Entertainment

**\$25 per member, associate member and any others attending with a member**  
**\$20 per child 12 and under**  
**\$50 per person after February 11th**

We plan on attending the Annual Meeting & Banquet (please print names clearly below)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of reservations \_\_\_\_\_ at \$25 each

Number of reservations \_\_\_\_\_ at \$20 each

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

BMW CCA Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

You may also register and pay online at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org)



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## Calendar of Events > January-June 2006

Events, Club activities and all happenings BMW

**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 Bengé at [mdbenge@mchsi.com](mailto:mdbenge@mchsi.com)

**Saturday, February 18, 2006**

### Annual Meeting & Banquet

Amana Colonies Holiday Inn, I-80 at Exit 225, Amana

Social Hour - 5:30 p.m., Dinner and Program - 6:00 p.m.

Comedian Willie Farrell will make you laugh with his rapid-fire comebacks! A regular in Las Vegas and Reno, you won't want to miss this! Please join us for an evening of fun and laughter, awards, and renewing old acquaintances.

**Cost:** \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under.

**RSVP by:** February 11, 2005. See page 7 for the registration form or visit the club Web site at [www.bmwia.org](http://www.bmwia.org) to register and pay online!

**Additional Information:** For more information, contact Event Chairman David Brighton at [dwbrighton@gmail.com](mailto:dwbrighton@gmail.com) or 515-576-8059. A limited number of rooms have been blocked at the Holiday Inn. Please call the hotel directly (319-668-1175) by February 1st and mention the Iowa BMW Club.

**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 21, 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)  
If you would like to receive event reminders via e-mail please send your e-mail address to: [wittawerks@lisco.com](mailto:wittawerks@lisco.com)

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## Quality Drives Quality

by: Doug Wittkowski | images courtesy of: [www.htvm.totalcar.hu](http://www.htvm.totalcar.hu) and [www.blog.livedoor.jp](http://www.blog.livedoor.jp)



When most people see the BMW roundel on the hood they think quality. Germany has been known for building everything mechanical at the highest levels of quality for many years. True enough, but as a BMW owner and enthusiast, I think it is much more a combination of quality of product, passion for automobiles, and developing the total ownership package to contain the soul, feel, and the balance we love so much. Lets face it, your average Toyota Corolla has extremely high quality – based strictly on how it performs in regards to incidence of failures, more than likely higher than your average BMW. We all have friends that would never buy a BMW because they are perfectly happy with their trouble-free (brand X) car as an “appliance.” There is much more to the

equation though isn't there? Most of us understand that and I think the answer is quality people.

The people at BMW, from engineers, product planners, to designers are obviously driven through a love of the marque and a love for the automobile. I think it shows through in every BMW I have ever driven, new, old, economy model to M car and I think this is a very rare thing in the automotive business today. In fact, that level of quality is quite possibly only available in two or three other European brands and none of them are high-volume producers like BMW. As BMWs market share steadily grows, I hope that as a company they keep the passion for the cars we all love to drive. It seems obvious that building cars, to BMW, is much more important than an exercise in making profit.

### **We all have friends that would never buy a BMW because they are perfectly happy with their trouble-free (brand X) car as an “appliance.” There is much more to the equation though, isn't there?**

We as owners are another big part of the equation. I have had the pleasure of meeting some of the best people, high quality people, while being involved with this car club as well as on the business side of BMWs. At one time, not too long ago, a BMW was most well known in the USA as a status car and unfortunately, I'm sure that is still the case for many buyers. I think this club and its active members are a separate division of BMW owners, whether they are true automotive enthusiasts or just high-quality people that happen to drive BMWs. Look around at some of the efforts put forth by not only our own chapter members, but members from all over the country, all giving their time to a variety of programs that benefit fellow club members and their communities.



One last quality-related issue is what we, as owners, expect from our automotive experiences. We should and do expect the very best from our cars, our dealers, our independent shops, and aftermarket suppliers. We should, however, at the same time be willing to pay for the best, as high-quality always demands a premium price, but in the end it is always a good value.

Quality people drive quality cars, quite literally.

# Why do we love BMW fans?

Because they're passionate about what they drive.  
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