



NEWSWERKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHAPTER BMW CCA

MARCH/APRIL 2006

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2006 Annual Meeting Recap

The Annual Meeting of the Iowa Chapter BMW CCA was held Saturday, February 18 at the Amana Holiday Inn and what a great night it was. The evening started with a relaxed social hour and a terrific slide show of past Iowa Chapter events playing on a big screen. It was fun to see that none of the cars (or people) had aged since the club was started! A special thank you to Dana Schrader for putting this musical photo history together for us to enjoy.

The meeting officially began when President Dana Schrader welcomed the crowd and recognized the current Board of Directors. It was then time for Secretary David Trachtenberg to announce the election results. The 2006 Board of Directors will be Mike Bengé, president; David Brighton, vice president; David Trachtenberg, secretary; Fred Bell, treasurer, at-large member; Don VanLengen, who will serve as Event Coordinator, along with Doug Wittkowski and Brian Smith. Appointed to serve on the Board, by virtue of their position as Newsletter Editor and Webmaster, are Martha Wittkowski and Dana Schrader, respectfully. It was then time for Treasurer Bell to give the "exciting and long anticipated" annual club financial report. Much to his surprise, there were no questions from the crowd! Much of the evening was devoted to door prize drawings and just before dinner, Chairman David and his able assistant Kolin drew for several door prizes. The door prize table was something to behold...wow! There were many prizes and before the evening was over, everyone in attendance was a lucky winner.

The evening's entertainment was comedian Willie Farrell, who had the room filled with laughter the minute he started. He must have

had "insider information" because many of the members in attendance where the brunt of his jokes! It was all in the name of fun and we even taught Willie that a "beemer" is a BMW motorcycle and a "bimmer" is a BMW car. One thing we learned is that you probably shouldn't laugh that hard and for that long after eating a traditional Amana meal!

Chairman Brighton added a new feature this year – a small auction of some of the donated door prizes. He served as the auctioneer and all proceeds will benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Iowa. Thanks to everyone for bidding so generously.

It was now time for the annual awards and Fred began by presenting the "Cutting it a Little Fine" Award to Dave Brennan for his exploits on the way to a driving school at Hallett Raceway early this year. Scott Smed and Dave Brennan were recognized for their service to the Board and Chairman David presented Dana Schrader with a thank you gift from the club for serving as club president over the last three years.

The Membership Participation drawing was next, and following an overview of the program, David Trachtenberg drew for the Member Participation prizes. Jim Chrystal won a certificate for free registration at our Longest Day Driving School and Ed Merkler won a \$50 gift certificate for Bavarian Autosport.

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Calendar of Events > March - June 2006

Events, club activities and all happenings BMW

March 11, 2006

Bowling at Merle Hay Lanes in Des Moines

1:00 p.m.

Cost: \$3.50 per game and \$1.50 for shoe rental

Following some friendly competition on the lanes, we will meet at Felix and Oscar's for some pizza and beverages!

RSVP to: Dana Schrader at webmaster@bmwia.org

March 23-26, 2006

Gateway Tech – Everything BMW

25th Anniversary – Hosted by St. Louis Chapter BMW CCA

St. Charles Convention Center, St. Charles, MO

A group of Iowa Chapter members are planning on attending this great event!

For more information contact Martha at newsletter@bmwia.org

April 8 – 9, 2006

Missouri Valley Chapter BMW CCA Driving School

Mid America Motorplex, Pacific Junction, IA

For more information or to register go to www.bmwccamvc.org

April 23, 2006

Go-Karting at JetKarting

Iowa International Raceway, Marshalltown

12:30 p.m.

Practice, qualifying and heat races with trophies!

Cost: \$55 per person

Come feel the thrill of wheel-to-wheel racing. Using the latest in Endurance Kart technology, you will be able to race against friends and hone your skills to a razor's edge. Not your standard "bumper cars," these are very capable karts, evenly matched to make the driver the most crucial part of the equation. Imported from Italy, these are true racing machines. For directions visit: http://www.jetkarting.com/directions_map.htm

RSVP to: Event Chair, Doug Wittkowski at wittawerks@lisco.com

May 7, 2006

The **Car and Driver ONE LAP of America** will be stopping at Mid America Motorplex in Pacific Junction and we are planning to have a "Welcome to Iowa" group from our Chapter.

If you would like to be there, contact Event Chairman, Brian Boehmer at boehmerbrian@hotmail.com

May 21, 2006

Annual Clean Car Concours

J & J Motorsports, Cedar Rapids

A fun and friendly competition that benefits a local charity.

For more information and for the official rules, watch the Web site at www.bmwia.org

or contact the Event Chairman, Mike Bengé at president@bmwia.org

June 9 – 11, 2006

Iowa Chapter Longest Day Driving School

Mid America Motorplex, Pacific Junction, IA

A great school for novice and advanced students alike.

For more information contact Event Chairman, Doug Wittkowski at wittawerks@lisco.com

or to register visit www.bmwia.org

If you are interested in being a volunteer at this event, please contact Martha at newsletter@bmwia.org

Updated information will be posted on the website as it becomes available. Be sure to check for current information at www.bmwia.org

If you would like to receive event reminders via e-mail please send your e-mail address to: newsletter@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

Please submit material suitable for publication to: Martha Wittkowski at: newsletter@bmwia.com

2006 Annual Meeting Recap

continued from front cover

Several years ago the Board realized that the club was successful due in large part to the help and assistance it receives from sponsors and thus developed the Sponsor of the Year Award. This award is presented to a sponsor or vendor who has provided significant support to the chapter during a year. This award is the club's way of thanking a sponsor/vendor that has assisted the club in achieving its goals and has an appreciation for the club and its members. This year the award was presented to EuroWerkz, LC, an Iowa-based business owned by Iowa Chapter Members, Duane Smith, Jason Smith and Doug Wittkowski.

The final award of the evening was presented by Mike Bengé and is the club's most prestigious award – the 2005 Member of the Year. Any chapter member in good standing is eligible to be nominated for this award. Criteria reviewed include their chapter involvement level, participation in events, and overall contributions to the chapter and the members. It emphasizes contributions in the current year, but is not limited to this. The Board tries to make this award presentation a surprise for the recipient. Mike had to revisit the club's early days to speak about this member and his contributions to the club. From the look on the recipient's face, we did indeed keep this a surprise and it was great to see that one of our founding members, Doug Wittkowski was selected as our Member of the Year. "His dedication, commitment and passion for our club are some of the reasons we are here today," said Mike Bengé. Congratulations Doug!

The surprise of the evening was that Event Chairman David Brighton, his son Kolin and our very funny comedian Willie Farrell were all dressed identically – guess they will all be going to the State Fair together.

Thank you to Event Chairman David Brighton and his committee comprised of Fred Bell, David Trachtenberg, Doug and Martha Wittkowski, Mike Bengé, Don and Stacey VanLengen, Sal Meyers, Brian Smith, Dana and Natalie Schrader and Kolin Brighton.

on this page (top to bottom, left to right) – Doug Wittkowski, Member of the Year and representative of EuroWerkz, LC, Sponsor of the Year; David Brennan, outgoing Board Member, "Cutting it a Little Fine" award winner; David and Kolin Brighton draw for door prizes; Dana Schrader, Outgoing President; Dan Van Lengen and Sal Meyers at registration; Scott Smed, outgoing Board Member; attendees enjoy the annual dinner event; the collection of items at the door prize table.

Photos by: Dana and Natalie Schrader, and Kolin Brighton.





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Member Profile

by Louis Whitehead



Everybody's got to have a hobby, right? For one Brookings, South Dakota city councilor, that hobby involves screaming down racetrack

straights at more than 150 mph (in a street-legal car, no less) and teaching others how to safely and legally explore the limits of their vehicles.

"It's a dangerous sport; you can get severely injured or destroy your car at the track," said Mike Bartley, whose full-time job is working as an optician in a community of 18,000 in eastern South Dakota. "You have to understand that when you take up this hobby. It's not an inexpensive hobby. But then again, I don't know of many hobbies that aren't expensive. If you enjoy it, it tends to get expensive. My entertainment is in the car," he added.

Bartley began driving competitively in 1988 by taking part in Sports Car Club of

America Solo II autocross events.

"One day, I was sitting in my house in Brookings, and I heard some cars off in the distance, so I went and checked it out. People were autocrossing in a dorm parking lot up on South Dakota State University's campus," he said. "I thought it looked like fun, so I asked if I could join in, and it's gone from there." Solo II events, he added, are a good way for people interested in auto racing to get started. "Solo II is a very safe environment where people can develop their skill sets in their cars," Bartley said. "Driving schools are another good way, too."

In the nearly 20 years he's been driving competitively, he's had his fair share of different rides. Bartley has raced a few Triumphs, a Mazda Miata and a handful of BMWs. His current vehicle, which also does double-duty as his daily driver, is a 2003 BMW M3 with the SMG transmission.

"BMW's are not absolutely exceptional at any one thing. There's always a car that can corner better or brake better or accelerate faster.

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Third Annual Chili Cookoff

by Mike Bengé, Event Chair

On a cold and rainy day a group of people got together to compete in the Third Annual Iowa Chapter Chili Cook-Off. The event was held at the magnificent Clark Alumni House on the beautiful Coe College campus in Cedar Rapids and along with participants showcasing their favorite chili recipes, it was a fun and enjoyable social event for all attendees. A total of 27 people arrived with the hopes of taking home the prestigious and coveted "Cauldron" trophy and the \$20 Chili's gift certificates. During the week leading up to the event, there was the usual "trash talk" and a fair amount of "bench" cooking, but time was up and now all that remained was for the real judging to begin.

Mike Bengé kicked off the event with a welcome to the attendees and we observed a moment of silence for the 20th year anniversary of the space shuttle Challenger disaster. Mike then discussed upcoming Iowa Chapter events and encouraged everyone to attend any or all of the events in the future.

With an explanation of the simple judging rules, the event was officially under way. Everyone became a judge and could pick out their favorite chili in two separate categories, the traditional "Red Chili" and the "Exotic" chili category. There was a third category added this year, as a result of observing competitors in the prior years take their chili displays to extremes. The new category was "Best Display" overall which rewarded imagination and creativity for the display and included the naming of the entries.

In the "Red Chili" category there were six entries submitted and every chili was truly excellent. The following comments could be heard among those in attendance, "this is almost impossible to judge because all the chilies are so good..." and "...I could eat anyone of the chilies and be perfectly happy as they are all so good..." The voting showed this to be the case as the margin of victory was a single vote with Don Van Lengen's "Smokehouse" chili taking home the award.

On the other side of the room were the "Exotic" chilies with ingredients ranging from allspice, nutmeg and cactus pulp, to white chili beans and what was probably the most unusual, alligator meat (and as it turns out, it does taste like chicken according to one fellow Board member). The comments I overheard were similar to the comments on the Red Chili contest, "...these cooks are incredible...", "...where do these people get their ideas...", and "...did you taste all the chilies yet? They are all so good." There were seven chilies entered in the "Exotic" category with two more chilies available for general consumption. When it came time to tally the votes the "Tribute to New Orleans" chili prepared by Kolin Brighton took home the trophy with the margin of victory being a single vote.

The third category was the "Best Display" and this was where entrants seemed to enjoy themselves the most. From a tire that was shredded by one of our own Board members at Hallett to a "Chili" backlit by green rope light, to a wooden scale model of a smokehouse, all entries were impressive and showed a great deal of creativity. The voting revealed this category to be difficult to judge as well with the margin of victory being a single vote. The winner was Don Van Lengen's "Smokehouse" followed by Fred Bell's "Re-tired" display.

The "Chairperson's Choice Award," chosen by the Chairman and Co-Chairman, was given to Fred Bell whose Red Chili and his "Re-Tired" display were runner-ups in two categories by a single vote in each. The chairpersons felt his entry was truly remarkable.

on this page (left to right, clockwise) – The crowd enjoys the chili; Chairman Mike Bengé presents Kolin Brighton with an award; talking cars or chili?; Mike Bengé presents the "Chili Fixins Can" to Diane Bottorf; Chairman Mike Bengé presents Fred Bell with an award; Chairman Mike Bengé presents Don VanLengen with an award.
Photos by: Diana Patten, and David Trachtenberg

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Third Annual Chili Cookoff

by Mike Bengé, Event Chair (continued from page 5)

Chili and displays aside, what this event gave each of us was a time to talk to one another about everything from dismantling a wrecked M3 to where to get the best white bean chili recipe (apparently it's right on the white chili bean cans – imagine that).

More importantly, the event gave us some time to reflect on what a great group of people show up at our events. One competitor who was awarded a "Chili fixins' in a can" prize along with a gift certificate to Olive Garden in the amount of \$20 said it best, "...these people are so comfortable to be with..." This from a non-club member who drives a beautiful Corvette, reminds us all that it's the people who continue to make our events what they are. For those of you who read and hear that the club is about the people, and have not taken it upon yourselves to join us at one of our events all I can say is, "what are you waiting for?"

Dreaming of June on a Cold Winter Night

by Brian Smith

Imagine being in the position I was in about four years ago. It's a 20 degree clear winter night. That morning's snowfall (two or three inches) remains in abundance on the side streets, but Interstate 35 heading south out of Des Moines is perfectly clear, and you give thanks to the highway plows. You're rolling along slightly slower than the then 65 mph limit, heading uphill into the country. Your view ahead is dominated by an overpass – you can't see much of the road as it begins to flatten toward the crest of the hill. As you continue, your headlights fall upon a swath of white – the wind has swept snow completely across the highway. The patch is several car lengths long and has a little depth to it – it's a blanket of snow, not a skin of snow. You've got at most two seconds before you enter the white stuff. So, what are you going to do?

Please chew that one over while I suggest how our driving school experience might help you turn such an episode into a simple jolt of adrenalin, rather than an exercise in accelerated vehicular depreciation. During my first track event the rear of my noble Bavaria unexpectedly lurched toward the outside of the track. My corrections, based on what I had read ("turn into a skid") and experienced (on snowy streets) were perhaps too aggressive. Although the car did not choose to reward my foolishness with an agricultural excursion, the oscillations were enough to reduce my highly verbal instructor to "well, we stayed on the road." That episode was a particularly memorable example of the importance of smoothness. And smoothness has gone with me from the track to my daily driving. Although I love

As co-chairperson of the event I want to thank all who attended and hope everyone enjoyed themselves. I congratulate all the trophy winners. I want to thank everyone who put effort into preparing and displaying a chili and we all appreciated every chili there, they were all very good. Speaking of extra efforts – we all enjoyed Brenda Trachtenberg's corn bread and brownies and thank her for bringing them. I want to send a special thanks to our two youngest judges – the son and daughter of Kevin and Teresa Wake who showed no mercy in their judging techniques – I hope you can help us out next year. I need to extend a special thank you to my co-chairperson, Diana Patten, who made all the arrangements to secure Coe's facility and provided help on details too numerous to mention.

So, until next year, keep the crock pots warm and the chili hot.



driving on the track, I do not drive like a lunatic on the street. In fact, my sedate style renders me the board member most likely to receive the "Driving Miss Daisy" award. But I practice smoothness in turning the steering, in applying the gas, in stepping into and off of the brakes all of the time. Whenever I make my 34-mile commute in our traditional winter conditions, I do so more safely, thanks to the virtues of smoothness.

Jim Morrison probably never instructed at a driving school, but he did sing "Keep your eyes on the road, your hands upon the wheel" ("Roadhouse Blues"). Good advice. One morning's commute found me driving 35 mph along three-lane Highway 34 in Osceola.

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A garbage truck approached ahead, on a right-hand side street that descended to the highway. The truck stopped, and I made eye contact with the driver. I thought all was well. Imagine my surprise when as I approached, the truck rolled forward into my lane. Unlike the episode on suddenly snowy I-35, there was no time for contemplation. I was holding the wheel at 9 and 3, just the way I learned at our driving schools. I swerved hard left, partly into the turn lane (which I knew was empty because I had my attention on my driving), and hard back to the right. The car moved about a half lane to the left, which was enough. I don't know how much space I had when I cleared the truck, because my eyes were looking where I wanted the car to go, another lesson learned at – you guessed it – the track at a driving school. At about this point, I launched into a serious tirade directed at the driver and his ancestors and provided some hand gestures (violating Morrison's instructions) to convey my feelings to him. Although I'm not especially proud of my expletive-filled communication, I am proud that I made the right decision – if I'd tried to stop I simply would've been going slowly when the truck removed the side of my car.

So I have a very pragmatic reason for praising our driving schools. But I also will praise them because driving on the track will give you humility. The first time you maneuver clumsily around the

track you will gain great appreciation of those who do it well. I have become a reasonably competent and consistent driver, but know there's plenty of room for improvement. This past June at Gingerman Raceway I watched an instructor from our chapter hit exactly the same point on turn 2 lap after lap – a small plume of dust arose from the inside rear every time. That takes great concentration and a lot of practice.

Along with the recognition of one's own limits, and appreciation of others' skills, comes a great deal of something I can only call fun. Wouldn't you like to find the limits of your car, and your own? Doing so requires intense concentration – and when you start to get it right, even if it's only one turn at a time, it's immensely rewarding.

But this pursuit is not solitary. You can meet some great people – enthusiasts who want to help you drive better. It's a fun thing to share. When you are off the track, you can wander the paddock and find plenty of folks willing to talk about cars. They bring a good variety of marques. Those vehicles, by the way, needn't be brand new and needn't be bred for the track; the Bavaria served me well at events through 2002.

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- Members may also post their ads on the Chapter's Web site forum at www.bmwia.org

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Dreaming of June on a Cold Winter Night

by Brian Smith (continued from page 7)

Of course, there's some risk involved. The biggest one is that you'll say "oh, I like that." Before you know it, certain weekends (say, June 10 and 11 of this year) will be blocked out on your calendar. You may begin to calculate the costs of everyday items in brake pad equivalents. You might even find yourself on a driving school organizing committee.

Ah, but that talk of risk brings us back to the suddenly snowy Interstate. So what did you decide to do with your one- to two-seconds? My thoughts flowed from my track experiences. I knew to look way down the road, where I wanted the car to go. I also was acutely aware of the car's weight distributed among its four tires. If I hit the brakes, I could slow to maybe 55 M.P.H., and enter the snow nose down, with the rear wheels relatively unweighted,

ready to move in any direction. So my foot stayed on the accelerator. The car hit the snow stable at 62 or so. I looked beyond the headlights, and made gentle corrections (maybe 5 to 10 degrees of wheel input) when the car squirmed. As we slithered through the snow belt, my peripheral vision picked up the dark forms of several vehicles off on either side of the road. I breathed a sigh of relief that I hadn't joined their impromptu get together, and made a mental note to never trust that a cleared road will stay that way.

So, why don't you go ahead and register for a driving school? Come out for both days, or just Saturday. Not quite ready? Then you could volunteer, or just come out to watch and see what it's all about. See you at the track!

Member Profile

by Louis Whitehead (continued from page 4)

But BMWs can do all those things well. They're very well balanced and very well engineered," Bartley said. And BMWs have served him well. In the four times that he's competed in the "Car and Driver One Lap of America," he and a co-driver took third place overall in a 325i and second place overall in another M3 he's owned.

"There were people from all over the country competing; and they couldn't believe that we were these two guys from South Dakota who were doing as well as we were," Bartley said. Along with racing on his own, he's also developed an interest in passing on what he's learned to other people. Bartley's been a certified driving instructor for BMW, Porsche and Audi clubs for the past 10 years.

"I teach not only in-car instruction, but also classroom instruction for advanced students," he said. "Requirements for becoming an instructor mainly involve having the skills that one aims to teach. It's usually the fast guys who have a knack that get to be instructors."

Even though the two- and three-day driving schools that he teaches are put on

by clubs devoted to specific makes of cars, they are generally open to anyone. "We don't allow pickup or SUVs, but we typically get BMWs, Corvettes, Porsches and so on. They're basically high-performance cars. Our goals are to teach the drivers how to operate them safely at speed and to teach them car control and the limits of their cars. You can't learn that on the street," he explained. Many different topics are addressed during the schools.

"When I do classroom instruction, we discuss car setup, suspension, tires, brakes and other performance modifications to the cars, and how they drive with those changes to their cars if they've come to the track," he said. "We also teach them that when trouble brews, it's usually not their first mistake that gets them into trouble. It's the second one. We teach people to recognize what that first mistake is." The driving schools where Bartley teaches typically cost between \$250 and \$350. Drivers must supply their own cars and helmets, and their cars must pass safety inspections to be eligible.

Regardless of where life takes him, Bartley said that he hopes to be involved in racing

and teaching for years to come. "It's been fun and I enjoy it. It's also great to have the camaraderie of being around people with the same interests. In addition, it's fun to be able to help others learn how to drive better and be better than they were before and help them understand what their car is doing," he said. "It's more like dancing with the car than driving it. It's part of you." "I think it instills a drive in you to succeed. To get to the level that I'm at and to be able to share that knowledge with others, to help make them better, safer drivers, I get a lot of satisfaction from that," Bartley added.

While he loves all cars, he said that cars are not the centerpiece of his life. "They're just paint, metal and glass," Bartley said. "People are more important. It's like when there's an accident. Even if the car gets destroyed, if the people in it are all right, then that's what's most important."

Editor's note: Many of our members will recognize Mike. Mike has volunteered to instruct students at each of the driving schools the Iowa Chapter has hosted and has instructed at many of the driving schools hosted by other chapters throughout the Midwest.

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