

BMW Car Club  
of America  
Los Angeles Chapter



# Whispering Bomb

WINTER 2017



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Photo by Baabak Afshar

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### **FRONT COVER:**

Set-up day at the Los Angeles Auto Show in November 2016.

Photo by James Chew

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### **BACK COVER:**

Taken at Laguna Seca near Monterey, California.

Photo by Baabak Afshar

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Happy New Year!!!

*by Kurt Helm*

I hope everyone survived the 2016 elections. Of course there are more elections to come, as our Chapter will be electing a Board of Directors in 2017. I can promise you that there will be no town hall meetings, no televised debates, no character assassinations, and no road closures as the candidates appear at campaign fundraising dinners in Bel Air. (Wait...fundraising dinners in Bel Air? I don't remember any of those from our last election.)

In addition, we're in the midst of revising our Chapter Bylaws, as we announced in our December 15<sup>th</sup> E-Blast. Our goal is to better serve our Chapter's 3,000+ members. The Chapter covers a wide area in Southern California, so having centrally located meetings is difficult. (Just ask anyone in Santa Monica who needs to drive from Ocean Blvd. to the 405 Freeway at 5PM during the week.)

Our vision is to establish four geographic areas that will present regional events that focus on local interests such as a visit to a car detailing shop, an independent repair shop, and local dealers. Of course all Chapter members are welcome at any Chapter event, including regional events. I'll try to attend most of these events so that I can meet as many members as possible.

We've recently purchased a fully enclosed trailer to replace the box truck that we had been using for many years. The trailer will house our event equipment; cones, timing gear, safety equipment and tables that we use in our High Performance Driving Events and Tire Rack Street Survival, and we hope to be using it to support some autocross events in 2017.

As always, if you have any suggestions for activities or how to improve our Chapter, let me know. If you're interested in serving on the Board in some capacity, then watch for the notification to nominate someone for a Board position. We welcome new ideas!

Until next time, enjoy your Club and enjoy your car.

### Please... Please... Please!!!

Remember that it is very important to keep your membership information up-to-date. We want to make sure that you are in the loop for any announcements from either us at the Chapter level or the National CCA. It's easier to delete an email than it is to live with the knowledge that you may miss out on something you really wanted to do, know, or have.

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

### Dithering

*by Jean Helm*

**September 2016** – Each quarter, I send out my call for articles (and here it where I profusely thank all of our WB contributors who come through every time!), and each time I hit the SEND button, I start to dither about what I'M going to write. And each time, I come up with something. I hope...

**October 2016** – I decorated the house for Halloween and handed out candy to the tiny and tall in our neighborhood. I was able to put off thinking about what I was going to write for the column. Well, I think I finally hit the wall. I can think of nothing amusing or inspiring. My brain is a blank slate (or should I say mush). And now I'm panicking about what I'll write about for all the quarters after this.

**November 2016** – I've chosen my 2017 benefits through work. We have made it through the Thanksgiving holiday, fed our friends (the family we choose), and I'm still no closer to figuring out what this column will be...

**Early December 2016** – I've successfully procrastinated finishing this column for nearly four months and I'm using the holiday season as my excuse this month. Of course, I'm using my WB Editorship as my excuse for not getting our holiday cards out on time. I think I've found a real scam going here. FINALLY, I figured it out... something of substance to address...

On December 4th, I was happy to volunteer at the LA Chapter's last Tire Rack Street Survival class for this year at Auto Club Motor Speedway. Even though we had to get up at the crack of oh-my-god to get out there (and it IS chilly on a December morning before the sun comes up) and be ready for our students, the day was a success. It is our honor as a club to host these classes throughout the year, as this day teaches our young students to be better drivers. This class does not replace the driver training that they take to get their drivers licenses, but rather enhances their training. Students complete the behind-the-wheel section in the car they drive the most. This makes sure that they are learning new skills in the car that they will be driving after the class. Our instructors walk them through what's under the hood, how to be a defensive and aware driver (exploding the airbag seems to be particularly popular), and what to do if they get into a jam. It's a full day of classroom and behind the wheel instruction. I know that we get as much out of the day as our students do. If you have a young driver in your family, please consider sending them to one of the Tire Rack Street Survival classes. You don't need to be a club member, and you can sign up friends, relatives, and acquaintances. I cannot stress enough how rewarding it is to host these classes for our young drivers.

Elsewhere in this issue of the WB, our "Five Questions" are interviews with five (plus one) parents of our TRSS students. It was interesting to get their perspectives. (See page 12)

# A SHAMEFUL ADMISSION

by Mark Buhler

"The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," my left ball joint.<sup>i</sup> Let me give you some context. If you've been living under a four-post lift for the last two years, you may have missed the Marie Kondo book of the same name. Allow me to summarize the book: throw all of your crap away, except for six perfect things, display them with artful indifference, and everyone will like you. Moreover, even you will like you.

For me and a lot of other people, twelve years of Catholic education precludes simple solutions like that. There are hundreds of years of shame to deal with, plus familial guilt to address. Then there's the whole issue of sin. I like sin. Sin is fun, and I engage in it where legal, ethical, and possible. Cleaning out the closets and cleaning out the soul require totally different levels of commitment. And one requires a whole lot more trash bags than the other.

But I digress.

Contrary to the point of the book, the motor head lifestyle is not about minimalism. It's about having the right tool for the job. Hell, I have six perfect hammers<sup>ii</sup>, not just six tools. Stephanie has at least as many hammers of her own. Pliers? A drawer full of mine, plus another drawer full for Stephanie. Sockets? 1/4, 3/8, and 1/2 inch drives, SAE and Metric both, plus another matching set for the air tools. Then there are the contents of the other half of the big, red, manly, tool chest on wheels. And the engine hoist. And the engine stand. And the compressor. And the workbench with shelves and drawers full of other mechanic's tools.<sup>iii</sup>

I think that if Marie Kondo stopped by for a personal consultation, she'd have a cerebral hemorrhage the minute she opened the roll up door.

By the way, there's also room for two cars, or at least there will be when we get rid of the furniture left over from when Stephanie downsized her office. Which brings me to the actual point: I gotta clean up my workbench. I know it's there, even if I can't really see it.

It started innocently enough, and with good intentions. When Stephanie downsized her office, we planned to move all of the stuff into a storage unit. Then we figured out that it would all fit in the garage if we rearranged things a bit and spent two months rent on shelving. All that would be left would be four chairs, two foot stools and a cabinet. So that's what we did: I tossed all of my stuff on, under, and next to the bench, set up the shelves, loaded them up with office stuff, and the remaining furniture is now parked where Das Boot, our E550 Mercedes should be.<sup>iv</sup>

Now, the *Feng Shui* in there is, to be polite, sub-optimal.<sup>v</sup> In fact, I would go so far to say that the *Shui* is all *Fenged* up. The forces of lethargy, indifference, and entropy have been winning. If I still had room to park in the garage, or if I did anything in there other than flip the laundry, then I could channel Marie. I would be focused and ruthless. The bench would be a priority and a shining light of order and righteousness in the world. Right now, it's a malignant, sucking vortex of woe, a magnet for stray tools, toxic solvents, and the occasional pestilent rodent.

**So here's the plan:** Get rid of the furniture by some combination of selling it, donating it or integrating it into the house. Move *Das Boot* into the garage again. Suffer painful embarrassment every time I walk into the house. Rinse and repeat until I just can't take it anymore. Then I'll put stuff away. Clean out the plastic track box that I haven't looked in for a year. Sort the tools and organize them on the pegboard. Find any one of the three air pressure gauges or four measuring tapes that I know are in the pile somewhere. Re-hang the speakers on wall and hook up the old MacBook for internet access. Get reels for all three extension cords. Put away all of the airbags we blow up for Tire Rack Street Survival in a place where I can grab them easily. I could go on, but you get the idea.

It's not magic. It's not even life changing. It's just being grown up and cleaning up the mess I made.

Sometimes, I hate being a grown up.

i Up until a few months ago, I actually had a pair of ball joints in my garage. They were the detritus from the Factory Five Cobra build that were hung up and out of the way. At least they were, until they were actually in the way.

ii Claw, ball pein, brass, dead blow, sledge, and leather.

iii Plus all of the woodworking, plumbing, drywall, and masonry tools on the shelves on the other side of the garage.

iv Yes, Nikita, the M235i, has garage priority.

v I know, I know. Marie Kondo is Japanese and Feng Shui is Chinese. The problem is that Kaso and Inyodo don't lend themselves to the juvenile pun that follows. ■



# LONE SURVIVORS

## BMW 320i and Dodge Charger SXT

*Article & photos by James Chew*

Since the late 1970's the end of the mass-market rear wheel drive sedan has been predicted. Both the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and buyers were favoring front wheel drive sedans. For the OEMs, these vehicles were easier to engineer and less expensive to assemble. For the buyers, the space efficiency and bad weather handling benefits were quite attractive.

But for the driving enthusiast, front wheel drive sedans don't have the desirable 50/50 weight distribution and exhibit an alarming amount of torque steer. Some still believe there are two types of vehicles - rear wheel drive and "wrong" wheel drive. And because life is too short to drive boring cars, many enthusiasts embark on a quest to find an affordable "enthusiast" rear wheel drive sedan for daily driver duty.

In my humble opinion there are now only two choices in this category – the BMW 320i and the Dodge Charger SXT.

Both sedans are very well designed, engineered, and assembled. Whether in their "volume" (320i, SXT) or in their "ultimate" (M3, Hellcat) form, the BMW 3-series and Dodge Charger are rated at the top of their respective markets.

Key to these two versatile benchmark sedans is the chassis. Coincidentally, both benchmark chassis designs were created when these companies had a healthy tolerance for risk. Being the backbone of any vehicle, the importance of an outstanding chassis cannot be overlooked. In addition to providing the foundation for the vehicle's steering, suspension, braking, wheels, and tires, the amount of chassis stiffness (especially torsional stiffness) impacts the vehicle's handling as well as its' assembly quality. A stiff chassis allows for closer dimensional tolerance, which leads to a higher quality assembly as well as a better handling vehicle.

The timeless benchmark driving quality of a BMW can be traced directly to their engineers focusing on chassis engineering during the development of the 1600/2002. To significantly distinguish them from the competition, Bob Lutz

entered BMW into the European sedan racing circuit. The lessons the chassis engineers learned from the track where incorporated in to the 3-series. Soon, BMW earned the reputation as "the Ultimate Driving Machine".

This laser focus on chassis engineering continues today. By using the famous Nurburgring track and their various factory sponsored motorsports activities for their chassis development, it's no wonder that the 3/4-series continues to be the benchmark vehicle in its class.

Designed and engineered by Chrysler engineers during Daimler ownership, the now famous "LX" chassis was being developed as part of a very quiet Corporate transition to rear wheel drive platforms. At that time, Chrysler was determined to further the Chrysler brand "affordable Mercedes" and the Dodge brand "affordable BMW" market position by producing benchmark affordable rear wheel drive sedans with a strong European influence. In short, Chrysler was developing the ultimate "anti CamCord" family sedans.

The "LX" chassis was initially based on the famous "LH" chassis, which produced the popular front wheel drive Chrysler 300 and Dodge Intrepid sedans. Unknown to most, the "LH" chassis was extremely versatile, allowing for rear-wheel drive and all-wheel drive configurations. When the Chrysler and Daimler chassis engineering teams review the "LX", the Daimler engineers provided the E-class 5-link rear suspension and the S-class control arm front suspension. Coupled with their Hemi V-8 engine, the resulting Chrysler 300s and Dodge Chargers flew off the dealer lots. Immediately, police departments from around the country wanted to switch to Dodge Charger patrol vehicles. A trivia fact; then-Senator Obama drove a Chrysler 300C.

Perhaps one of the signs that I'm getting wiser with age and experience is that when I look at the 3-series or the Charger, I don't immediately gravitate to the M or the Hellcat. In my humble opinion, the E36 M3 (which some more fanatical BMW enthusiast will argue that the US version was not a real M) was the last M that I would consider for daily driving duties, while the Charger R/T has 80% of the Hellcat's performance with MUCH better fuel economy. Whether driving in Southern





California or the Washington DC metro area rush hour traffic, I've felt the frustration coming from the current generation of M and SRT/Hellcat vehicles.

Enthusiasts know as well that driving enjoyment isn't an exclusive trait to "ultimate" sports cars. Balance, responsiveness, and predictability are much more important factors, traits that both the 320i and Charger SXT excel.

Using the "Peter Carroll halftime" approach to freshening, the 320i has exorcised the demons that plagued the vehicle when it was first launched. Specifically, the electronic steering feels much better, the "auto stop" is much smoother, and the suspension has been retuned to act like a BMW, not a Lexus.

Equipped with a minimal amount of equipment and the six-speed manual transmission, the 320i is simply a blast to drive. Whether I'm driving the back roads to Charlottesville or Angeles Crest Highway, the 320i brings the best out of any driver. When driving the Interstate highways, the BMW's "autobahn cruiser" characteristics shine. The car is very easy to parallel park, easy to drive in above and under ground parking structures, and will not exhaust the driver in stop-and-go traffic. Best of all, the outstanding "real world" fuel economy from the 320i's turbocharged 4-cylinder engine will make any "CamCord" owner envious.

The Charger SXT was also a pleasure to drive. While a manual transmission is not available, we found that the new 8-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters allowed for some rather spirited back road driving.

As if one needed more proof of the Dodge Charger's daily driving prowess, the California Highway Patrol recently ordered close to 600 and the Los Angeles Police Department ordered 100 to replace their older patrol vehicles. Closely examining the police vehicle purchases, you'll notice that the vast majority of the Dodge Chargers are equipped with the 292 horsepower V6. We found the performance from this engine quite outstanding while the observed average fuel economy is also quite good.

An interesting point is that while the EPA classifies the 3-series as a compact luxury sedan and the Charger as a

full size sedan, the two vehicles are surprisingly close in size and interior volume. Only in cargo space does the Charger show it's larger size, though both can be equipped for folding rear seats. Both vehicles transported four full size American adults in comfort and the large, practical trunk volume of each car easily accommodates four golf bags.

One of the best reasons for the enthusiast to consider both the BMW 3-series and the Dodge Charger as a daily driver is the ability to purchase both under their respective certified pre-owned programs. Having the ability to purchase low-mileage vehicles with a factory warranty without having to absorb the new car vehicle depreciation allows the enthusiast to be both car and financial savvy.

The future of both the BMW 3-series and the Dodge Charger as rear wheel drive sedans are uncertain.

We've written about BMW's move toward front wheel drive vehicles and have been quite impressed with the resulting products such as the 2016 BMW X1. The BMW Supervisory Board has been less than impressed with the sales performance of the i-series, which has diverted valuable product development resources. And while the 3-series continues to be BMW's crown jewel, the popularity (and margins) from the X-vehicles continues to impress them.

The current owners of Chrysler brands continue the trend of poor ownership since Chrysler "partnered" with Daimler. Milking as much as money from the minivan, Jeep, and Ram Truck cash cows, FCA is diverting most of their product development resources to an ill-advised North American re-launch of Alfa Romeo. With the new Fiat 124 (e.g., "Fiata") FCA has already shown that they will re-badge competitive products to fill out their product line.

People buy daily drivers for the long run. And both the BMW 3-series and Dodge Charger reliability have been quite good. With the anticipated tsunami of off-lease 3-series and Chargers coming to the certified pre-owned market in 2017, it may soon be the ideal time to purchase one. It's not clear how much longer these lone survivors will be on the market. ■

# DORKFEST 2016

by Mike Buhbe; photos by Jenn Martin

Dorkfest, yup, and Oktoberfest, a double throw down of M Coupe and Z3 Coupe owners plus 100 years of BMW in Monterey, California; **all at once**. Count me in for the party! We got a chance to check out historic cars brought from the BMW Museum in Munich. The lads and lasses came from mostly California, but there was out-of-state representation too. And the four laps on Laguna Seca Raceway were enough of a thrill to make me stop dreaming of bungee jumping with lunatics.

Dorkfest, eh? My friends would cock their heads at the word when I announced my travel plans, as if they had not heard correctly. Aren't dorks supposed to be outcasts and weirdos? Well, maybe. But being a nerd or a geek is cool too. We own that word - Dork - proudly. We gather the tribe once a year to exchange tales of engines, racing feats, paint, sound systems, and to renew the friendships of past Dorkfests while finding new friends. The cars bring us together for introductions, and then the thrill of owning a most unique and exciting BMW is just the beginning of our good time together. We come in all flavors and stripes, we Dorks, and the company we find amidst ourselves is just the best fun. Our special cars are for special people.

Our go-to organizer, Ian Vasquez, had been forever drilling into me the importance of this year's Dorkfest coinciding with the 100th anniversary celebration of BMW. "Ya gotta be there!" Ian insisted. Our leader also designed a cool T-shirt and a Dorkfest sticker commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BMW. Ian's good karma rewarded him with registration number 100 and a corresponding window sticker! What are the odds? Ian had help from Delight Lucas pulling strings with the national club organization, especially getting us out to pilot our cars on the Laguna Seca track.

Our Coupes were developed from Z3s, the cars that started life as roadsters, the car many people know as the James Bond convertible, debuting in 1995. Mr. Bond, in my opinion, should have stuck with BMW but instead has returned to his automotive roots, driving Aston Martins (deep sigh). The wildly popular Z3 convertible was given a hardtop for racing and a hatchback because coupes have better torsional strength due to the rigidity of the steel roof. The Coupes were made four years, from 1999 to 2002. The M Coupes, with bigger engines, stiffer suspensions, and fatter tires, are pricier. The Z3 Coupes with somewhat smaller but still torquey six-cylinder engines are more affordable, and there are actually fewer of these, making them a rarer breed. Both cars make for exciting driving and their styling



sets them apart from all other BMWs. No one on my block has anything like it. No one in my town has anything like it. Heck, I can go weeks in SoCal without seeing another Coupe.

Maria and I set out for Monterey on Highway 1. The road is not really fast what with all the sight-seeing traffic but its curves and occasional speeding opportunities make it shifter's delight. Los Angeles to Monterey might be a one-day drive, but we chose to stretch that out with an overnight in Cambria. There is so much to experience, and though we have driven the road dozens of times, it always feels fresh; it liberates us from the demands of our busy Orange County environs. Highway 1, perched on the cliffs of the Pacific with tremendous views, winds through Big Sur and it's hippie vibe, slinks like a sinuous spool of ribbon, luxuriously patterned with towering redwood trees casually rolled out of the hand of a bearded commune dweller. The road slows down at the few human settlements. Outposts appear out of the mist and fog as ghostly relics from another time offering grub and java. Then we turn into a dirt parking lot to see elephant seals heaved on the beach like giant slugs, eighteen feet of snorting jello, flaccid life forms in silvery greys and speckled tans coming from a mile-deep dive in the Pacific. On shore, they rest for a month before heading out again for hour-long dives into depths where darkness is blacker than midnight.

The big Dorkfest event was Saturday morning, our gathering at Laguna Seca - Mazda Raceway as it is formally known. The yips, yaps and yelps of modified M motors heralded our arrival. We lined up our coupes on the infield like children putting their favorite candies all in a row. A string of bright blues, burnished reds, a cheerful yellow and a couple of greens were set off by glistening silver, formal black from a British butler, and virginal white. Well, maybe not virginal but still looking fantastic,





ethereal. A total of thirty-five cars were at the track that day, a good number when considering the total production numbered below five thousand and the passage of time plus the travails of the track have shrunk the number considerably.

Most cars were driven from within California, but there were plenty of out-of-staters. Steve Nuss from the Northwest drove south in his Boston Green Z3 Coupe. He is a first timer at Dorkfest who purchased his car a year and a half ago. Steve has been busy trying to change the window glass on his coupe so that it rolls down completely, something that has consumed his life for over a year. You know how on some cars the edge of the window glass does not go completely down? And you can't hang your left arm on the door when boulevard cruising? I can't roll down Main Street without hanging my arm on the door ledge, my elbow casually slung poser-style. It's a reflex! Steve explained his efforts to fix this with parts from other Z3 models, including window glass, scavenged parts, and his own inventions. What I liked about Steve's car is that it is a work in progress, a commuter Coupe lavished with love on a way to a better life. Gotta see this car next year!

Tony and Kaye Jajou came in from Texas. They drove their '99 Evergreen Coupe from Austin, in the Hill Country. The turbo-assisted motor and a dozen other mods must have made for a quicker trip. Well, it started with a dash of velocity; in the first thirty minutes the authorities issued a warning for speeding. Tony and Kaye courted in the Coupe, and the Evergreen color was part of the initial attraction for Kaye. Tony, being a great guy, listened carefully to a wonderful woman and of course love blossomed as vacations in the Coupe became more frequent. Then came the inevitable - marriage! Dorks are romantics too if you hadn't already guessed this.

Ryan Carter from the National Capital Chapter shipped his '02 Black Sapphire Metallic with Black Nappa leather from Baltimore. Ryan's car was so clean it looked like it had been dipped in chocolate sauce and set to dry. Yes, it was downright edible as a See's candy. A chip and other mods give the car "zip and zing," as Ryan puts it. Ryan had wanted to attend Dorkfest for many years, and finally made good on his wish. Like all of us, Ryan was amazed to see the many collector BMWs shipped from Germany on display for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We would have to fly to Munich to take in a more dazzling display of history.

The absolute highlight was our four laps on Laguna Seca Raceway. These were parade laps led by instructors who took it pretty easy on us. The Goddess of the Dorks, Delight Lucas, gave a royal wave as her retinue entered the track. Or was it best wishes for surviving the torturous turns laying in wait? For most of us this excursion onto the track was thrilling beyond words. The Corkscrew, the turn you always read about, is like nothing you will ever see on an American Highway. A steep uphill curve

suddenly crests and in less than a blink twisty corners way down there demand negotiation. It's as if a slide show suddenly shifted from cute photos of cuddly Teddy Bears to Godzilla ravaging the landscape. The challenge of a steep downhill screams orders like a Marine drill sergeant to recruits on a live firing range: shift weight and control speed on compound S curves! Living through the Corkscrew is a like being in heavy surf and swimming toward a huge wave because the shore is too far to go back, diving under the monster wave, and then emerging to find a bigger wave farther out. There are no lifeguards. There is no turning back - just the intense, pure thought of survival. I was behind Alan Ning in his 2002 M Coupe, a silvery thing of jewel-like beauty polished to perfection with engine mods and fat tires. I wanted to shout "Slow down, Alan!" I used all my available power to the maximum to stay with him. Keeping up with the pack was imperative.

Monterey is near some of the prettiest coastal driving you will ever enjoy. The famed 17 Mile Drive wends through stunning scenery of jagged cliffs sprouting angular cypress trees, rocky beaches drawn from a murder mystery, and architecture that will make you say (silently) "I wish I could live here." As a warm up for Dorkfest fifteen Coupes with assorted passengers toured on a leisurely putt through scenery from a Clint Eastwood movie. Yes, Carmel is where Eastwood was once mayor, after he starred in the thriller *Play Misty for Me*, an experience almost as nail-biting as motoring through the Corkscrew.

Before we knew it, Dorkfest was done. Maria and I were on our way home, tootling down a three-lane freeway in a fairly crowded pack traveling at just a bit over the speed limit. The experience of laps at Laguna Seca made me more aware of my surroundings. You know - the current topics of mindfulness and situational awareness that we read and hear about. Our freeway drive home (read a further accounting in my *An Accidental Bimmerphile* column) was punctuated by a situation like none other in my driving of fifty-plus years.

Dorkfest has its own social web, its own interwoven collection of individuals whose aim is camaraderie and helpfulness, and that is what keeps drawing me back. The car is wonderful. I never tire of looking at it, stroking it, smelling the leather, and listening to its engine song beckoning the road, but it is my Dorky friends who bring from the depths of my soul a yelping tribal whoop of joy. Looking for a Coupe to make your own? Checkout Jon Martin's excellent [mcoupebuyersguide.com](http://mcoupebuyersguide.com). This site has excellent articles and a listing of Coupes for sale anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, everything from daily drivers and track cars to low mileage collectors ready for your giant display box.

Come to next year's Dorkfest! There you will find a sunny, congenial group and you can check out the most amazing collection of Coupes anywhere on the planet. This is surely easier than traveling to Munich. ■

## NEW MEMBERS

Jeremy Adajar  
Dale Alberstone  
John Alcober  
Ridge Altman  
Jorge Andrade  
Aaron Augusto  
Brian Berces  
Leah Berry  
Holger Besch  
Nick Bozorgi  
Casey Brennan  
Alec Broutian  
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Chloe Carson  
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J. Christopher Hamilton  
Patrick Hannaway  
Stephen Harvey  
Mark Hestrin  
Jeremy Ho  
Paul Hughes  
Chris Hutchinson  
Karen Hybridge  
Amar Isterabadi  
Susan Johenning  
Ilyas Karaalp  
Kody Khosrowpanah  
David Kim  
Hakim Kriout  
Fred Kumetz  
Chris Kwak  
Andrew Lambert  
Dwight Lee  
James Lin  
Sujeethnath Lingutla  
Wendy Maduff

Vache Margoussian  
Enrique Martinez  
Ron Mass  
Elizabeth Morales  
Jojo Morales  
Aya Morales  
Jose Morales  
Andrew Musselman  
Anthony Nguyen  
Benjamin Norrie  
Robert Notarnicola  
Kenneth Oneill  
Nels Ortlund  
June Paik  
Aaron Pardue  
Jaden Park  
Adam Parrish  
Pritul Patel  
Ciaran Patrick  
Art Peters  
Steven Phillips  
Bruce Pollard  
Roy Pollock  
Kim Puliti  
Julian Ramm  
Sanaz Rashidfarokhi  
Tori Richardson  
Alexander Richter  
Carolo Rocha  
Meg Rogers

Nolan Rogers  
Matthew Schmitt  
Garrett Scott  
Mason Shieh  
Wail Shoga  
Matthew Silverman  
Calvin Slater  
Glenn Snyder  
Andrew Spanswick  
Mathew Spindler  
Evan Stalker  
George Tanaka  
Henry Ting  
Joshua Tollefson  
An Tran  
Burton Tripathi  
Eng Ul  
Julia Vyborny  
Malte Wagener  
Mike Wagner  
Jonathan Waltman  
Michael Wilson  
Sonny Windstrup  
Christopher Wombold  
Ronald Yarris  
Eric Yoshinari  
Samuel Yu  
Juan Zhao

**JUNE**

BMW CCA Los Angeles Chapter Board of Directors elections

**JUNE 2-3**

Bimmerfest at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana

**JUNE 4**

Huntington Beach Concours held at Huntington Beach Central Park, 7111 Talbert Ave, Huntington Beach, California. Contact: Fred Larimer – fred@fredlarimer.com; Chris Macha - cmacha@socal.rr.com; or Mike Burger - chileburger1@hotmail.com for more information.

**JULY 11-15**

BMW Club O'Fest in New Orleans

**AUG. 18**

Legends of the Autobahn in Monterey

**AUG. 19-20**

Festorics at Laguna Seca



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# DIVA'S WORLD

## Wine, wine, wine ...

by Diva Moose



After several years of participating in the L.A. Chapter's Wine Tour weekend, I'm starting to fancy myself a budding wine connoisseur. The Wine Weekend is held in October and for the past few years, has been arranged by Gerhard Fehrmann (along with oversight from his charming wife, Isolde).

This year's weekend took place in the Santa Maria & Santa Barbara areas. Lodging was at the classic Santa Maria Inn. Many people arrived at the hotel on Friday in order to catch up with friends and awaken fully rested on Saturday, the first day of wine tasting.

As we've come to expect, Gerhard lined up seven great wineries for our two days of tasting. This year, we visited Chamisal Vineyards (San Luis Obispo), Kynsi Winery (Arroyo Grande), Wolff Vineyards (San Luis Obispo), Sextant Wines (San Luis Obispo), Cambria Wines (Santa Maria), Kenneth Volk Vineyards (Santa Maria) and Martian Ranch & Vineyard (Los Alamos). As you can imagine, there is little chance of going thirsty on this tour! Tastings usually include a progression of whites and reds, and on occasion, a dessert wine.

Dining is also top rate. Barbeque was on the menu for lunch on Saturday at Wolff Vineyards and on Sunday we gathered at Martian Ranch & Vineyard with plenty of food for everyone.

Dinner on Saturday night was at the Hitching Post 1 in Casmalia. (Hitching Post 2, in Buellton, was featured in the movie "Sideways" for those of you who need to know) The food, beverages, and laughter with old and new friends at "HP1" certainly was a big part of this great weekend.

Despite the rainy weather, everyone had a great time and I suggest that you keep an eye open for the 2017 tour next October.



*The wind got the better of us!*





## ONE QUESTION and FIVE (+ One) ANSWERS

When the Club hosts a TRSS, we encourage parents to stick around and watch their children learn about safe driving. While we were there in December, we asked some of our parents why they signed their children up for TRSS and what they thought the kids would get out of the class. Here are six points of view.

### JIM ADAMS (daughter Corbie)

It was Jim's idea that Corbie (licensed for 1 ½ years) sign up for TRSS. Her older sister gained so much confidence from the class when she took it, Jim knew that Corbie would also get a lot out of attending. Jim wanted to make sure that his daughter could better control the car in any situation.

### SUSAN FRENCH (son Graeme)

Susan signed her son up in hopes that he would exchange his (teenage) cockiness and fear for confidence. Graeme got a 2009 335 for Christmas this year and he has already said he wants to retake TRSS in his "new" car to gain even more confidence in his driving.

### KIM GASCON (son Daniel)

"Along for the ride" with Jim Adams, Kim signed her son up for the class because she wanted Daniel to be more confident and safe driver. Daniel just got his car and she wanted to make sure he learned how to handle it.

### MONIQUE HOLZMAN (daughter Ilana)

Monique's son had previous taken the class, so she knew how much Ilana would get out of it. Her husband recommended that their daughter take the class to learn how to maneuver her car.

### MARY & PHIL IRWIN (daughter Krystal)

A close friend from Virginia suggested that they sign Krystal up for TRSS. Mary told us that their daughter was not a "natural" driver and was very timid behind the wheel. There have been a couple of near misses and they thought Krystal would gain confidence from participating in TRSS. They were particularly concerned because several times a week, their daughter drives from Pasadena to Mission Viejo and she needs to be able to handle many types of traffic issues.

*[Editor's note: while I was talking to them, their daughter was practicing quick starts and stops. Mom could swear that daughter Krystal laid rubber and she was jumping up and down with delight]*

### NORMAN NIE (daughter Katie)

Surprise! Katie didn't know that dad had signed her up for TRSS. Norman didn't have anything like this as a kid, so when other parents in their neighborhood suggested attending, he thought this was a great idea. He thinks that Katie will gain street smarts and TRSS was a good way to experience something she normally wouldn't.



# SILENT BOMB?

by Bill Blowers

While pondering subjects for our quarterly mag, it dawned on me that **"Whispering Bomb"** is an excellent description of my Tesla Model S. I have gotten so used to its silent operation, that the engine noise, transmission shifts and exhaust sounds of our E-350 Mercedes have become foreign to me.

Don't get me wrong. I love the sound of a powerful V8 engine, the unmistakable rumble of a Harley and that spine tingling roar of high powered race cars hurtling down the back stretch. The exhaust note of my Z4 was music to my ears. But as I approach my advanced years, I find that the quiet smooth operation of a well-designed and manufactured all-electric car adds to the relaxation and enjoyment of driving. The silent powerful acceleration as I pull away from a traffic light presses against my back, brings a smile to my face and leaves confused stares on the faces of drivers left behind.

I just finished, **"Owning Model S – The Definitive Guide to Buying and Owning the Tesla Model S"**, a great read for those who own or are considering the purchase of a Tesla and I might add, recommended reading for all car enthusiasts. Author Nick Howe has published a terrific guide to the car, its features - and its foibles.

Being an engineer, I have been searching for information on the technical side of Tesla, and this book didn't disappoint. Among the many questions I have pondered is, "How do they get such long distance mileage without any loss of performance?" Tesla's miles per charge, 290 miles for the model 90D, is about three times greater than other all-electric cars. And this is accomplished in a full size, fully equipped, luxury sedan weighing 4848 lbs.

In short –it's all about the battery and its management.

Based on some research, and a few of my own engineering assumptions, the 90 KW battery apparently consists of 7104 individual Lithium-ion cells, each about the size of a large 'AA' battery. Indications are that they are arranged into 16 groups of 444 cells each. The cells are a co-development of Tesla and Panasonic with most of the technical details of their make-up and charge/discharge management closely guarded secrets. It is believed that the battery has been designed for 3000 charge/discharge cycles without significant degradation (about 8 ¼ years of daily charge and use). The complete battery pack measures 107 x 54 x 4.5 inches and weighs approximately 1000 lbs. Occupying the entire undercarriage of the car, it is enclosed in a liquid cooled titanium case for protection from damage as well as a safety measure against catastrophic battery failure. That much weight, centered as it is at the very bottom of the car contributes to the car's flat handling.

Through the magic of controlling battery chemistry, Tesla engineers have managed to significantly increase the power density of the batteries, well beyond the normal capability of 'standard' Lithium-ion cells. The voltage output of the battery pack is 375 volts DC, which is electronically converted to variable frequency AC to power the induction motor(s).

It is interesting to note that Tesla's usage for batteries,

especially with the planned production rate for the recently announced Model 3, will soon outpace the entire world's production capacity for Lithium-ion cells. To face this problem head-on, Elon Musk, not known for timidity in his quest to create life-changing technology, has built the "Giga-Factory". This huge battery manufacturing facility, current nearing completion near Sparks, Nevada, will produce batteries for Tesla automobiles and the "Power Wall", another of Musk's innovative all-electric energy projects, Solar City.

As one who looks forward to the return of manufacturing to the United States, it is notable that the Tesla is manufactured in California – a state not noted for a business-friendly atmosphere. Musk also manufactures Space-X rockets in Hawthorne CA, and does so at a fraction of the cost of the big companies in the aerospace industry.

Last August, on a very hot day, we drove to Las Vegas, our first long distance Tesla trip. As we left Santa Clarita, the battery charge level was at 285 miles. As we approached Barstow, 165 miles of range remained. We pulled into a super charger station, plugged the car in and walked about 100 feet to Chili's restaurant and had lunch. Forty-five minutes later, my iPhone beeped. The car was fully recharged – my cost, \$0.00. When we arrived at the Venetian Hotel on the Strip a few hours later, 120 miles of range remained. I parked at the hotel's free recharging station, hooked up the car, and went off for a few days of fun and relaxation.

An interesting thing happened on the way home. Coming from Las Vegas, there is a long downhill grade, about 25 miles, on the approach to Baker, CA. As we began the descent, I noted the charge level in the battery – 195 miles. For the full downhill run at 70 MPH, the car was in regenerative braking mode, i.e. the forward kinetic energy of the car was charging the battery. When we passed Baker, the battery charge was at 207 miles. The car's regeneration had recovered enough energy to add 12 miles of distance. Think of it like this – a small refinery under your hood that converts engine heat back into gasoline.

In my last column, I was critical of Tesla's software problems. There has been a constant litany of complaints from Tesla owners, who, like me, were a tad upset that a car that cost upwards of \$85K and beyond constantly suffered from annoying screen failures.

There have been two recent software downloads from Tesla that added functionality and simplicity to the touch screen controls. Since then – no more screen failures. It's been about three months now, and everything continues to work as it should. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Whatever they did, it's a big step in the right direction.

This illuminates a unique aspect of the Tesla design, which, depending on your point of view, is either good or bad. The car is constantly connected to the Internet. Tesla can change just about anything in the car through a software download. True, I have to agree to accept the download, so I do have some control, but since downloads always improve or repair a known problem, I'd be foolish to refuse. And it's nice to have a car I don't have to take to the dealer to have a bug fixed.

But I ask myself – is Big Brother watching? ■

## A DAY IN THE SUN: The 9th Annual SoCal Vintage BMW Meet

*by Tom Jacobsmeyer*

It was bright and sunny in SoCal...something we would regret a bit later in the day. We started with our usual meetup at the corner lot on Woodley Ave and Victory Blvd. at 7:30AM next to the famous Henry's Charbroiler, a notable local Greek restaurant, home of the breakfast gyro. Gathering before an event creates some anticipation for the "roll-in" and pumps up the excitement for the event. It's always fun to chat and warmup with some catch-up and car talk before we move out. We were joined by two new members for the short trip down the street to Woodley Park in Van Nuys CA and they fell in line like troupers. Gary, our fearless vice president, has become pretty adept at leading the SoCalEights convoy from place to place; he's had a lot of experience with it over the years. We rolled out in an impressive line of fourteen 8 Series BMW's making it all the way down to the park entry before being split into two groups (parking guys have no sympathy for an orderly line of Eights) as we rolled into the Woodley Park staging area.

We all got back together at the end of the long line of staged cars waiting to make the winding procession into the park. By the time all the E31's had arrived we were 19 strong at the start, a pretty decent showing. Southern California seems to have the highest concentration of 8 Series cars in the world which makes for a great show when we roll in. The SoCal car culture term for this is "comin' in heavy". We hear that phrase pretty regularly at all the events we attend. It's also nice to get all the "thumbs up" from people lining the route to the display area.

After about 20 minutes we started the procession to the display area. This year was a bit of a problem in that the city had not watered the park grass due to the severe drought we are seeing in Southern California and the grass was pretty sparse. In spite of the slow speed, the amount of dust that we created was pretty disheartening. Right after all the cars were parked, all the dusting implements appeared out of trunks everywhere. This was a pretty much the requirement for the day, but most people giving up as a lost cause by noon. I know the SoCal Vintage BMW organizers were frustrated as well but we all had no control over the city's watering plan.

After everyone was parked we counted about 350 participants for the event. I think that this is the largest crowd we have ever had and is one of the larger BMW





events (Bimmerfest excepted) in the area. The number and variety of BMW's is pretty amazing. The meet is comprised of pre-1989 BMW's that were pretty widely represented. This is the show that, last year, Mike Brewer of "Wheeler Dealers" wandered around buying parts for their BMW project show. Although there seemed to be fewer vendors this year, it was still a great show.

There was also a nice assortment of "unique" BMW's, some meeting with the season, since Halloween was just a few weeks away. The creativity that owners express is always an interesting break from the beautifully restored models that all show at this event.

There were several cars that could be described as rowdy. The 2002 conversion into an off-road, Mad Maxx version was pretty interesting. It garnered a lot of attention and was a crowd pleaser. Many asked how they could do that to a nice 2002. We heard that it was a junker car from top to bottom and is not actually a 2002 in the frame. Everything was hacked together and the car was, for all intents, free as it's made of junk parts...and looks like it.

Did I mention it was a hot day? The temp soared in sunny SoCal. Shade, water, and sunscreen were a must. The SoCalEights campfire (a figurative description here, not actual) gathered under a popup that offered some relief from the heat.

It was a trick following the shade as the sun moved; being under the canopy was not necessarily where shade accumulated. Everyone shared their resources (thanks to Steve K. for bringing a ton of drinks), and we stayed cool.

Wandering around the event was a bit of a trek, with a water bottle in hand a must. As we reviewed all of the cars we had a new awards process this year that was better than carrying a paper ballot and wondering where you dropped your pencil. The voting was conducted by app we accessed on our cell phones. It was easy to use but there was some confusion as to the categories. We think, given it's the first year it was used, that it will clear up next year. It was a good use of technology instead of counting all the paper ballots. Counting ballots has always been a long, tedious process for the organizers and this moved the process along quickly.

When all the ballots were counted SoCalEights members scored the Best of Show-Armen D. (a member who brought his E24 M6) and Alec C. in his brand-new-to-him Hellrot, 1995 850 CSI won Best 8 Series (there were other non-SoCalEights E31's there). Congratulations to Alec and Armen in keeping with the SoCalEights tradition of Perfection! ■

# ACCIDENTAL BIMMERPHILE

*by Mike Buhbe*

You know the feeling of driving home after a wonderful time with friends.

A car entering the onramp caught my attention. Going a tad fast. Going much too fast! The silver car was veering at a wide angle into the center lane toward another car.

We were returning from Oktoberfest in August, Maria and I, motoring on the 101 through the peaceful valley with agricultural fields rolling into view, hypnotized by the rows of crops and trees marching ahead of us with their multiple lanes of symmetry opening and closing like a game board studded with thousands of pins stuck into a precise grid. The trip home is always a mixture of satisfaction that the main goal has been reached and that the comforts of my own surroundings will soon wrap me in a familiarity, all ready for a snuggle.

The trip north to Monterey for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party of BMW in August had been both fun and exciting. We made the journey a two-night trip, though we have made it in one day. Driving up Highway 1 in my M Coupe, a world-class drive, had been the absolute best way to travel this sinuous, scenic stretch of California beauty. Though fast driving is limited by the rules of common sense and the impediment of a steady stream of traffic, driving a five-speed in a BMW is never the less a thrill. There are brief stretches where nailing the go-pedal is possible and the M performance engine sings its distinctive metallic song, baying toward the romance of the road. At times I would slow down to open a long gap between me and the car in front, enough of a gap to then punch the accelerator in an open corner before catching up with the string of cars. This had to be done where I could see the road ahead. I did not want to find a bicyclist around the bend hugging the shoulder, sparing the gravel and dirt by an inch or two, presenting an obstacle on this very narrow road made in the days of the Model A. I drive a lot more safely than in my younger, crazier days.

An American road is renowned when you see shiny new convertibles tootling along with their tops down in either fog or bright sunlight. These are the international travelers with gobs of money who can afford to live the dream of a California road trip in a rental Camaro or Mustang, and what better road than Highway 1? We residents of the Golden State know better than to expose ourselves to the toxicity of cancer-causing sunrays. Cold fog condensing damply on the hair? Well, that is no fun. If you want to drop the top it is best to find a warm summery night,

let's say in Palm Springs, when you can cruise the boulevard at a reasonable speed without being whipped by wind that quite literally beats the cells out of your face.

Before we knew it, Dorkfest, that happy gathering of M Coupe drivers, was done. Maria and I were on our way home, tootling down a three-lane freeway in a fairly crowded pack traveling at just a bit over the speed limit. The experience of laps at Laguna Seca Raceway made me more aware of my surroundings. You know - the current topics of mindfulness and situational awareness that we read and hear about.

The silver car entering too fast veered crazily and in a blink smacked a blue car in the center lane. Both spun.

My immediate concern was for my own safety. As the cars spun I could not know where they would end up, or if other cars would be involved. My awareness of the traffic in front of me, next to me, and behind me became acute. I remembered hearing racecar drivers saying that when they see cars colliding there is no way of knowing where to steer to safety. Braking was my safest course. As I braked I watched the cars on all side of me to see if my compatriots in this intimate moment were paying attention.

Bits of glass, rubber, and metal flew in the air in a cloud of thin blue smoke, a blurry fog of detritus, as though a child had thrown sand into the air on a windy day. Time did not slow down for me, as I have heard it does for some. In as much time as it takes the reader to process the above sentences both cars had hit and came to a complete standstill. Scattered on the freeway were markers of the impact: silver strips, black dull chunks, crystal shiny things - a radius of obstacles testifying to the rapidity with which life can come completely undone. They all lay perfectly still.

The driver of the errant silver car, a young woman, sprang out of her car within seconds of impact. With lightning speed she sprinted to the shoulder clutching her head with both hands, eyebrows arched in a cartoonish V of ultimate distress, her face contorted with a sorrow beyond what I wanted to know.

I was completely stopped. So were all the rushing cars behind us, miraculously. We were all paying attention. Immediately people got out of their cars to dial 911 and to comfort both the victim and the perpetrator. There was no blood and no serious injury as much as we could tell, but the damage was greater than crushed metal and deployed airbags. These were two older sedans, most likely destined for salvage or scrap.

It always amazes me to think of the high speeds at which we travel. For almost the whole of our lives we do

this safely for thousands of miles, for days and years at a stretch. We assume that because we have done this for such long periods of time that everything will continue as it always has, lulled into security.

I had never been this close to a serious accident, a collision right in front of me, a smack down of forces that could have involved me had I been daydreaming or distracted. It was a hideously intimate moment. All of us on the freeway were part of an instantaneous social web, practicing safe driving and helping those in need.

The young woman crouched on the shoulder, her mouth opening and closing in the immediate aftermath, wordless to us in our car with the windows rolled up. Her shoulders heaved and in this silent movie we could see sobs as great as any I have ever known. I pushed the window button down.

"I hit her! I hit her!" she screamed over and over, endlessly repeating her terrible mantra.

A young man wrapped his arms around her and repeated his own mantra: It's OK. It's OK. It's OK. Still she would not stop her sobs and cries of guilt.

A dozen or more cars had stopped. It was clear who was at fault. No one was bleeding. Fate allowed us to roll up our windows, restart the engine, and complete the journey home in safety, as though nothing at all had gone wrong. My four laps at Laguna Seca had made me a better driver, more aware of my surroundings.

On the way home where everything is in order, vigilance at all times is the watchword. ■

## LOS ANGELES CHAPTER and the HUNTINGTON BEACH CONCOURS, June 2017

*by Fred Larimer*

Welcome to 2017, have you already planned out your car-event calendar for this year? **What are you doing on Saturday and Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>?** Huntington Beach Concours is that weekend and yes, there will be show and display classes for BMW's and Mini's. Right, it is a bit early but....

The past couple of years a small group of LA and San Diego chapter members have been participating, bringing their cars, picnic baskets, and families out to spend a day at the park, visit friends, and enjoy the cars that are competing for trophies.

Similar in format to the San Diego Chapter show held in mid-May, the Huntington Beach event is a "show-within-a-show" where the Huntington Beach Concours organizers let us BMW enthusiasts set up our own classes and judge our own group of cars.

Although different from an event like Legends of the Autobahn or So Cal Vintage, this **"show-within-a-show"** allows BMW CCA members to participate in a local event and support a good cause. Proceeds from this event are donated to the Huntington Beach Children's Resource Center at the Huntington Beach Central Library.

**Mark your calendars and join us in Huntington Beach on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

Additional information can be obtained through the following sources:

Huntington Beach Concours webpage:  
<http://www.hbconcours.org/>



In addition, you can find more information on the HB Concours through the following Facebook pages:

**Huntington Beach Concours**  
**OC BMW Concours**

## The 2017 Los Angeles Auto Show

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

There's a reason why this is considered a law. During last year's major auto show season, our friends at BMW NA had rather low-key media days. At last year's Los Angeles show, I asked Dr. Willisch why the lack of a press event. He stated that they felt that they didn't have anything truly news worthy to announce. From my review of the sales figures, BMW NA has paid a steep price for not having any major product launch press events during last year's major auto show season. Unlike past generation 3-series mid-cycle freshenings (that always included outstanding new powertrains) that historically result in significant sales increases, the 3- and 4-series year-to-year sales are down almost 30%. And while overall year-to-year sales are up almost 50%, the all-new 7-series still trails the Mercedes S-class sales by almost 35%. Unlike the Mercedes GLM and Lexus RX sales, the BMW X5 sales have decreased. And because of a rather subtle launch during last year's New York Auto Show, the e- and i-Performance model sales are almost non-existent. Despite the runaway success of the new X1 as well as significant sales increases from the 2- and the 7-series, year-to-year BMW sales are down 9%. The headline story in the 9 November Automotive News best summed up the result of BMW current product strategy: "Star Power: How Mercedes took the luxury lead, 4 years ahead of schedule."

Reviewing the sales statistics, the only good news for BMW NA is that, despite a significant sales decrease, BMW dealers still have some of the lowest inventories in the market. Because BMW will NOT need to have a fire sale to clear old inventory, the low dealer inventory helps maintain a higher BMW product resale value.

This is why I found the BMW Los Angeles Auto Show media day activity press release puzzling. Rather than focusing on the new 5-series, the one-time benchmark executive sport sedan that simply HAS to prove to the market that it is again THE benchmark, the focus was to have various senior executives available to discuss the various e (plug-in hybrid) and i-Performance (models that use the BMW eDrive electric drive technology) products.

It's clear that the executives at BMW AG and BMW NA are way too obsessed with the Toyota Prius and Tesla sales. Year to date, Toyota has sold almost as many Prius' as

3-, 4-, 5-series combined. And Tesla sales are significantly higher than BMW 6 and 7 series combined. Ignoring the fact that neither Prius nor Tesla sell at a profit, the BMW focus on the e- and i-Performance models can be viewed by some as distraction as BMW tries to develop "Ultimate Driving Machines" for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While developed with the same benchmark engineering and design attention-to-detail obsessed BMW product development processes, the North American e- or i-model sales have been much less than impressive.

Oddly enough, BMW NA thinks that they have ACES up their sleeve in order to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century "Ultimate Driving Machines." ACES stands for Autonomous, Connected, Electric, and Shared. By the way, Mercedes has similar 21<sup>st</sup> Century product development goals – though theirs are known as CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, Electric).

"Data is the new oil". The Intel CEO made this declaration during the first day of the L.A. Auto Show (now called "Automobility") media days. After being highly criticized by the Wall Street analysts for missing the mobile electronics market, Intel has decided to bet big on the ultimate performance mobile device – the automobile. Intel's contention is that for BMW and Mercedes to achieve their 21<sup>st</sup> Century product development goals, high speed in-vehicle data product processing coupled with Cloud computing connectivity is key.

Before becoming upset that cars are becoming computers on wheels, the fact is that they already are. Computers are now used to help control every major aspect of vehicle operation to the point that your new BMW performs at peak efficiency in every road and climate condition.

We are already close to achieving "Connectivity" goal. Have you noticed that Wi-Fi is now an option on the 2017 BMWs? This, combined with BMW Assist, the BMW Apps, and the GPS tracking has us as connected as we would be at home or in your office. Think about the last time your passengers looked out the windows at the view during a long drive.

Achieving the "Autonomous" goal adds the layer of complexity to achieving the "Connected" goal. To allow for fully autonomous vehicles, they must have the appropriate connection "size", speed, security, and scalability. Intel's experience with laptops and wireless office devices should help. To show their commitment to this area, they recently purchased a company that specializes in developing and producing field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs). This, coupled with the CEO's comment that they are investing

\$250M over the next five years in this area, showcases Intel's seriousness in this market.

While Intel was discussing how they were meeting the desired data connectivity, the Ford CEO; Mercedes VP, R&D; Porsche Director, Connectivity; and McLaren Director, Advanced Technology discussed how they were planning to use this new capability to improve their product operation and ownership experience. The McLaren remarks were most interesting – they discussed how the technology would be used in both the racing and street products.

The "Electric" goal discussion was also interesting. Raised only by the German manufacturers, this struck me as an overreaction to the VW diesel engine emissions scandal. The German manufacturer's reactions were clear – Audi Racing dropped their stunningly successful endurance racing program to focus on Formula E. VW will no longer sell diesel powered vehicles in the U.S. Mercedes has announced that they are studying dropping their diesel products in the U.S. And if you've visited the BMW web site lately, you'll notice that the X3d is no longer available. Prior to the VW scandal, German manufacturers were discussing how to convince the liberal European government agencies on how the latest round of imposed emission standards was impossible to meet. Thanks to VW (more precisely Ferdinand Piech), the entire German auto industry may now be permanently damaged.

The "Sharing" goal is most puzzling. Over the past eight years, the anti-car forces have been promoting the perception that millennials are shunning car ownership. These anti-car forces have been using every trick from the book, "How to Lie With Statistics", to use their questionable data to provide their point. It was quite interesting to listen to a number of presenters during the first media day discuss how recent surveys have shown that as they get older and start families, millennials are moving to the suburbs and very interested in car ownership. For us older folks, this was one of the biggest "duhs" from this event.

By the way, the other "duh" was that SUVs, CUVs, and SAVs are all the craze. When Jaguar, Bentley, and now Alfa Romeo introduce a SUV, a Mercedes full size pick up truck doesn't sound all that crazy!

The developed "sharing" technology will find a home for fleets and rental vehicles. And it's usefulness for privately owned vehicles may be questionable, unless we consider it's potential for the family car.

I was able to only attend the first media day of the L.A. Auto Show ("Automobility"), which was the manufacturer's display set up day. Promising to be on my best behavior, I was allowed access to the halls to quickly see the BMW

display being set up. I was quite pleased to see that the BMW products were targeted to the Southern California market. While e- and i-Performance models were present, there were a number M-models as well as a Motorrad product. It was great to again see my BMW product specialist friends, dressed in casual clothes while reviewing the product specifications and inspecting the displayed products in preparation for the show. Ironically, even though the media days were focusing on BMW's "green" products, it was clear that the public days focus was on their "Ultimate Driving Machines".

As an industry observer it's clear to me that there is an on-going battle in the BMW AG executive suite concerning the future heart and soul of this company. The VW diesel engine emission scandal has steered the current liberal European governments to set regulations to eventually eliminate the use of internal combustion engines. In fact, for the past eight years, our own government has been trying to do the same. The BMW management's response to these outside forces smacks of an overreaction that is already having detrimental effects to the operational and financial well-being of the company.

But both our recent Presidential election and Brexit results have given rationale thinking/true believers within the auto industry a reason to smile. Within Europe, rational thinking politicians are gaining favor within their respective countries. As it is with we Americans, the Europeans now seem tired of governments that smugly dictate how things should be because they "know better."

Casting political correctness aside, the auto industry true believers know that technology, not government regulation, can save the day. By refocusing on free market forces rather than the current social engineering, clairvoyant car companies will succeed and offer even more amazing personal transportation products to the market.

Let those of us who are the BMW faithful hope that is it these true believers that win the current battle within the BMW AG executive suites. *(Photos on Inside Back Cover)* ■



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## Los Angeles Chapter - BMW CCA Board of Directors & Staff

The **WHISPERING** bomb is published four times a year for the members of Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America, and our friends in the BMW motoring community. Since October, 1970 it has been carrying information about our club and BMW's many successes throughout the world. The ideas and opinions expressed are those of the authors. The editor ... publisher ... BMW ACA ... BMW NA ... BMW CCA and authors claim no liability for authenticity or correctness. Modifications to a new BMW may be cause to void the warranties.

The Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America (BMW CCA - LA) was founded in 1970 as the BMW Automobile Club of America – Los Angeles Region (BMW ACA - LA). As a separate club, the BMW ACA - LA was affiliated with the International Council of BMW Clubs and BMW Clubs Europa eV. In 1997, the BMW ACA - LA merged into the national BMW CCA and became the Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW CCA. The BMW CCA continues to maintain those relationships with the worldwide BMW community. The LA Chapter has grown from a few charter members in 1970 to a current membership of over 3000, one of the largest BMW CCA chapters nationwide. The Chapter includes members from Santa Barbara, to Orange County to the Inland Empire. We invite Chapter members and all owners of BMW cars to join us at our various activities. General meetings/events are open to all and are held in various venues throughout the Chapter's territory. The time and place for each event is announced on the Chapter website. The Board of Directors also meets regularly, and members may attend those meetings as well. To attend a board meeting, you can contact any board member for additional information. Upcoming events such as autocrosses, driving schools, wine tours, open houses, are also announced on the chapter website, via eBlasts and in the **Whispering** bomb. Come join us at an event, you won't regret it.

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**The 2017 Los Angeles Auto Show - Before the glitter is sprayed ...**



*Photos by James Chew*

# TAKEN AT LAGUNA SECA NEAR MONTEREY, CA

*Photo by Baabak Afshar*

