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TWO GREAT SUMMER ROADTRIPS

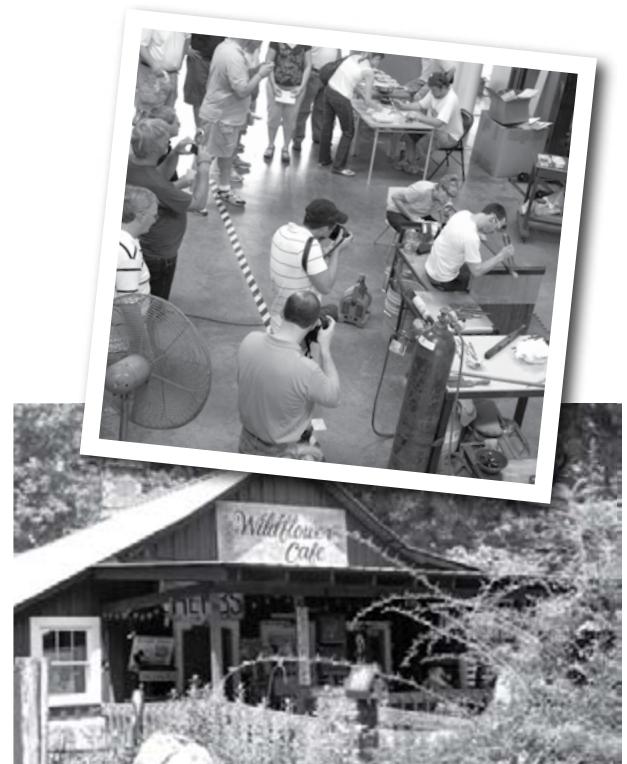
The Heart of Dixie chapter made two fun trips to destinations in Northeast Alabama over the summer. The first in July was to the little town of Mentone. Mentone used to be a vacation spot for the wealthy back in the old days before air conditioning. Higher elevations meant cooler temperatures, although it really didn't seem that much cooler to us. We may have been spoiled by air conditioning.

One group started out from Leeds Alabama and the other group started from the Huntsville area and we met in "Dogtown" to make our way to Orbix Hot Glass Studio, situated very near the beautiful Little River Canyon. We had to drive down a frightfully steep hill to get to the gallery. First, we visited the gallery to check out the beautiful examples of glass artwork. A few pieces were well out of our price range at \$1500 and more, but there were some smaller items that were affordable. We all went outside to the furnace to

watch the process of glass blowing. It was a warm day and being near a furnace made it quite toasty. The furnace fortunately was built in an open structure that allowed for plenty of shade and cross breezes. Several of our members signed up to blow their own glass Christmas ornaments. The glass blower would heat up the small glob of glass on the end of a metal tube until it was molten, then place it on a rack. The person blowing the ornament would blow through the long metal tube as the glass blower rolled the tube back and forth to distribute the glass evenly. The glass blower would then apply a little more molten glass to make a place for the ornament hook and then the product went into an oven for annealing. The ornaments were sent to their owners later since the hardening process took some time. Afterward, we made the 20 minute trek to Mentone for lunch and guitar music at the lovely Wildflower Cafe.

(continued on page)

Below, an Orbix glass artist prepares molten glass for glass blowing. At right, a member blows her own glass ornament. After the glass-blowing demonstration, the club drove to Mentone for lunch at the Wildflower Cafe.



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Here we are just finishing our 3rd quarter for 2010 and I'm really looking forward to our Fall trip to and the mountains. We're doing things a bit different this year as we'll be going to Highlands, NC and using the Inn on Main as our home for three days. Plenty of trip planning has been put into this event and we think it will be one of the best trips the club has experienced to date. For those of you who are not going along we'll miss you and hope you can make one of the future trips. We will not have a Fall trip in 2011 as we'll be hosting Octoberfest but the Fall Trip will return in 2012.

Speaking of Octoberfest, I think most of you know that the Heart of Dixie chapter (HOD) will be hosting O'Fest for 2011. The Ross Bridge Resort has been reserved for the event and Barber Motorsports Park will be the location for all track activities. Board members will be meeting with staff of the BMW CCA national organization over the next few months to get started on the details for the event. I mention all of this because we'll need some volunteers to help with every phase of activities. The surrounding chapters will be helping out too, but it's going to take a major effort given that our club isn't very large. So, I guess this is my way of asking you to consider setting some time aside to volunteer if you can. Once we have the events planned we'll know more and I'll be sending out emails to all members. For those who don't know, Octoberfest is the big deal put on by BMW CCA each fall. For a detailed description of what goes on during the week-long event, check out Troy Wesson's article on page 4. He recently made the trek up to Wisconsin to attend the 2010 Octoberfest.

Many of you reading this message might just be new to the club. Tom Williams BMW has been supplying one year BMW CCA memberships to everyone who buys a new BMW (**Thank you Tom Williams!**). So if this is your first club newsletter welcome aboard. I hope you'll come to one of our chapter events and meet some really great people who like their BMW's as a means of having some fun and not just a piece of transportation to get you to the office every day. Come on out and learn what you and your BMW can do on a beautiful Saturday when we take one of our Fun Runs to nearby points of interest. We also educate people to be better drivers as we will be doing in October as some of our members instruct at a Street Survival course at BF Goodrich in Tuscaloosa. For the adventurous, find out what your car can do on a challenging track like Barber at our yearly driver's event. We hope to see you soon!

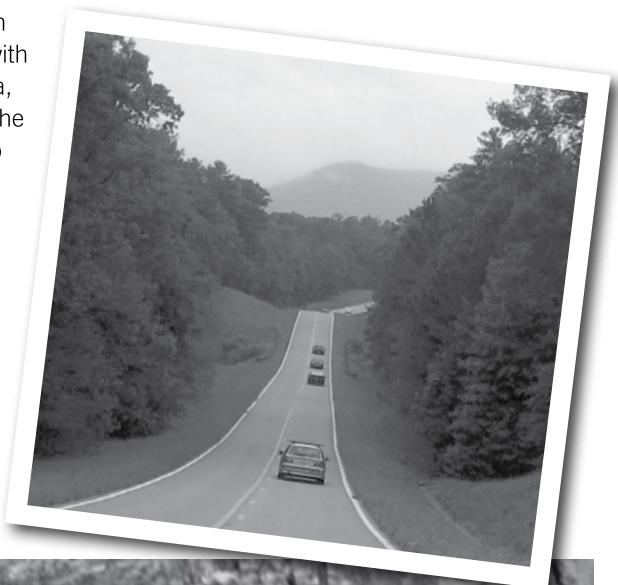
Ron



Above, scenes from Octoberfest 2010 in Wisconsin (see article on page 4). At left, an M1 on display at the concours d'elegance. At right, the BMW roundel carved from genuine Wisconsin cheese (it's more appetizing in color).

TWO GREAT SUMMER ROADTRIPS (CONTINUED)

During August, the Club took another road trip to east of Birmingham, starting once again from Leeds and heading toward Cheaha Mountain for some more changes in elevation. Cheaha State Park has the highest elevation in Alabama and connects with the Appalachian Trail. Our drive led us through some scenic parts of rural Alabama, ending at Cheaha for a stop at the restaurant for a look at the view off the side of the mountain. We then went on to another lookout point, Bald Rock, before heading to Anniston for lunch at The Mellow Mushroom.



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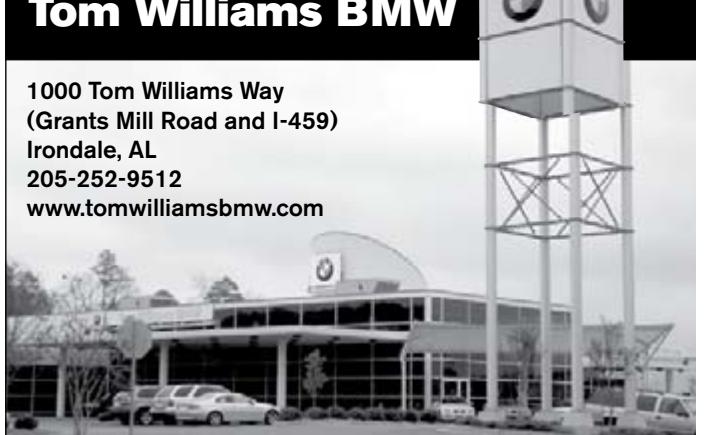


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BMW OKTOBERFEST 2010

Troy Wesson

If you have not heard, the BMW CCA Oktoberfest will be held next year (2011) at Barber Motorsports Park and the Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort in the Birmingham area. The dates are Columbus Day, Monday, October 10 thru Sunday, October 16. This will be the opportunity for the Heart of Dixie Chapter to shine and make their presence known in the BMW CCA. We will need lots of volunteers to help as well as participate, and even if you can only make it one day, it is worth it. Keep an eye on www.bmwccafest.org for details. If you would like to see pictures or video from either this year or last year's Oktoberfest, I have plenty posted at picasaweb.google.com/Troy.Wesson. Be sure to check them out!

Can you say "ROAD TRIP!"? That is what it felt like when I began planning to attend my second annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest. This year it was at Road America in the beautiful Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. Since O'fest typically conflicts with the local school schedule, I made arrangements to attend this year again with my dad, Wayne, who lives near Asheville, North Carolina. We decided to take our time getting to Wisconsin by Monday, August 23, by meeting up in Louisville, Kentucky on Friday, August 20, and taking a few days to get there.

For our adventures along the way, we spent Friday touring the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory. On Saturday, we spent the day touring downtown Chicago via the Millennium Park, Chicago River, Navy Pier, and Weber Grill restaurant. We spent the night at the Marriott Magnificent Mile, and then got up early on Sunday to head to the glass ledge skydeck at the top of the Willis (aka Sears) Tower. Sunday afternoon, we met up with the best man from my wedding (and childhood friend) to spend some time with the karts at Chicago Indoor Racing.

Monday morning was started with a personal tour of the Werk Shop (www.thewerkshop.net) in Lake Bluff, Illinois. We were greeted during the open house with the loading of an M1 for the upcoming Concours. The tour consisted of seeing numerous classic BMWs in various states of restoration - including a number of rare models.

Upon arriving at the Osthoff Resort, the host hotel, we were greeted by the friendly volunteers at registration. After reviewing the events we had signed up for, we then signed up with BMW NA to test drive some of the latest models later in the week, then hopped over to the Michelin table to get a time slot to compare various tires in matching M3s. After dropping off our bags in our room, we returned downstairs to view the vendors, pick up some goodies and enter the various raffles. That evening was the first of our weeklong dinner buffets on the lakefront and including welcoming comments, orientation and raffling off of the first of seven BMWs for the week.

Tuesday welcomed us with the same beautiful weather we experienced all week - lows in the high 50s/low 60s and highs of no more than 70 to 75 degrees. We opted not to display my 2004 330xi in the Concours and instead took off on the Fun Rally. The Fun Rally consisted of a 70 mile route through the winding Wisconsin countryside by following route instructions only and filling

in the blanks on what we saw. The winner was the person who completed the route in the least amount of time and got the most questions correct. Some of the questions were easy with others being very hard to find or requiring multiple answers between route instructions, and the first and best answer was the one you had to write down.

That afternoon we took in the concours d'elegance. There were various classes sorted by types of cars and clean and super-clean categories. There was also a display category for those who would just rather show their cars without being judged. It was neat watching the judges pick over the cars with Q-Tips. I learned to make sure you clean behind the rubber seals on your doors - wow! After the Concours, we headed out to the track to get registered and help set up for Wednesday's Gymkhana. Dinner was again on the lakefront with another great meal, attendance prizes and another BMW being given away.

Wednesday, my dad, Wayne headed over to the Car Control Clinic in my 330xi while I volunteered at the Gymkhana. The Gymkhana consisted of a mix of silly events or gates on a

timed autocross-like course. This year's theme was, of course, Wisconsin. The driver had to leave the starting gate and stop in a box. Once in the box, both the driver and passenger had to hop out and assemble a full-size plywood model of a Milwaukee manufactured Harley-Davidson. They had to bolt on two wheels and hang the exhaust, engine, seat and handle bars. After the driver and passenger had their seatbelts back on, they drove through three gates to the tailgate party gate. They had to both put on Packers jackets, cheese heads, scarves, put a rubber brat on the Weber grill and pour a beer (yellow-colored water). Of course, they had to yell, "Go Packers!". Three more gates and they were in Door County - the thumb of Wisconsin. What better way to get there than have to slalom around three cheese heads in reverse before getting to go forward again! The last gate was to race two full-size plywood cows on wheels around a mini-track of Road America. Once the cow "race" was completed, the driver and passenger got their seat-belts on and then through more gates and a 5 cheese head slalom before crossing the finishing line. Wayne and I did the whole thing in 2:37 with only one 2-second penalty for hitting one cone (or cheese). The top time of the day was 1:30.

Somewhere in there on Wednesday we did have a nice lunch buffet at the track. After cleaning up back at our room, we headed over to the famous Siebken's Resort for a volunteer



social. Siebken's is known as the place to hang out with the drivers. After that historic visit, we head on to the South Central Region (our chapter's region) Vice President's BBQ at the Fireman's Park on the lake for all of the region members. Somehow, we were never hungry all week.

Thursday, it was my turn for the Car Control Clinic. This is the same class given to teens as part of the BMW CCA Foundation Tire Rack Street Survival School. Our group had 19 students and started with 45 minutes of classroom time. Our first activity was to drive through an extensive slalom, practicing looking ahead and hand position, and then slamming on the brakes to get a real feel for the ABS. We then took two loops around a set of cones at high speed to get a feel for the tires and how the car might break traction. We then entered another series of slaloms, set up like a road with outside cones, before engaging the ABS again. We repeated the exercise 4 times with our instructor in the car.

The third activity was a much wider slalom that required more extensive and modified hand work to make each turn before entering a zone with three lanes and three red lights. You had to react at the last minute to the light that turned green, enter that lane and come to a complete stop using your ABS. Afterwards, you repeated the second slalom, but this time with an object (cone) in the middle of the route as you came around the turn. You had to either break left or right to avoid hitting it. We repeated this event 3 times. Normally this event includes a wet skid pad, but due to limited space it was unavailable this year. The Survival School hopes to bring it back next year.

After wrapping up the Car Control Clinic class, I grabbed the opportunity for a hot lap around Road America in an M5. They had a M1, M3 GTR (that I rode in last year at Road Atlanta), and a M5. I choose the M5 and my driver was Mike Renner of the BMW Performance Center. I had a blast seeing the track up close and personal and we topped out over 140 MPH in this older M5. Others who rode in the M3 say they hit 173 MPH. BMW NA later presented us each with a personal split-screen video of our ride.

If that was not enough for our day, my dad Wayne and I headed off to the BMW pavilion for some test drives that we had booked earlier. Between Wayne and I, we got 4 different cars to test drive and swapped out with each other. They planned out a recommended 20+ mile loop

that you could test drive for 30 minutes. The cars we tested were the track-ready 135i Coupe w/stick, the 335i Coupe w/stick, the 550i Gran Turismo, and X6. Lots of fun! Dinner that evening was back at the track with another buffet and more car raffles. For those that dressed warmly, they set up a drive-in movie of Ronin at Road America.

Friday morning was spent touring the area. First we got to see "Industry in Action" at the Kohler Factory. They hosted a free 3-hour tour where the tour gave you 2.5 mile walk through the factory floors. You were allowed to get up close and personal with products, heat, and workers. We got to tour many of the still operating historic buildings and see how vitreous china/fireclay products are made like toilets and sinks. We then checked out the foundry where things like faucets, sinks, bath tubs and engine parts are poured. We next headed over to another building to watch how tubs and sinks are enameled. It was really neat to see the difference between the human and robotic labor. Afterwards, we toured the museum and

design center. The design center had working models of many of their products for you to compare and about 50 "mock" bathrooms and kitchens.

After grabbing lunch in the town of Kohler and cutting through the town of Johnsonville (known for their brats), we headed back to the track to watch some friends Auto-Cross. The Auto-Cross course at Road America was built with varying elevation and is laid out like a mini race course with grass and guard rails. Afterwards, my dad and I grabbed two more BMW test drives, putting the new 535i and 328xi through their paces. That evening culminated with a grand dinner buffet on the lakefront at the Osthoff Resort. More event awards were given out and the rest of the BMW prize cars were given away. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the upcoming 1M, which was still under cover, by Dr. Kay Segler, President BMW M GmbH. No matter how hard we tried, they would not give us more than a peak of this special car they had flown over for the occasion.

For those participants that were doing driving school, the O'fest was continued into Sunday. My dad and I opted to begin to make our drive home. We chose to stop part of the way on Saturday night with a planned overnight stay back in Louisville, Kentucky. After a fantastic 9 days, we parted ways, returning to our respective homes.



ROADTRIP: BARBER MOTOSPORTS PARK

April Curtis

For the past couple of years, the HOD chapter of the BMW CCA has been holding an Instructor Training School along with the annual Driver's Event at Barber Motorsports. April Curtis, vice president of the Tarheel chapter in South Carolina, has made the trip down to Birmingham to head up our schools and help us train more Driving School instructors. The following is her description of the Barber experience. Her help has been greatly appreciated!

Last year in August, I had the enormous pleasure of making a trip down to Birmingham, Alabama, to facilitate Instructor Training School (ITS) for the Heart of Dixie (HOD) chapter. When HOD called me again this spring, I leapt at the chance to see Barber Motorsports Park again, and to actually drive it in my own track car. (Last year, I flew down, and my experience on the track was, uh – limited.) Of course, driving Barber in my own car meant talking Paul into being a mentor, so we could navigate our truck and trailer down there with BOTH cars. That conversation took roughly 8.5 seconds!

We loaded up the cars and tools and tires and Magellan and left Raleigh around 6:30 Friday morning, May 28. Fiona, the bulldog, was positively stunned to see truck and trailer loaded but no invitation for her to jump on into the cab. I tried to explain to her that Barber is not like VIR. Barber does not allow dogs, not even the most human ones. The shocked look of disappointment and betrayal on her face jangled every string in my heart, as we pulled away.

Just a few miles west of Greensboro, we gave a few celebratory hoots and hollers as the truck rolled over to 10,000 miles on the odometer. Silly, I know. But with eight more hours of highway facing us, and no need to find a restroom yet, what else could we do to break up the time?

Well, there was The Peach. As I-85 approaches Gaffney, SC, a huge peach-shaped water tower comes into view. Wikipedia says that it is called "The Peachoid." The peach – did I mention "huge" – symbolizes Gaffney's status of "peach capital of the US." Pretty exciting, huh?

Somewhere in South Carolina, we witnessed a bizarre wreck that must have happened just a few moments earlier. It looked to us like a northbound car somehow jumped the barrier cable separating the two directions of traffic. That car had then collected two more cars in the southbound lanes. People had already stopped to help, so we went on our way, shaking our heads in puzzlement that the barrier cable had not stopped the car from crossing into the southbound lanes.

From that point, it was easy driving for a good long hitch. We passed by the exit for Road Atlanta, resisting the temptation to stop in for a few laps. Around 15 miles north

of Atlanta, traffic suddenly clotted into multiple lanes of chock-a-block cars creeping along at less than 30 MPH. I had a few random thoughts about the meaning of quality of life, thinking about how happy I was that I don't have to make that drive every day. We finally peeled off onto I-20 toward Birmingham, and traffic gradually thinned out.

The instant we crossed the border from Georgia into Alabama, the speed limit plummeted from 70 MPH to 55 MPH! No rhyme or reason – the area looked thinly developed. My cynical mind came up with a possible explanation having to do with revenue opportunity for eastern Alabama, combined with a holiday weekend. In addition to the change in permissible speed, we also had to set our watches back an hour, as Alabama is on Central time.

We arrived at Barber Motorsports Park around 3:45 local time. If you've never been there, it is something else to

behold! The park, from perimeter road to Barber Motorsports Museum to paddock to track, is landscaped to the hilt and adorned with beautiful, whimsical, humorous metal sculptures. There are a couple ponds on the property, one of which holds a sculpture of a man climbing out of the overflow pipe. Or perhaps, as someone pointed out to me, he could have been climbing into it. A little further along the perimeter road, there's a wonderful sculpture vignette depicting motorcycle worshipers dancing in metallic glee around a figure holding a bike aloft.





Each of the metal gates closing off spectator viewing areas is a work of art. For example, one gate shows a sculpture of the track layout of Barber. Another has motorcycles sculpted between the gate panels.

Bronze daisies and sunflowers lurk at the edge of the woods along the perimeter road. A pair of lions guards one entrance to the paddock. If you look closely at the top of the leader board in the infield, a cap lolls atop the board, one leg dangling lazily off the side.

The artwork doesn't end at pit-out. A gigantic metal spider graces the infield. Someone told me that the grass in that area contained an image of a spider web – unfortunately, I never saw that. Or fortunately, I never got into the grass!

The back straight features more incredible sculptures. On the hill to the right of the track, a beautiful, lacy dragonfly with a 6-foot wingspan rests on a boulder, looking more natural than the real thing. A little further down the straight, to the left, Sisyphus in metal vainly tries to push a monstrous boulder up the hill. Seeing the sights around Barber made me feel like I'd somehow dropped into Wonderland!

Then there was the track itself!! It's 2.3 miles in length with 16 turns. There is no single long straight, so it's a very busy, technical circuit with tons of elevation change and blind apexes. Some folks with high horsepower cars lament the absence of a long straight, but I loved every foot of it! I would not want to go off and take out a section of Armco or leave ruts in the beautifully manicured grass. I've heard that it is V-E-R-Y expensive to make that sort of mistake at Barber.

The Instructor Training School went beautifully. The candidates were extremely engaged throughout the two days. It

was so special to me to see them progress from nervous anxiety to relative confidence and competence by the end of the program. I'm happy to report that all of the candidates passed, and HOD now welcomes a great group of new instructors to the ranks.

I want to say a special thanks to Carol Lowery, HOD's event registrar, and Jack Joyner, the chief instructor. They are both 100% supportive of ITS and went out of their way to make the program work. I so appreciated their hospitality to Paul and me. And I send a huge load of thanks to the mentors. They embraced their roles, and they helped their candidates make huge strides along the way to riding the right seat.

The drive home was long – two wrecks either side of Charlotte slowed us down. Would I go to Barber again? Absolutely!! I'm sure there are more sculptures to see, more laps to turn, and more stories to tell.

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HEART OF DIXIE BMW CCA UPCOMING FALL EVENTS

FALL TRIP TO HIGHLANDS, NC

Thursday, October 22-Sunday October 24

Our Fall trip will be Oct 21-24 and we are headed for the mountains in North Carolina. This year we're staying in the southern Appalachians, right where the Autumn leaves should be at their best. We'll be staying square in the middle of Highlands at a B&B called "The Inn on Main", being hosted by a car buff who has helped us arrange a great weekend agenda. We'll be enjoying some of the best food in the area at restaurants like Wolfgang's, the Bistro and The Sweet Onion in nearby Waynesville, doing some excellent mountain driving and visiting a couple of highly-rated wineries in North Georgia before returning on Sunday.

KICKOFF PARTY IN JANUARY

January 2011

We are in the planning stages for the Kickoff party, so we don't have details yet. More will be published in the 4th quarter newsletter. Make note on your calendar!

NOVEMBER PLANNING MEETING

The Heart of Dixie chapter board will be meeting in November to plan activities for 2011. If you have any ideas about fun places for road trips or other activities, please contact Ron Drenning at rdrenning@albmwcca.org.



Flown from Germany for the 2010 Octoberfest in Wisconsin, the soon-to-be-released 1 series M remained under cover. (See Octoberfest recap on page 4).