

THE HEART of DIXIE

BMW CAR CLUB
NEWSLETTER

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THE HACK MECHANIC VISITS THE HEART OF DIXIE CHAPTER



Mike Renner of the Performance Center presents the coveted M School driving slot to a lucky winner.



We had great door prizes thanks to Tom Williams BMW.



The people who keep us rolling, the 2013 Board Members: Steve Lowery, Paula Holly, Jonathan Holly, Dale Sitton and Jack Joyner. Not pictured: Carol Lowery.

The Heart of Dixie Chapter gathered at Tom Williams BMW in Birmingham on Sunday, January 20th to kick-off the 2013 year. We had two guests: Mike Renner, a frequent visitor at our kick-off parties came from the Performance Center in Greenville, SC, to present a performance driving school slot to a lucky winner. We were also happy to have as our featured speaker, the Roundel's *The Hack Mechanic*, Rob Siegel. Rob has been writing his column for *The Roundel* for 25 years and has been fixing stuff for way longer than that. He shared a few observations from a lifetime of mechanical fascination, and read a few pages from his upcoming book, *Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic*.

We also had the most door prizes (and best) ever, thanks to generous donations from Tom Williams BMW. As usual, one slot for our Memorial Day Driving School was given away. If you missed out on our 2013 Kick-off, maybe you can make one of our Fun Runs, or other events we have monthly through out the year. If you've never experienced performance driving on a track, consider attending our driving school in May. You can find out more about this and other events on our website at albmwcca.org under "Driver's Education" in the menu. See page 5 for a listing of the great events we have planned. We hope you'll plan to join us at a few!

Below: Guest speaker, Rob Siegel talks about his upcoming book, *Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic*.



For more photos of this and other events, see our website: albmwcca.org.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER**Hello and Greetings to my fellow Bimmerphiles,**

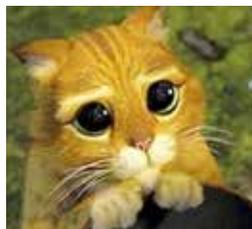
WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR! The world didn't end in 2012. We all made it..."whew". That means all the time and effort your officers put into creating a great calendar of events in 2013 hasn't been done in vain.

My sincere thanks to everyone that came out to Tom Williams BMW in Irondale on January 20th for our annual kickoff party...I hope you had fun. I want to offer my special thanks to James Corlew and Troy Conyer at Tom Williams for the use of the dealership and the raffle prizes. I also want to recognize and thank Mike Renner from the Performance Center and Rob Siegel, "The Hack Mechanic" for spending time speaking to over 100 members that attended and making it a memorable day for the chapter.

I enjoyed seeing some old friends and meeting new ones. My apologies if I didn't get to meet you in person but the kickoff is hectic to say the least with an all volunteer team but rest assured if you come to any other event this year I'll make it a point to slow down and say "Hey". I promise!

I'll keep this first President's letter of 2013 short and sweet...

I only have one wish this year for our members... make it a point of coming to at least one event this year

**PLEASE!**

We have something planned every month and all you have to do is go to our newly launched website at www.albmwcca.org to see what's planned and sign up.

Also check out the pictures from our most recent events under the "Photo Gallery" tab. Don't forget to  "Like" us on  Facebook at "Heart of Dixie BMWCCA"

On behalf of myself and the officers of the club, "Thank you all for your membership."

Happy motoring,
Jonathan



HEART OF DIXIE CHAPTER HAS A DICKENS OF A CHRISTMAS

Troy and Theresa Wesson

Ever wonder about going back to the Victorian era and experiencing a small town Christmas? The Heart of Dixie BMW Car Club did exactly that on Saturday, December 8. After meeting in Athens, fourteen cars took the scenic US31 north to the town of Franklin, Tennessee, where the city transforms itself for one Saturday and hosts their annual Dickens of a Christmas celebration.

Before joining 50,000 of our closest friends in the Victorian festivities downtown, our group gathered for lunch along the meandering Harpeth River at Puckett's Boathouse. We had a private room upstairs and enjoyed amazing seafood and sandwiches. Our wait staff had even donned Victorian garb, as is the custom at most of the restaurants on this special Saturday. Fueled with great food, our group was ready to take on downtown Franklin.

With all of the streets closed in the 15-block historic district of town, our club was treated to numerous street vendors selling crafts as well as the streetscape

trimmed out with the latest in Victorian swags and bows. Even the local shops were fully decorated as times gone by and were open for business, with staff members dressed in Victorian attire. Along the way we were greeted by over 250 costumed volunteers, portraying the characters from the story "A Christmas Carol" and other Victorian stories. The characters on hand this particular Saturday were Ebenezer Scrooge, the ghost of his partner Marley in chains, Tiny Tim Cratchit, the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, and even a fairy. The local police were also dressed up as Victorian or English Bobbies.

The area along Franklin's roundabout contained a stage with numerous musical events scheduled throughout the day. There were even horse-drawn carriage

rides available for families and individuals to experience. This event was a fantastic event, especially as part of the holiday season. Our family has already marked our calendar for next year and cannot wait to return!



Photos: Troy Wesson



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2013 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

If you're a new member of the Heart of Dixie BMW Club, you'll find that our chapter is a very active organization, holding an event usually at least once a month. Our activities include trips (fun runs) to destinations around the central and north parts of Alabama and surrounding states. We also hold a well-attended annual Kick-off Party, social gatherings, and put on a very popular Driver's School at Barber Motorsports Park. Check out our calendar for the year and mark your own calendar. *We hope to see you at a few of our events!*

JAN. 20: Kick-off Party – Tom Williams BMW

Our Kick-off Party, held in January, is one of our big events. If you missed it this year, there's always next year. See the article on page 1.

FEB. 16: Helen Keller's birthplace in Florence, AL

This home and museum room are decorated with much of the original furniture of the Keller family. Of particular note is her complete library of Braille books and her original Braille typewriter. The entire estate is nestled under a cooling canopy of English boxwoods (over 150 years old), many varieties of plants, and an abundance of English Ivy (for which the estate receives its name, Green Ivy).

MARCH 23: Jack Daniels Run with lunch at Miss Mary Bobo's

We've been going on this fun run for more than a decade because it's so much fun. The people at Miss Mary Bobo's and Jack Daniels Distillery are always in full Southern character. The food is really good too. We also stop at Falls Mill, a country store with an operating water wheel along the way.

APRIL 5-7: Honda Indy Grand Prix of Alabama at Barber

We get a special perk as a Car Club. By registering with the car club and purchasing a car corral pass, you'll be able to park inside Barber Motorsports Park in the BMW car club corral for the Indy Race weekend. Otherwise, you'll be required to park at a remote location and take a shuttle into the Park. We also organize a visit to the BMW car teams in the paddock area.

APRIL 27: Waterfall Run with Lunch in Mentone, AL

There are some nice waterfalls in this mountainous Northeast Alabama area. Mentone is a charming place to stop for lunch.

MAY 11: Silvertron Social - Brunch (Birmingham)

We meet every now for a lunch or dinner, no driving required, except to get there and back.

MAY 24-27: Driver's Education at Barber Motorsports Park

This event will get your adrenaline flowing. This is the big event of the year and your opportunity to learn to drive on one of the most beautiful and challenging tracks in the country. A driving instructor accompanies you in your car. See website for details.

JUNE: American Village, Montevallo, AL (date to be determined)

The American Village campus has replications of some of the famous buildings from America's founding. A great place to learn some American history and be entertained at the same time.

JULY: Cook out at the Sitton's Lake House (date to be determined)

Bring your bathing suit and flotation devices if you like to swim. If not, just come enjoy a cookout and good company. Location: Tuscaloosa, AL.

AUG. 17: Rickwood Caverns (Warrior, Alabama)

It's been our tradition in the past few years to take a trip to one of the many caves in Alabama during the month of August so we can stay cool in the heat of the Alabama summer. There is a lot to see and learn about at this 260 million-year-old formation.

SEPT. 21: Rattle & Snap Plantation in Mt. Pleasant, TN

Rattle and Snap Plantation was named so because the owner won the land back in the 1800s in a game of chance called "rattle and snap".

OCT. 12: Selma Ghost Tour with Costume Contest (Central AL)

Starting in Birmingham, we'll travel down to Selma for some ghost stories. We don't get down to this way very often and this will be a fun opportunity. Halloween costumes optional, but it'll be more fun if you wear one. We hope to see some of you Central Alabama people there!

DEC. 14: Christmas Dinner Cruise on the Pickwick Bell Paddle Boat

Experience the beautiful Tennessee River cruising in an authentic paddle wheel riverboat while enjoying a delicious meal and relaxing, live entertainment! Located in Decatur, AL.

TAKING A TRIP WITH THE BMW CLUB

You may have noticed that a lot of our club events are trips to points of interest around Alabama, and sometimes surrounding states. As a club, we've logged a lot of miles over the past decade or so. Usually these trips begin from a starting point in Decatur or Birmingham at around 9:00 am on a Saturday morning. We try to take our caravan on roads that are more interesting than just the interstate. North Alabama and Tennessee have some of the best roads and scenery. Depending on our destination, there may be anywhere between 6-7 cars to 15-20. We stop for usually stop for lunch along the way to our destination. If you want to join us for one of our trips, here are some suggestions as to what to bring:

- **A hand-held radio.** This is how we keep in touch on the road. If you don't have one, no problem. You can follow along without it, or sometimes borrow one from another member.
- **Snacks.** Sometimes lunch may be a little later. In that case, a snack comes in handy.
- **Rain gear.** The weather doesn't always cooperate with our travel schedule.
- **A camera, of course.** Our trips make for great Facebook postings.

DEEP THOUGHTS ABOUT GPS AND MY WONKY BMW SPEEDOMETER

Ron Drenning

By no means am I a GPS expert but started wonder about how accurate is my Garmin GPS when it comes to predicting my forward velocity. The speedometer in the Bimmer has always been overly optimistic when it comes to speed so I wanted to use the GPS to come up with a calibration curve. Before making any decisions it would be necessary to do a bit of GPS research and here is a quick synopsis of what was found.

GPS uses 24 space-bound satellites in geosynchronous orbit. The satellites know exactly where they are and with the extreme accuracy of their onboard atomic clocks any ground based GPS receiver can determine your exact location and speed. So, using your GPS receiver as an absolute standard for determining speed is perfectly acceptable provide the receiver can see four satellites. Three satellites will give you exact positioning but with four you get your altitude to boot. The fourth satellite also provides the GPS receiver a back-up calculation to improve the determination of your location.

So, let say you want to check the accuracy of your Bimmer speedometer. Find a very long stretch of road with few trees or buildings that might cause a signal to bounce. Check to see if the GPS showing your altitude as that tells you it has a lock on four satellites and you are ready to run your test. In my case, I found the speedometer is off about 5 mph at 70 mph (it reads 75).

FYI, if the GPS system did not compensate for the time dilation predicted by Einstein's theory of relativity you'd be off by almost 9 miles in positioning.



Don and Sarajane Pugh of Tuscaloosa got into character as Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus during the Christmas season. A convertible 1-series tops a sleigh and reindeer everytime, especially the heated seats.

The Benefits of a BMW CCA Membership

- **Membership Rewards: Rebates Up to \$1,500 on BMW purchase.**
BMW CCA members in good standing (membership for 12 months prior to the purchase) may be eligible for substantial rebates up to \$1,500 on the purchase or lease of a new or Certified Pre-Owned BMW from any authorized U.S. BMW Center. See bmwcca.org for details.
- **Outstanding national events** including BMW CCA's premier annual gathering, Oktoberfest, which was held for the first time in Birmingham in October 2011.
- **12-month subscription** to the Club magazine, *The Roundel*.
- **Driving schools**, autocrosses, safety schools, fun runs and Club Racing.
- **Regional club-sponsored car corrals** at major road races, like the Indy and Grand Am Series at Barber Motorsports Park.
- **Free classified ads** on the website and in Roundel magazine.
- **Access to our Technical Service Advisors** for personalized advice.
- **Ombudsmen** to help with dealer issues.
- **Friends of BMW:** A roster of fellow BMW CCA members who can offer coffee and conversation, repair tools, workspace, sometimes even help when you're out on the road.
- **Club library and video services.**
Borrow BMW-related books and videos.
- **Availability** of a BMW CCA affinity credit card.
- **Free BMW CCA decals** available from the club office.
- **Access** to all areas of the growing online community at BMWCCA.org.
- **Access** to the BMW CCA social networking tools!