THE HEART of DIXIE
BMW CAR CLUB
NEWSLETTER
2011 ISSUE NO. 4
BMW IN THE HEART OF THE SOUTH
BMW IM HERZEN DES SÜDENS

A CHRISTMAS TRIP TO 100 OAKS CASTLE

Troy and Theresa Wesson

It was a cold, brisk morning for a fun run on Saturday, December 10th! Our club met at the Shell gas station on the east side of Huntsville for a beautiful drive up to Hundred Oaks Castle, one of the thirteen remaining historic castles in the United States. While the shortest route might get us there in under an hour, it would not be a fun run if we did not fine some curves along the way!

Our caravan of 23 cars headed east on US 72 through Gurley before turning north into Paint Rock Valley. We had the road to ourselves except for dodging a few hunters in their trucks with ATVs on trailers - and even a deer. Part of the way into the drive, we pointed our cars east for a straight shot up the nearby mountain, covering over 1000 feet in elevation in under two miles. After a stop for a snack and bathrooms at the Citgo gas station in Skyline, we proceeded south down the mountain through a series of twists and turns to the bottom of Crow Mountain. The cars spread themselves along the route and each took a turn heading up Crow Mountain. This portion of the drive was a series of tight twists and turns, which included seven hairpin turns, forcing the driver to use the brake pedal as much as the accelerator! After regrouping from that exhilarating jaunt and another 1000 foot climb, we worked our way through state forests along sweeping vistas down into Winchester, Tennessee and home to the castle.

Upon arrival at the Hundred Oaks Castle, the castle owners and hosts for our visit, P.K. and Shirley Bramlett and their son, Robert, greeted our car club and welcomed us inside this amazing location. Our entire group of 45 was treated to a catered lunch in the main portion of the castle. We were seated in the main castle spaces, occupying the great room with its 40 foot ceiling, the library with its woodwork

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The end of the year is upon us and the Heart of Dixie BMW Club is winding down until the 2012 Kick-off Party on Sunday, January 22nd. We've had a nice year overall, with several successful drives, our Driving School at Barber, a tech session at Tom Williams BMW, the National Oktoberfest event hosted in Birmingham, and ending on a high note with our recent trip to the 100 Oaks Castle in Winchester, TN. We had 52 attendees and well over 20 cars. Troy Wesson did an excellent job of leading the drive and keeping all those cars together. The drive via Crow Mountain in Jackson, AL was as much fun as our holiday experience in the decorated castle (see article on page 1). Our excellent hosts at the Castle, PK and Shirley Bramlett were both captivating storytellers who shared a lot of fascinating detail about their lives, the background of the castle, and their European adventures and did so with a helping of southern charm.

On page 7 of the newsletter, we have the ballot for our new officers. You may notice that there is only one nominee for each slot, making it not so much an "election" as a "selection". If you would like to change that, get more involved in the BMW club and run as a nominee in 2014! All of our nominees are experienced in managing BMW activities. Steve and Carol Lowery, and Dale Sitton are all charter members since 1998 and Jonathan Holly has been a member for over 8 years. All have held office before, so our next two years are in good hands. Show your support for your club—mark your ballots (check "yes!"), and drop them in the mail to Dale Sitton who will be officially counting the multitude of ballots that are sure to flood in.

As I mentioned, the Kick-off Party will be on January 22nd and this year will be held at the Pelham Civic Center, conveniently located right off I-65, about 20 miles south of Birmingham. The Civic Center has a very large parking lot and we will have an Autocross Course set up outside, with lunch and socializing inside. Details will be sent via email when we get closer to the event date. If you're new to the club, this is a great chance to see just how much fun you can have in your driving machine.

The Club activities schedule for 2012 is finalized and a summary is on page 5. Be sure to mark your calendar so you plan to be a part of our events.

Well, that's it for this year. I have enjoyed being your president for the past 4 years. I hope to see you at some fun runs or at the driving school during 2012!

Ron Drenning
HOD BMW CCA President

ARE YOU RECEIVING EMAIL UPDATES FROM THE BMW CLUB?

If not, then we may have an incorrect email address on file for you. We communicate details and updates about our events by email. Many emails bounce back as undeliverable. If your address, phone number, email information has changed, then please update it with BMW CCA National. You can do this online at **www.bmwcca.org or call 864-250-0022.**

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ONLY ONE LUXURY CAR MEETS THE NEW STANDARD OF SAFETY.

A 5-star crash test rating is no longer handed out; it's earned. The 2011 BMW 5 Series is the only luxury car to be awarded an overall 5-star rating from the government's new crash test. The New Car Assessment Program testing criteria involve new standards in the rating system, including a test representing a vehicle crashing into a tree or pole, side impact test at a higher speed and a new female crash test dummy. Joy is embracing the new standards. The story of Joy continues at **bmwusa.com/5Series**.

JOY IS THE BMW 5 SERIES.

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©2011 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name, model names and logo are registered trademarks. European model shown. The 2011 BMW 5 Series received a 5-star overall rating from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safercar.gov program (www.safercar.gov). Other 2011 luxury vehicles tested include Audi, Cadillac and Infiniti. Each received a 4-star overall rating. All BMWs come with BMW Ultimate Service and Warranty standard for up to 4 years or 50,000 miles, whichever occurs first. Roadside Assistance comes standard for 4 years. See the Service and Warranty booklet for more details and specific terms, conditions and limitations. Based on $0 cost for the BMW Maintenance Program. IntelliChoice estimated cost of maintenance for a BMW for 4 years or 50,000 miles, excluding tires, is $0.

Tom Williams BMW

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A CHRISTMAS TRIP TO 100 OAKS CASTLE

(continued from page 1)

that duplicated the original library of Sir Walter Scott, and the parlor area with its decor reflecting the English garden of the castle. Lunch consisted of baked spaghetti, green beans, homemade potato chips, salad, and a castle cake dessert made from a 100 year old family recipe. After our hot meal, our hosts proceeded to inform us of the castle and its history and give us a guided tour of the entire castle, decorated for the holidays.

The Hundred Oaks Castle was built in 1830 as a plantation house by Benjamin Decherd for his 1000 acre plantation. In 1860, the property was then owned by Albert Marks, the 21st governor of Tennessee. His son, Arthur, and Arthur's wife, Mary Hunt, decided to convert the plantation house into a twelve bedroom castle. The castle then had several owners, and, in 1900, the Paulist Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church converted the castle into a school and monastery. They continued there until 1953. The castle then had several owners, and in 1975, it served as a restaurant and club. The castle later became the Franklin County Adult Activity Center until May 1990 when a horrible fire occurred.

In 1996, the castle was purchased by the Bramletts as part of a charitable foundation for restoration. They have spent their time meticulously restoring the castle and furnishing it with an eclectic mix of antiques and unique items from around the world. Besides the great room, the "Sir Walter Scott" library, and the parlor area, the castle had numerous restored bedrooms within its main portion.Right outside the great room, through a door, the Bramletts created a fantastic grand courtyard or deck area. Using the connecting castle brick walls that remained after the fire, the deck featured areas with tables for gathering and even an outdoor room or area.

After our guided tour, our car club was permitted to climb one of the castle turrets that had been restored. This turret was 80 feet tall, and after a winding staircase and four flights of open stairs, we were presented with a glass room that provided a sweeping view of the grounds and nearby town. Our numerous BMWs and cars could be seen winking back at us through the trees, looking as if they were right at home at such a prestigious location.The turret featured bedrooms along each level or flight of stairs, with a cozy kitchen and delightful bathroom on the ground floor.

The Hundred Oaks Castle Fun Run was a great social event, with many of first timers enjoying the exhilarating drive, great fellowship and historic site. Can't wait to see all of our new friends on our next fun run in 2012!

2012 EVENT SCHEDULE

The Heart of Dixie board members met early in December to decide on our events for 2012. We've got some excellent activities scheduled monthly. **Take a look and be sure to MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Sun., January 22: Kick-off Party at Pelham Civic Complex.

Sat., February 18 - Sun. February 19: Valentines Day Fun Run to Florence, AL.

Sat., March 24: Chattanooga, TN Fun Run.

Friday, March 30 - Sat., March 31: Rolex Race at Barber Motorsports Park.

Saturday, April 28: Fun Run to Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Cullman, AL (north of Birmingham).

Sat., May 12th: Brunch at Silvertron Cafe in the Forest Park area of Birmingham.

Sat., May 26 - Sun., May 27 (Memorial Day Weekend):
Driving School at Barber Motorsports Park in Leeds, AL.

Sat., June 23: Cookout at Dale and Linda Sitton's Lakehouse in Tuscaloosa, AL.

Sat., July 21: Fun Run to Anniston Museum of Natural History and lunch.

Sat., Aug. 18: Dismals Canyon Fun Run (North Alabama)

Sat. Sept. 8: Winery Fun Run in North AL. We will have a group starting from both the Birmingham and Huntsville areas to meet at the destination.

Thurs., Oct. 18 - Sun., Oct. 21: Fall trip to the Smokies.
More details to come.

Sat., Nov. 10th: Huntsville social. More details to come.

Sat., Dec. 8th: Fun Run to historic downtown Franklin Tennessee for "A Dickens of a Christmas".

Free BMW tech help.

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Check it out at blog.BavAuto.com...

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!

THOUGHTS ON MAINTENANCE FOR NEW BMW OWNERS

Ron Drenning

We've gained quiet a few new members this last year so for you newbie's here are a few thoughts about maintaining you new BMW.

BMW NA provides a solid plan to keep your car in great shape during the warranty period but what about after warranty. Well, BMW has the answer – buy a new BMW—but not all of us will be doing that as we plan on keeping our toys for much longer. If you are among those (and many of our members are) do some planning now to keep your Bimmer in good shape.

Lifetime Fluids are the big thing these days and they sound really great because it lets you off the hook on keeping up with your Bimmer needs but don't be fooled—lifetime fluids are an invention of the Marketing Department not the Engineering Department. They help sell cars but not keep them alive for much more than the warranty period.

So what to do? Here are a few time proven suggestions:

1. Flush your brake fluids at least once every two years and preferably once a year. Be sure whoever does it uses the correct DOT-rated fluids or things can get really expensive as all your hydraulic seals swell-up and have to be replaced. If you are going to a DE flush the brake system immediately before the event. Brake fluid is hydroscopic and boiling water vapor won't stop your car.

2. Transmissions live in a nice environment but eventually they need new fluids too. Automatic or manuals both need constant lubrication to reduce friction and to cool the unit. Each uses its own type of fluid so be sure you get the correct type. If you have a manual transmission most of us have found Red Line MTL to be the answer to smooth shifting manual gearboxes.

3. Differential oil lives a really good life and only needs to be drained and replaced maybe every 100K miles or more frequently if you have an M car since they have clutch plates internal to the differential. M car fluid is different so be sure to get the correct type.

4. Engine oil—the biggie! Bimmers use synthetic oil and that is not negotiable if you want to keep your car for a long time. In the old-days we all used Dino oil but that stuff will not hold up to the extreme demands of modern engines. Failure to use synthetics will most definitely void your warranty and most likely wreck your engine to boot. BMW has their own brand to use anytime it comes in for service and you can bet it is good stuff but once the warranty is over its up to you so be careful, read your instruction manual and be sure that synthetic oil is all that goes into your car. If you plan on keeping the Bimmer forever shorten those intervals to about 6K miles rather than the approximately 12K indicated by your onboard computer. As your engine ages it passes more combustion products into the oil and those have to be removed by changing the oil. Some of those combustion byproducts include acids and those are not removed by an oil filter and are not good for aluminum engines.

Keep that Bimmer happy – feed it often, change the fluids and keep it waxed.

Photo of oil containers to go here.

A message from our next club president.

Greetings to my fellow members of the Heart of Dixie chapter, I am Jonathan Holly, and I would like to be your next chapter President.

"Why him?" you may ask yourself.

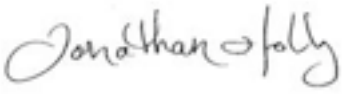
Please allow me to introduce myself. I am an active member of the Heart of Dixie chapter with over 8 years of membership. I currently serve on the board of our club. I served as club President from 2005-2007 and enjoyed the opportunity to grow our club, see old friends and meet new BMW enthusiasts.

How did I get here?

I, like many of you, first fell in love with BMWs to such a degree that I sought out like-minded individuals and became a member of the BMW CCA. I then took the next fateful step of offering to help with an activity or two (it really is painless). The next thing you know I'm helping run our club.

I want to bring my knowledge and enthusiasm to our club as your President. I think my people skills, positive outlook and supportive family will enable me to keep our club on the positive path it's been on for the past few years. I would like to give back to an organization that over the years has given me lifelong friends, memories and a car that just can't be beat for looks and performance.

Thank you for your consideration.



Jonathan Holly

Show your support for our club officers and mail in the ballot on the next page. >

2012 OFFICER BALLOT

The Heart of Dixie Chapter is having it's officer elections this year. Elections are held every two years (even when all candidates are running unopposed). Below are the nominations for the posts and their candidacy statements. Ballot deadline is January 15, 2012. ***Show your support for our club and send in your ballot!***

Name: _____ Membership Number: _____

Fill in your name and membership number above and make selections below; detach this page and send to:

Heart of Dixie BMW CCA
c/o Sitton & Hard, CPAs
2870 Old Rocky Ridge Road, Suite 110
Birmingham, AL 35243.

President: Jonathan Holly

Greetings to my fellow members of the Heart of Dixie chapter, I am Jonathan Holly, and I would like to be your next chapter President...

< See column at left for full candidacy statement.

❑ Yes ❑ No

Vice President: Steve Lowery

I have been a member of the Heart of Dixie Chapter for 13 years and have enjoyed every minute of it. I have always believed in the saying; "You get out of something what you put into it". I have had the privilege of serving this chapter as an officer for the last 13 years and would consider it an honor to serve as your Vice President again over the next two years.

❑ Yes ❑ No

Treasurer: Dale Sitton

It has been a privilege to serve the Heart of Dixie Chapter of BMW CCA as Treasurer for the past 7 years. I have owned BMWs almost continually since 1979, joining BMW CCA in 1992. I have been part of the Heart of Dixie Chapter from its very beginning, having attended the first informational gathering at Jim and Nicks Restaurant in 1998. I consider it a distinct honor to be an Officer of this Chapter.

❑ Yes ❑ No

Secretary: Carol Lowery

I have been a member of the Heart of Dixie Chapter for 13 years...

❑ Yes ❑ No

HEART OF DIXIE CHAPTER
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HEART OF DIXIE BMW CCA UPCOMING EVENTS

2012 KICK-OFF PARTY
Sunday, January 22, 2012
Pelham Civic Center, Pelham, AL
Need time

Our 2012 Kick-off Party will be held at the Pelham Civic Complex. For members who want to participate, we'll have an autocross course set up in the parking lot so that you can experience BMW handling without the expense of being on a track. Winning teams will receive a prize. Inside the Civic Center, we'll serve lunch, socialize, and introduce the 2012 officers. Watch email for any scheduling updates. *We hope to see you there!*

Directions to the Pelham Civic Complex: The Pelham Civic Complex is conveniently located about 20 miles south of Birmingham, off of I-65.

• From I-65 South, take exit 246, right onto Hwy 119; take the next immediate left at the light onto State Park Road; then take the second left onto Amphitheatre Road. The Civic Complex and amphitheatre are on the right side on the road.

• From I-65 North, take exit 246 and then turn left onto Hwy 119; after passing under the interstate bridge, take immediate left at the light onto State Park Road; then take the second left onto Amphitheatre Road. The Civic Complex and amphitheatre are on the right side on the road.

Address:
500 Amphitheater Rd, Pelham, AL 35124-4338

Wanted: A daily driver

Looking for an E30 era 323 or 325i for daily driver/minor project car. Though I will consider newer model if it is offered. 2 door preferred but not required. Manual or automatic. No major mechanical problems though the body could need small work and or paint.

Contact Mick Speer at 256-426-0821 or mick.speer@nasa.gov or mick.speer@gmail.com
Huntsville resident

Check page 5 for our list of 2012 Events and mark your calendars!

Be sure to mark and send in the 2012 officer ballot on page 7.