

BMW IM HERZEN DES SÜDENS



2018, Issue I • January 2018

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Photo courtesy
of Albert Hicks

A driver's last fling on page 4
High Performance Driver Education

2018 Kick-Off Party



Save the Date: Saturday, February 3 at 12PM

Location: the new Century BMW in Huntsville

Feature Presentation: James Clay, President of

BimmerWorld IMSA Race Team (see page 2)

Raffles Galore: BMW Merchandise, free slot for the
March 17 ///M School in Spartanburg, SC (page 2) and
a free slot for the September 15-16 High Performance Drivers Education at Bar-



ber Motorsports Park (page 4)
RSVP: Monitor your e-mail
for the menu and registra-
tion details



**Old Car
City USA**
(Page 5)

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Special Announcement

Stay tuned to your e-mail for details on the upcoming Heart of Dixie **///M School**. We have reserved the BMW Performance Center in Spartanburg, SC for private use by our chapter. The date is **Saturday, March 17** where you will get to experience the M2, M3, M4 and likely the brand new M5. Pricing includes the cars, tires, gas, instructors and a catered lunch. Our activities will include 8 lessons on a road course, autocross, track and skid-pads followed by a grand finale. See our 4Q 2017 newsletter for details on this exciting experience. More details and a **raffle for a free slot** will be provided at our upcoming party on Saturday, February 3.

President's Letter

With the New Year fast approaching, I hope 2017 was as good a year for you as it was for me. The chapter hosted some great events, most recently a second Tire Rack Street Survival school and an autocross at the Barber Motorsports Park Proving Grounds. Congratulations to the team for a job well done! As I transition into this role, it's important to me to take a moment to first say thanks to our outgoing President, **Steve Lowery**. Steve has generously given his time to lead our chapter, planning our event calendar and ensuring we all had a great time. Steve, thanks for all your efforts and I hope to continue to see you at our events.

As we look forward into 2018, the team has some fantastic events planned. We'll start the year on February 3rd with our kick off event headlined by James Clay, IM-SA Continental Tire Sportscar Challenge series race team owner/driver and President of BimmerWorld. You won't want to miss James talking about being one of the very first teams to race the new M4 GT4 and discover how BimmerWorld adapts what they learn on track for our street cars. Our officer team has also put a greater focus on more driving events this year including a M School day in March at the BMW Performance Center, hosted by our chapter for the first time, as well as our HPDE in September. We're raffling free slots for both at the kick off event, so don't miss it.

We have more planning to do and the team

interested in your thoughts, feedback and ideas. In the coming days, watch your email for a short survey from me. I encourage you to spend a couple of minutes to let us know the types of events you would like to see us plan - ideas for different fun runs, events held in the past you enjoyed, something brand new or anything else on your mind related to chapter activities. Your feedback is important and will help steer the direction of our chapter.

Allow me to share a little about myself - I'm a native of Huntsville, a huge Formula One fan and a member of our chapter for about 8 years. As I write my initial letter, I reflected back on the first kick off event I attended - I didn't know a single person. My first HPDE was a few months later in an E92 335i. I didn't really know what to expect, it was raining and I was convinced I had gone off the deep end for taking a brand new car out onto a track in the rain. It turned out to be a great experience and I haven't missed one since. More importantly, I've made some tremendous friends along the way through our activities.

Finally, if you have not had an opportunity to participate in many of our events, I encourage you to make 2018 the year you do. Great fun spending time together with a diverse group of people who share a common passion.

As a team of officers, we are always interested in your feedback - please reach out to any of us at any time. I look forward to seeing you at our kick off event in February!

Happy Holidays!
Todd



Todd at Barber on November 4, 2017 in his 2013 M3

Stay tuned to our April Issue to read about our most recent Auto-Cross at the Barber Proving Grounds. Pictures at: <https://hodbpg20171104.shutterstock.com/pictures>
Photos courtesy of Troy Wesson

To see the benefits of a BMW Club Membership and to join the club: see that national web-site at www.bmwcca.org

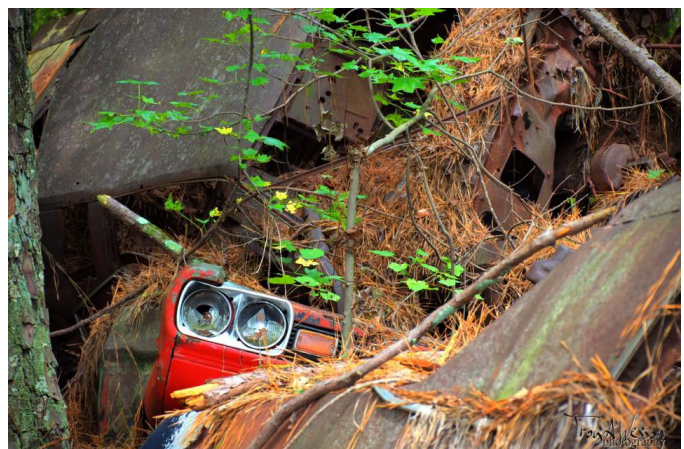
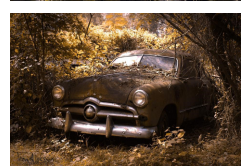
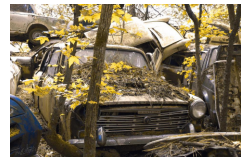


Old Car City USA

Story and Photos by Troy Wesson



An easy day drive from north and central Alabama, Old Car City USA (www.oldcarmcityusa.com) is a 34 acre photographer's paradise. Started in 1931 in White, Georgia (a few miles east of I-75), this now defunct junk yard has turned into a museum collection of 4000 vehicles repossessed by nature. One can easily spend 2-3 hours just seeing the highlights and walking the over 6 miles of trails throughout this preserve. Open only Wednesday—Saturday, admission is \$15 per person plus \$10 per camera (reduced pricing for children available). Most cars date from the 30's to the 70's. Be sure to pack old shoes, bug spray and dress appropriately for the weather. If you get hungry, Wes-Man's across the street is highly recommended and is full of memorabilia from the Paul Rudd and Selena Gomez Netflix movie: *The Fundamentals of Caring*. If you go, be sure to send in your favorite picture.



Heart of Dixie Chapter HPDE—My Last Fling

My wife and I sat in folding chairs in the Huntsville Century BMW's immaculate shop, one tenth of which any of us could only dream of owning. The dealership had hosted an open house for the club in its sparkling new facility, featuring a guided tour and other offerings. The summertime BBQ Century BMW provided drew a large crowd. I believe the HOD Chapter had found the magic words for this event: Free lunch.

Still thoroughly filled from the earlier barbecue lunch, also served in the spacious air conditioned shop, attendees returned for the grand finale – the drawings for door prizes. Each attendee had been given one ticket for the drawings. President Steve Lowery announced that he would draw first for the grand prize – one free entry to the coming high performance driving event at Barber Motorsports Park.

Steve drew out a ticket and called out the number. It was one number above the ticket I held. Since my wife had been behind me at the registration table where the tickets were issued, I quickly asked if the winning number matched her ticket. She confirmed that it did. Our flurry of activity had drawn all eyes to us. My wife had won the grand prize, but it was immediately assumed that I would be the designated driver. (To be fair, and not completely sexist, I told her that I would be her crew if she chose to drive in the HPDE. She declined.)

Having a pretty good idea of my age, and probably anticipating having to draw another ticket for the grand prize, Steve looked straight at me and asked, "Will you do it?"

Someone in the crowd said, "Do it! It'll be fun!" I suspect that they didn't know that in addition to 40 years of autocross, I participated in SCCA Solo I (now called Time Trials) competition for ten years, ending 25 years ago. I loved it, but family circumstances ended my participation.

After about three seconds of serious deliberation, I responded, "Why not?" My immediate intent was to drive my 2011



Z4. Our 2013 535i, the family bus, was clearly inappropriate. But then I was informed that convertibles are not allowed unless they are equipped with a full roll cage. The Z4 is a convertible, but it has a metal roof. Still no go. What to do? With the crowd departing, Steve and Carol Lowery awaited my answer. I said, "I guess I could drive the NSX."

Steve said, "You have an NSX? Bring it!"

It wasn't my first choice, but my 25-year-old, 130,000-mile Acura NSX would have to do. There was about a month before the event for preparation. Fortunately, I had recently changed the brake fluid in the car, so that chore was out of the way; but there was more to do. On-line forums said that NSXs were prone to overheat in high performance events, so I built a wide rubber air dam under the nose of the car in hopes of better exhausting hot air. I also removed the spare tire that sits just behind the radiator to further encourage air flow despite some misgivings about eliminating 30 or 40 pounds from the nose of a rear-weight-biased car. I had the tech inspection done by Rich Crowell, long-time nationally-licensed SCCA scrutineer, who is always very thorough. During this time, Carol Lowery was wonderfully patient answering my many questions.

The car wasn't the only focus of my preparations. I decided it would be wise to trailer the car to the event so I could get it home if something bad happened. Realizing that the tires



Photos courtesy of Albert Hicks

on my trailer, which had great tread, were 10 to 20 years old, I bought new trailer-rated tires. A test loading, working out the tie-downs, and a test-tow resolved remaining issues. I borrowed a helmet since my barely-used M2005 helmet didn't meet the rules. Then I loaded my truck like I had done for Solo I events years ago – gross overkill, but better to be prepared

The trip to Barber on Friday afternoon was uneventful. In the fading evening light, I unloaded the car and checked in with event administration. I was as ready as I could be.

At the mandatory Saturday morning meeting, I met my instructor, Scot Sledd, a pleasant fellow. I was assigned to the C-group, the novices, which was my preference. In the paddock, a couple of drivers complimented my car, and I was told that some couldn't believe I was going to track it. I wasn't sure that it was the best idea, either. I had resolved to not flog the car and to hold the RPMs to 1000 RPMs below the 8000 redline in consideration of the car's age and mileage.

When my group's time arrived, Scot joined me on the false grid after instructing in the previous group. He handed me the earpiece and mike of his helmet intercom, a nice touch for calm communication, and the gridmaster soon directed us onto the track. My resolve to pamper the car as much as possible must have lasted two laps. The event description stated that drivers could drive within their comfort zones. I discovered that my comfort zone is still pretty darned high. During our first outing, Scot remarked, "I think you've done this before." I was driving the NSX hard, flirting with the redline a couple of times and bumping the rev limiter once. After chastising myself for coasting, I found the brakes to be very good and was typically braking at the last marker, probably to the consternation of Scot in the passenger seat, who would occasionally remind me in a calm voice, "Brake."

Despite the exhilaration of it all, I was very unhappy with my performance. I was inconsistent, sloppy, and mistake-prone. I spun the car in the downhill, off-camber Turn 5 and almost spun there again. Scott calmly said, "Nice catch." But I also spun in Turn 3; neither I nor Scot could explain why. I had remained on the pavement in both spins, but it put me dangerously close to the "three and out" rule. Scot kept telling me that I was improving, but I couldn't feel it. I finally said, "Don't stroke me, Scot." He replied that he didn't "stroke" anyone. I appreciated his candor and his diplomacy.

It was a hot day, and the heat was beginning to take its toll. Scot remarked that my speedometer had become intermittent. "I hadn't noticed," I replied.

"You're not supposed to be watching the speedometer," Scot said. Good point. But by the end of the third session,

the speedometer had stopped working and the check engine light was on.

It was time to reconsider what I was doing to the car. The NSX is not a sacrificial car; it is an appreciating collectible. I reluctantly decided to withdraw from the event. The decision was also influenced by my silently suffering wife who was ill from some "bug that's going around."

In retrospect, Scot Sledd was unflappable. He knows the Barber track perfectly, and he demonstrated it quite well in his 186,000-mile BMW. Interestingly, before I got into his car he asked if I would have trouble riding in the passenger seat during the fast drive, and he asked a couple of times during the drive if I was okay. Apparently some unpleasant incidents had occurred in his car in the past. For an instructor to get into the passenger seat with a stranger who may drive like he has a death wish takes courage, and I applaud them for it. Scot confided that his first ride as an instructor ended in a severe wreck.

The event administration was outstanding with every segment occurring on schedule, something that is so often not true. Just as a point of curiosity, however, I have to wonder how group assignments are made. Some of the drivers in my group were definitely not novices. The hotter BMWs were having my poor little NSX for lunch. I provided a lot of point-bys.

For my own defense, I will point out that the NSX is bone stock on so-so tires, and I had never driven it at the limit before. And my quarter-century old high speed experience was in fully race-prepared formula cars. But I learned a lot about the NSX.

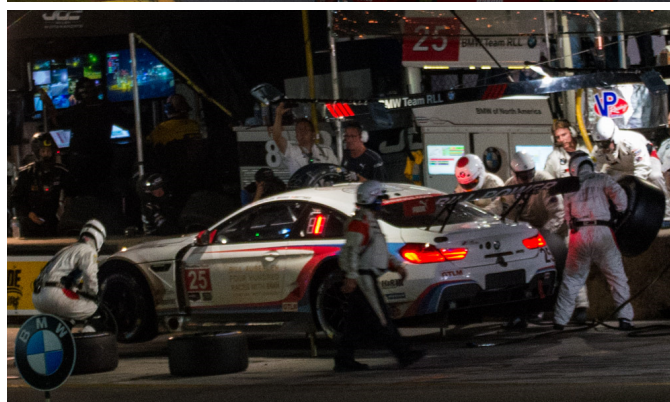
I am happy to have had the opportunity to experience the HPDE. It was a fabulous door-prize worth hundreds of dollars. Usually, if I win anything, it's more like a ball cap or a can of polish. Believe me, this 78-year-old driver had a ball! My sincere thanks to the HOD Chapter, BMW CCA.

- Jim Burruss



Petit Le Mans Story and Photos by Sam Fara

This year was the 20th running of the Petit Le Mans and BMW was well represented on and off the track. The Peachtree chapter and Global Imports BMW had a car corral with a large tent running a live feed of the race. BMW USA also had a tent with race cars on display, merchandise and some of the latest and most fun BMWs such as: the new M5, an Alpina B6 and a M4 CS. On the track, in GTLM, #25 BMW Team RLL scored its fifth win of the season beating Corvette, Porsche, Ferrari and Ford. Per the IMSA website, this was RLL driver Bill Auberlen's 400th career start with BMW and was his 58th career IMSA win, putting him only two behind Scott Pruett who leads all-time IMSA wins with 60.



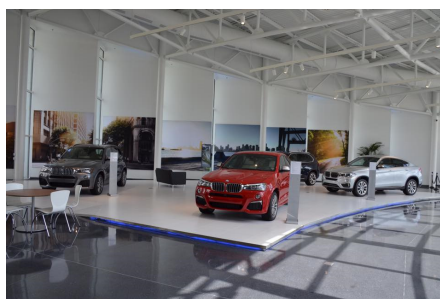
Do you have a story to share with your club? We take stories about local drives, your BMW/MINI, repair how-tos and other BMW adventures. If so, please send your idea to the editor at twesson@albmwcca.org





If you are ever passing through Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina during the week, do not miss an opportunity to visit the museum at the largest BMW factory in the world. The museum and gift shop are open Monday – Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The small collection covers from the origins with the Dixi to modern BMWs. Highlights including an Isetta, Z1, art cars, and an i8 that you can try out to see if you fit (good luck getting out once you get in). The museum is also the starting point for factory tours, although during my visit - the factory was being retooled for the X7 and tours were unavailable. Details are available here to help you plan your visit:

www.bmwusfactory.com If you go, be sure to also visit the BMW Performance Driving School and the BMW CCA Foundation nearby.



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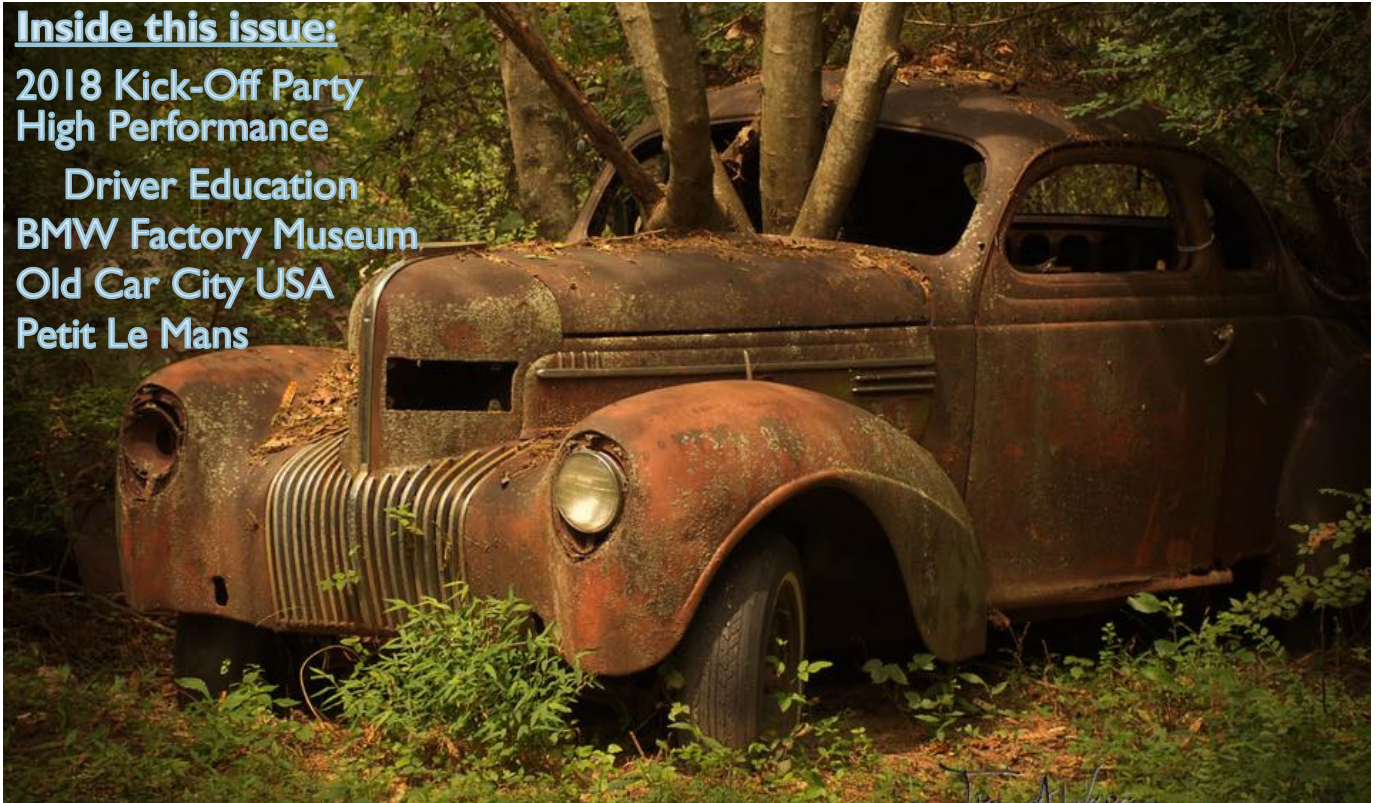
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High Performance**

Driver Education

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Heart of Dixie Chapter



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