Field Testing the BMW X1: A Cautionary Tale  
(Or, How I Spent a Year of My Life One Night)  
Dave Weaver

If any of you are in the market for a new crew vehicle you may want to take a look at the BMW X1. The X1 is the entry level cross-over SUV from the Bavarian performance car manufacturer. While I’m not sure it’s the “ultimate driving machine”, it’s certainly worth a look.

I recently had the opportunity to field test the X1 during a very demanding retrieve at the 15M National Soaring Championship being held at Nephi, UT. I was crewing for XM (Mike Smith) when back problems sidelined him from the competition. We decided to get cleaned up and have a nice relaxing dinner in Ogden since there would be no flying for us the following day. We were about 20 minutes up the road when Mike got a call from the retrieve desk asking if he’d be willing to pimp out his crew for a demanding retrieve. Mike told them that he would have to ask but didn’t see any reason why it would be a problem because I got to sleep the previous night. As an aside, XM is a very benevolent contest pilot allowing his crew to eat every other day and sleep every other night. Since I had a good night’s sleep the previous evening I was good to go.
By the time we got turned around and drove back to Nephi it was 1800 when I checked in at the retrieve desk. I was informed that the wayward pilot had landed at the Escalante, UT airport some 140 air miles from Nephi. As can be seen in the attached images, this place is in the middle of nowhere. Note that it is very close to the Box Death Hollow Wilderness, a foretelling of things to come. I told the retrieve desk that he had better have a nice crew car and they said it was a BMW. Good to go.

It was around 1930 by the time we got the trailer hooked up and actually ready to head out on the retrieve. I had no paper map but the GPS indicated that I would arrive at Escalante around 2330 that night so I headed south on I-15 under GPS guidance.

We had come to call XM’s Garmin portable GPS unit Mildred. Normally Mildred and I had a pretty good working relationship but occasionally she would become irate when I disregarded her instructions and, as with most women scorned, tended to want to drive me off a cliff as an act of vengeance for my lack of attention. I was testing the high speed end of the X1 envelope by cruising at 80 mph on the interstate. The trailer was rock solid behind the little SUV with no tendency to fish tail. Acceleration was brisk with plenty of excess power to climb the substantial hills, even at 6,000 feet above sea level.

After about 45 minutes on the interstate Mildred commanded an exit onto a secondary road. It looked pretty good so I obeyed Mildred’s instructions. After a time Mildred wanted me to turn onto a dirt road and head off into the wilderness. I steadfastly resisted Mildred’s insistence that I turn off onto an unpaved road until finally she directed me to a paved road in approximately the right direction. Unfortunately, after about 5 miles on this road it turned to dirt and headed off into the national forest. The road still appeared to be adequate so I continued into the abyss. The road continued to deteriorate and I really wanted to turn around but it was too late so I continued and was slowed to about 10 mph due to the road condition. The X1 performed well even with the relatively low ground clearance. Despite the excellent performance of the X1 my life passed before my eyes when a rockslide blocked the road. It was completely dark by now and I was in the wilderness of the national forest with no cell coverage. I got out of the car with a flash light to investigate and discovered that people had been bypassing the slide by driving off-road through the woods. “Damn you, Mildred”, I screamed to the creatures of the night. I got back into the car and took the X1 off road for the first time. There were some pretty big rocks to climb over but I made it around the slide and reengaged with the road. “I can’t
even believe this road is in the GPS database”, I moaned to Mildred. She simply replied, “Continue on the present route”. What else could I do? I finally climbed the switchback road to the 10,000 foot summit and began my descent back into the forest.

As I drove around a bend in the road I thought it was all over. They would likely find my body in the spring when the snow melted, assuming the mountain lions left enough for identification through dental records. There, across the road lay two large aspen trees completely blocking my path. Worse yet, there was no place to turn around and no cell coverage. Once again I exited the vehicle and cursed Mildred and her entire lineage. She simply replied, “Continue on the current route.” I surveyed the surrounding area with my flashlight and briefly considered disconnecting the glider trailer and pushing it off a cliff. After calming myself I determined that I could possibly back the trailer through the under growth, between a couple of large boulders far enough to allow me to get turned around. It was pitch black dark in the forest so I had to back up about a foot and then get out of the car to inspect the progress. I repeated this process for about 20 minutes before finally getting the X1 and trailer turned around. I still had to pass the rock slide, going uphill this time, and it took about two hours to correct this situation. When I finally reached the paved road and cell coverage I answered one of the many voice mails and missed calls from the retrieve desk and the pilot to turn off any proposed search efforts. Before moving any farther I pulled out my cell enabled tablet to consult Google Maps and determine a more appropriate routing. As I continued toward Escalante on the new route Mildred tried to turn me back into the forest but I would have none of it. In my now sleep deprived state I think I remember hearing her say, “I’m really sorry Dave, continue on the current route.”
Epilogue:

I did finally get to Escalante Airport. When we opened the Cobra trailer we discovered that the pedestal holding the nose cone had fallen over because the bolts holding it in place had failed due to the stresses put on them during the rough ride through the woods. We had to delay departure until a field repair could be made. Traveling via a much better route, we arrived back at Nephi about one half hour before the pilot’s meeting at 1000. The pilot planned to fly but thankfully the task was called off due to poor conditions on course.

The BMW X1 performed flawlessly throughout the ordeal. I did not have the opportunity to test the optional F1 type paddle shifters on the steering wheel but overall the car is really something you should consider if you are looking for a new crew car.

Nephi to Escalante, the aerial route.
Photo E. Nelson
M-ASA members,

As most of you know, for the last 6 months the board has been debating the merits of upgrading our training fleet to 2 new ASK21s. Rich Carlson led the way and created a presentation describing the benefits of the K21s for training, and a possible financing plan for the club. The board reviewed the present financial status of the club and concluded that the best course of action was to ask members to make loans to pay for the deposits for the 2 glider positions. Our members quickly stepped up and donated more than enough to cover the deposits. Within the past week the deposit money has been sent to Schleicher and we now have 2 glider slots with construction expected in approximately 18 months.

That was the easy part. At present prices the 2 gliders with trailers will cost approximately $225,000. We expect to raise about $80,000 through the sale of our 2 Grobs. We hope to raise another $60,000 by selling one of the tow planes, though it hasn't sold yet. At present we have 4 tow planes and we really can't use more than 3.

Rich's presentation showed that the club usually nets about $20,000 per year after all expenses. Assuming no change in operation income and no large expenditures, that gives us about $160,000 to work with. The challenge will be the additional $65,000 and the fact that we really don't want to sell the Grobs until we have the replacement gliders in hand.

The best way to insure the needed financing and still be fiscally conservative with the club's balance sheet is to increase our membership. We've talked about many possible ways this can be achieved but we now need to get busy and promote our club to the public. Another 10 or 20 members would do a world of good to our bottom line.

Our treasurer has indicated that the club should have at least $50,000 in un-encumbered funds to be available for possible contingencies. We're slightly below that number at present and the board will be carefully managing our finances to achieve that target.

I would like to thank the members that have loaned money for the K21 deposits. It's great to see the enthusiasm that this project has generated.

Progress on the assembled glider hangar is still moving but slower than I had hoped. We now have enough deposits to build an eleven slot hangar and at least one more member has shown interest in putting up money for another slot. We are presently finalizing the design and will send out for more bids.
On July 3 we had another great cookout under the pavilion. Thanks again to Cathy Williams and Deb Hackett for organizing the party. Each cookout seems to be bigger and better than the last and this one hosted over 40 people. Make plans to attend the next one and socialize with your fellow club members.

See you at the airport.

Mike Smith

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**Whom to call...**

**M-ASA Club Officers and Directors:**
President – Mike Smith  
Vice President – Bob Jackson  
Secretary – Holland Ford  
Treasurer – David Pixton  
Director – Mike Smith  
Director – Preston Burch  
Director – Willy Hackett  
Director – Bob Jackson  
Director – Dave MacVeigh

**Safety Officer:** Paul Rehm  
**Membership Chair:** Steve Shelton  
**Duty Scheduling:** Ricardo Cibotti  
**Chief Instructor:** Dave Weaver  
**Chief Tow Pilot:** John Machamer  
**Convектор Editor:** Erik Nelson  
**Website Manager:** Wayne Elseth

For Godfathers and other support staff, please visit www.midatlanticsoaring.org.
M-ASA Welcomes New Member

Jonathan Brossart

Hi, I’m Jack, a lifelong aviation enthusiast and a private pilot for about 10 years. I work as a financial analyst for a major university in Maryland. I have a passion for physics and chemistry so I have hobbies including brewing beer, astronomy, and of course flying.

Achievements

On June 17, two new M-ASA Private Pilots were minted: Viktor Torhonen and Riley Campbell (and, according to Riley, the more handsome of the Campbell Bros.) I’m proud to have been Viktor’s and Riley’s primary instructor; and I feel honored to have been able to help them with the start of their aviation journey.

--Lance Nuckolls

Photo Caption Contest

Congratulations to 5E Ground for her winning entry:

“Danny, you got the Dramamine?”
In the News

Thanks to David MacVeigh for sharing this interesting item from the New York Times:


For Discussion

Also courtesy of David MacVeigh:

Joining the party, crashing the party, or both?

As a matter of courtesy, situational awareness (read: safety) or both: when joining a gaggle, announce your intentions. We fly in a very big sky that sometimes still isn't big enough. Since we routinely announce our intentions to land, and most of us make three position reports (entering downwind at the IP, turning base leg, and turning final leg) it only makes sense to do the same when intentionally closing in on others in a gaggle. For example: "123 X is joining the gaggle over Jack's Mountain from the north at 3,500." Perhaps as an additional bit of information (and I seek the opinions of others on this) "123X counts 3 gliders in the gaggle."
Dave Weaver (DW) and Rick Fuller (CL) competed in the Region 2 soaring contest at the Mifflin County Airport in late May. Dave flew in the Standard Class and I flew in Sports. There’s a certain familiarity that I enjoy about the Region 2 contest hosted by the newly formed Mifflin Soaring Association (MSA). It’s nearby; only a two-hour drive northwest from Fairfield, close enough for family and friends to visit. It uses a somewhat familiar task area that overlaps the M-ASA task day area to the west of Fairfield. It incorporates a complex ridge system that frequently tasked us into the Tuscarora, Lewistown and Jacks mountain ridges, with which most M-ASA task day pilots are familiar. Well over half of the competitors have competed in M-ASA’s Region 4 North contest over recent years. It’s also run by a well-respected and experienced staff; CM - Janine Acee, CD - John Seymour (SM), Operations - Brian Glick, Ground Ops - Steve Glick and Fred Winter, Scoring - John Godfrey (QT), Weatherman – Richard Kellerman (QV). This was Janine’s first year as CM and MSA’s first year to sponsor the event. Janine ran things with the requisite authority and precision of someone who had done this for years. There’s a new MSA clubhouse open to all participants that features a contest office, lounge, full modern kitchen, bathrooms, and outside RV hookups. Volunteers and local Amish carpenters raised a first-class facility. The contest was a lot of fun with better-than-expected weather, great tasking and plenty of chances to do well. I’ll hit the high points from the six-day contest.
Mifflin has had its share of non-flyable weather in recent years so it was satisfying that the 30-ship grid launched each of the six days. The two practice days were washouts. Mifflin is famous for ridge “missions” but there were no ridge days this year. Although thunderstorms were a distant threat almost every day, none caused re-tasking or diversions on course. They did shorten the task for a few participants on **Day 1** that featured lift to 6500 feet, early spreadout and claps of distant thunder late in the day. Out of the field of 30 pilots, only seven completed the task for speed points. **Day 2** started foggy in the Kishacoquillas Valley but soon faded, turning into a classic boomer with lift to at least 8000 feet for most pilots, 9000 feet for a few and 11,200 feet reached by one pilot. There were only two landouts in a TAT task that took us to Waggoners Gap, Orbisonia and north to White Pine for a nominal 200 miles and 3+30. That night there were rumblings of an “undercall” which only meant John Seymour would make the next day more challenging. That he did. **Day 3**’s weather was a bit weaker than the previous day but not by much. The CD called a 3+00 MAT that took us west to east then anywhere we wanted after that. For me, it started out strong. After circumnavigating a fire plume near the Mid-State airport in the central Pennsylvania plateau, I headed east as every valley I crossed seemed weaker than the one before. I finally got low in the valley east of Lewistown and had a near-tragic landing at the Mifflintown airport. (See the sidebar article.)

**Day 4** was unique. Damp, overcast and hints of rain as we launched. Undaunted, the CD tasked us with a reduced 1+30 TAT with big circles and a nominal distance of 127 miles. The sixth sniffer finally reported 5700 feet in 2-3 knots of lift, enough to pull the trigger on the rest of the grid. Only the Standard and 18-Meter Classes were able to claim a contest day even though not a single pilot made it around the course as the day devolved into low ceilings, scattered rain and numerous landouts. I made an inaugural visit to Penns Cave airport after only 10 miles and de-rigged in the rain. **Day 5** took us on a two-hour TAT north to Three Barns and then south to Orbisonia, both with big radii. Soaring ended early in the day so it was a mixed day with low speeds, several landouts and minimum distance and minimum time flights. The bright spot in the day was the traditional Mifflin Fish Fry (trout) in the maintenance hangar put on by the Glick family. I’m never worried about eating well at Mifflin. The week continued to get hotter, hazier and more humid on **Day 6**. The task was a 2+30 TAT with big circles that took us way to the northeast to Selinsgrove on the Susquehanna River back south to the CD’s favorite turnpoint Orbisonia. Everyone made it home and the leader board
wasn’t shuffled which generated a lot of smiles on the podiums. My high point was third for the day on Day 6, well enough to convince me to return next year.

John Seymour did a stellar job of adjusting the tasking as the weather forecasts changed during staging and gridding. On one day, he made three changes to the tasking as one day developed stronger than forecast. He allowed us to absorb every bit of energy the sky had to offer. There was only one day that he wished he had called larger turn areas.

It was gratifying to see some rising stars among the newest competitors. Noah Reitter (HH1), a twenty-something competitor from Harris Hill NY, piloted a club-owned Discus CS to second place in the Standard Class in his first contest. Piet Barber (QQ) from the Skyline Soaring Club, flying a new (to him) Duo Discus, also flew in his first contest and claimed third place in the Sports Class.

For all the reasons I cited above, I enjoy this contest run by an experienced staff. Having my 17-year-old grandson crew for me for four days made it that much more fun. It’s convenient that as I get older he’s become bigger and stronger, a perfect balance. In addition to helping me rig/de-rig, he assisted the line crew with hook-ups on Days 1-4. Great job, buddy! I’d also like thank James Joao who visited and crewed for me on Friday and Saturday. At the final meeting the CM thanked all 30 volunteers who kept things running smoothly. How did I do? My final score belies the amount of fun I had!

Complete scores can be found at http://www.ssa.org/Contests?cid=2336&display=results

Next year MSA and Mifflin will host the Sports Class Nationals.

Dave Weaver on tow. (Picture by Bo Michalowski with permission)
I’ve been flying since 1968 and never encountered this. It’s never been part of any training course, scenario, Navy check ride or biennial flight review since it would be impossible to simulate. It made me gasp, sucking all available oxygen from the cockpit. It also made me react on a very instinctive level. It was over in two seconds.

It was the second of two booming days at the Region 2 contest at the Mifflin County Airport. I was doing well with lift 5-6 knots to 8000 feet. The MAT task for the Sports Class had taken us west into the central Pennsylvania plateau beyond Tom Knauff and Karl Striedieck’s fields and back toward the valleys to the east of our start point. Each valley we crossed offered something different until the Mifflintown valley offered almost nothing. I took the Mifflintown turnpoint at about 5000 ft and headed north to Saw Mill, the final mandatory turnpoint. I got low and unable to jump back to the previous valley where the lift was stronger a few minutes earlier. I set up a landing at the Mifflintown airport with a couple hundred feet above glide path, enough for a full pattern to check out the airport I had never seen up close. I inspected all the usual things, runway, wind sock, taxiways, etc. and flew a right pattern to runway 26 due to the hill east of the field. I knew the runway was 50 feet wide and posed no problems after a talk with John Mittell (BZ) who landed there earlier in the week.

As I touched down, I noticed her to my right. She was walking away from me on the right edge of the asphalt runway. Full left rudder brought me halfway to the runway’s left edge; full right rudder back to the centerline. I’m sure I left some of Tost’s finest rubber on the runway. How I didn’t hit the woman or a runway light, I don’t know. I rolled to the end of the 2627-foot runway and called my crew.

The properly dressed Amish lady eventually walked up to me while I was getting CL off the runway and ready for the retrieve. We were briefed early in the contest to have respect for Amish and their way of life here in central Pennsylvania. So, we exchanged pleasantries before I asked her if she realized that she was almost hit as I landed. She smiled and replied in a very unruffled voice “Yes, I saw you”. I asked if she realized how dangerous it was to walk on an active runway. She answered “Yes, my boss told me I shouldn’t walk on the runway.” Out of respect for the Amish, I withheld my frustration and calmly said “Tell your boss that you were almost hit by an airplane today”.

Rick Fuller
Club Racing News

Saturday, June 18th began with tall Cu’s forming early over the hills west of W73. Rick Fuller (CL) and Cathy Williams (392) formulated a plan to make a run up the hills to Mount Holly Springs in the foothills just south of Carlisle. As the day progressed, thin wispy clouds slowly filled in the blue over the Fairfield and Chambersburg valleys enough to call a 2+00 MAT not knowing how well the lift might develop beyond the two mandatory turnpoints, Mt. Alto and Mt. Holly.

CL, 392 and Mel Donahoo (M6) flew the task and found 4-5 kts of lift to 7500 feet in the hills with a bit less in the valleys. After working the lift in the hills, CL followed some cloud streets west to McConnellsburg and M6 headed east out over the Fairfield valley to Kampel, York and Lineboro. It was encouraging to see Mel, a newcomer, do well with a flight of 93 miles at 43 mph and 860 points. CL went 108 miles at 49 mph to capture 1000 points. 392 was challenged by the hills and landed out at Shippensburg.

Full results are at: http://www.midatlanticsoaring.org/?page_id=3473

Sailplane Grand Prix USA Ionia, MI July 25-31

The first FAI Sailplane Grand Prix to be held in the United States is less than two weeks away! The event is the North American qualifier for the SGP Series Final at Potchefstroom, South Africa in November. This popular racing format features a closed course, timed start, live on-board tracking, and video coverage. We’ll be using the Glidetrack smart phone app with real-time telemetry on Glideport.aero. Follow along as your humble Convector editor gives it a try:

http://www.sgp.aero/usa2016

https://www.facebook.com/FAISailplaneGrandPrixUSA
# 2016 Duty Schedule Assignments

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**M-ASA Duty Notes:** Members assigned to operations duty must be on site in enough time to start operations by 10:00 a.m. and stay at the field until operations are concluded. Each person listed on the duty roster is responsible for that day’s assignment. In the case of “no-shows,” the person acting as OD should indicate this fact on the flight sheet. “No-shows” will be fined $100. Every effort will be made to accommodate the new member’s stated duty preference whenever possible. M-ASA Scheduler: Ricardo Cibotti ([cibottir@verizon.net](mailto:cibottir@verizon.net); 301-229-2407).
Luscombe Tail Dragger club has openings. FDK Luscombe, a KFDK based Luscombe club is looking for additional members. We keep the membership to 6 members so that the aircraft is available when you want to fly. Get your conventional gear time in a Luscombe 8E. Contact Wayne Elseth 443-718-9359 luscombe@elseth.net

Janus (4S) – Silent Soarers Inc. has corporate shares available. Glider is hangared at Fairfield. Low cost access to an excellent high performance two-seat sailplane. 39:1 performance with outstanding climb characteristics. Refinished in 2010. MicroAir radio, SN10B with repeater in back seat, MH EDS oxygen, trailer with new running gear. Contact Glenn Collins (pwrlessflt@msn.com) or Tom Jones (daedelus@mindspring.com)