



July 2000

Annual Picnic/Concours

**Live Music Again!
The Pool is Open!**

On Sunday, July 23, Hank Harris will host the Annual Mid-Atlantic Picnic and Concours at his home in Potomac again. Tradition is wonderful since it provides us with a chance to repeat what everyone has said has been a good event, and it also means that we can just crank up the old plans.

We hope Tom and Mary Kestel and Debbie Hirtes will be in charge of the cooking again. You know the hamburgers and bratwurst will be great! And, of course, we're expecting a repeat of the excellent work of our biermeister and wine sommelier, Jim Van Valkenburg, who will dispense the "gute Deutsche bier und wein" to slake your thirst. We'll also have soft drinks on ice. And, there will be lots of watermelon. So be sure to bring a big bib.

The live "tunes" of the last two years were so well received that we'll do it again!

Bring your swim suits and enjoy the pool. And don't forget chairs or blankets for the lawn.

The Concours has no entry fee. On the registration form, fill out the car information so we can organize the classes. Please send in your registration form early.

We will hold a silent auction again for the benefit of The Hospital for Sick Children and Children's Hospital. In addition to items from both local and national merchants, we ask that you contribute a "treasure" (no white elephants, please) for the auction. All items sell to the highest bidder. Please indicate your contribution on the registration form.

Anniversary pins will be presented to MBCA members celebrating their five-year, ten-year, etc., memberships. Check out the label on The Star for your start date.

Times: Cars entered in the Concours should arrive between 9:00 and 10:30AM. This year, we will have a Clean Car/Display Class that is not judged. Wash it up and bring it out! Street and Show Classes are judged. Judging begins at 11:00AM and awards will be presented at 3:30PM. Food "judging" begins at about 11:30AM. Beer, wine, and soft drinks will be served all day. The silent auction ends at 3:00PM.

Directions: From I-495 (the Beltway) take River Road, west, pass Potomac Village (five miles); turn right on Esworthy Road; turn right after 0.8 miles onto Query Mill Road and then turn right again

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into the entrance of Hidden Hill Farm.

The registration form is in the centerfold of the newsletter. If you have any questions on the Concours, call Ed Ayre at 301-654-0837. For questions on the registration or silent auction, call Judy Roth at 301-774-5390. The club does not mail tickets to the picnic/Concours. Cost is \$15.00 per person.

The rain date is August 6.

Club News

Tri-O-Rama 2000

On September 23-26, 2000 our section will host the last Mercedes-Benz Club of America national event to be held this year - or in this millennium (if you're in the group that correctly thinks 2001 starts the next one).

The headquarters hotel will be the Holiday Inn in Winchester, Virginia. The autocross will be held at James Wood High School, just a few minutes from the hotel. Summit Point Raceway - the site of the driving events - is a mere 20 minutes away. The Concours d' Elegance will be held in the Old Town area, and the rallye will take place in the area around Winchester. The Welcome Reception and Biergarten Dinner will be held at the Holiday Inn. The Final Banquet will be at the beautiful, nearby Winchester Country Club.

The Welcome Reception, Concours, Rallye, and Autocross all take place on the weekend, so there is no excuse for not joining us. We urge all members showing cars at the Annual Picnic/Mid-Atlantic Concours in July to sign up. There are three classes: Show, Street, and Display. Members from all over will be participating, so you will have the opportunity to measure how good you are against national competitors.

The autocross will be held at James Wood High School on Sunday, September 24. We can promise a challenging course on a very good lot - extra big, no poles, and rectangular.

We are planning an interesting Sunday rallye that is planned to take no longer than one and one half or two hours. Winchester is an interesting and attractive old town that changed hands 70 times during the Civil War. The rallye will be followed by the Biergarten Dinner Party.

We've planned four fun-filled days for you. However, this is a great opportunity for those members who cannot take off during the week to join us for at least two days of action on the weekend. Whether you come to one, two, or all of the events, Tri-O-Rama 2000 promises to be an exciting affair and our best yet. Beautiful Winchester is only an hour's drive from the Washington area.

For the food conscious, the meals will be prepared by the same folks who once operated the fabulous Old Post Office restaurant!

The Grand Finale banquet will be held at the beautiful Winchester Country Club.

Plan to attend what has become the club's premier national event. The time to sign up for Tri-O-Rama 2000 is now. Remember, you must preregister for all events.

Send the form in the Newsletter centerfold to request a registration packet now. Packets will be ready in July. We hope to have the registration packet available for downloading on the club's web site at: www.gws-mbca.org

We're not sure we can fit any more in the schedule for you to do, but we'll keep looking and trying! Please plan on joining us for as much of the event you have time for!

Tri-O-Rama 2000 - Schedule of Events

Friday, September 22

Early Registration
Vehicle Tech Inspection

Saturday, September 23

Registration
Vehicle Tech Inspection
Concours d' Elegance
Welcome Reception

Sunday, September 24

Registration continues
Autocross
Rallye
Drivers' Classroom School
Biergarten and Concours, Autocross, and Rallye Awards

Monday, September 25

Summit Point Defensive Driving and Skid Pad School
Summit Point Performance Driving School
Summit Point Acceleration Runs

Tuesday, September 26

Summit Point Practice/Time Trials
Grand Finale Cocktail Party and Awards Banquet

Calendar of Events

Greater Washington Section Events

July 23	Annual Picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours Harris Estate Potomac, Maryland Contacts: Concours: Ed Ayre Call: 301-654-0837 Registration: Judy Roth Call: 301-774-5390	October 14	Mercedes-Benz Vehicle Prep Center Tour Belcamp, Maryland Contact: Ed Ayre Call: 301-654-0837
July 30	Autocross #4 James Wood High School Winchester, Virginia Contact: Joe Wozney Call: 703-437-7866	September 10	Autocross #6
August 6	Rain Date for Annual Picnic	September	Tri-O-Rama Tech Inspection Location: TBA Contact: TBA
August 13	Autocross #5	October 15	Autocross #7
		December 2	Annual Holiday Party Belle Haven Country Club Alexandria, Virginia Contact: TBA Call: TBA

Regional and National Events

August 19-22 **Gemütlichkeit 2000**

Nelson Ledges and Thompson
Drag Raceway
Contact: Dick Gortz
Call: 216-765-1901

September
23-26

Tri-O-Rama 2000

Summit Point, West Virginia and
Winchester, Virginia
For registration information
Contact: Joe Wozney
Call: 703-437-7866
For Concours information
Contact: Ed ayre
Call: 301-654-0837

Thoughts of a Car Guy

What a great year, I hope you're having as much fun as we are. Between our MBCA events, golf, and building a new house there is never enough time. It goes by so fast with one great event after another. Our recent Deutsche Marque Concours shared event with Porsche and BMW was a resounding success with a recent record Mercedes-Benz turnout of 35 cars. Ed Ayre did an outstanding job of organizing the event, and Chief Judge Dick Gentz made sure no one got by with any after market stuff. Boy, he's tough!

If you missed the Deutsche Marque show or have not had enough, plan to attend our picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours on Sunday, July 28, at the Potomac estate of Hank Harris. This is always a very well attended event so call or write Judy Roth right a way and make your reservations. (The coupon in the centerfold of this issue.) Trophies will be presented to the first three cars in each class. There should be about five classes consisting of older roadsters, newer roadsters, older sedans, newer sedans, and whatever else we can come up with. The top older car - 20 years old or more - will receive the prestigious Hank Harris Award which is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of older Mercedes-Benzes.

Board members and the Tri-O-Rama 2000 committee members got together at Seasons restaurant in Fairfax in May for our quarterly GWS board meeting and Tri-O-Rama planning session. We all enjoyed a good meal and tossed around some good ideas. If you can spare some time to work on Tri-O-Rama, which will be held on September 23-26, give me a call. I promise you a good time.

Mason Beale has organized a tech forum for Saturday, July 8, at the Merchant's Tire training facility in Manassas. This event was very well attended two years ago and should be again. Mason has arranged for several of our local wrenches to answer your questions along with a tire talk by Merchants tire guru, Joe Interrante. You ladies will enjoy this event. It's a perfect opportunity to ask those questions about cars that you always wanted the answers to. Lunch is included with your registration fee.

The MBCA National Board meeting will be held in Williamsburg in November. The Central Virginia and Virginia sections will host the event. Highlights will be attending the open meetings, chatting with your national officers, and the final banquet. Several GWS officers plan attend. It's a good opportunity to meet the people who set national policy in the club in a nice, nearby setting.

Our "raincross" on Sunday, May 28, was incredibly well attended. Fifteen Mercedes and about as many BMWs and Audis slosed around in the rain in Winchester. Since it was Memorial Day weekend and Monday did not loom as it normally does, twenty or so folks went to the Cork Street Tavern after

the event for some good conversation, dinner, and to watch the Indy 500. Again, what a great opportunity for the young drivers to experience this type of car control driving in a protected and safe event. Our Sunday summer autocross dates are July 30 and August 13. Get the kids out there - we'll supply the instructors - and save yourself some heartache.

See you at the picnic.

Dick

MBCA News

Drive for Excellence

When dozens of MBCA members convened in Tuscaloosa last fall for the inaugural Mercedes-Benz Drive For Excellence - some from as far away as California - many left expressing the hope that the event would become a major annual gathering of members and enthusiasts. Those wishes have now been realized with the announcement that the second annual Drive For Excellence will be held on October 6-7 and will once again include a car show as one of its main components.

This year's Drive For Excellence will be even more fun and exciting because it will incorporate DaimlerChrysler Environmental Day - a day of family fun and adventure.

Tom Struthwolf, Assistant Manager of the Mercedes-Benz Visitor Center said he expects a large turnout for the car show portion of the event. "We had a good showing last year from Mercedes-Benz Club members, and we expect an even better showing this year. We believe this will be a popular show because you cannot only meet other Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts, but also take part in all of the other Environmental Day activities and hear top musical acts," Struthwolf said.

Last year's MBCA car show, at the Drive For Excellence, included everything from a replica 1886 Benz Patent Motorwagen to the CL500. The People's Choice Award went to Axel Reinert's stunning 1964 220 SE Coupe.

There will be a number of new attractions that MBCA members will find of interest, including alternative vehicles like the NECAR 5 - a zero-emissions fuel cell vehicle; a smart car; and the ESX3 fuel cell vehicle, and

- Special environmental tours of the MBUSI plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama;
- Eco-friendly driving demonstrations on the facility's off-road course;
- Fun, interactive exhibits that highlight MBUSI and DaimlerChrysler's industry-leading environmental initiatives;
- Hands-on children's activities that impart the practical ways kids can help protect the future of their planet;
- A 5K Run and 1-Mile Fun Run; and
- Musical performances by nationally known headliners.

The Drive For Excellence was designed to help raise funds for Alabama charities. In its inaugural year, it attracted 8,000 attendees and generated \$130,000 for Kid One Transport and the Alabama Reading Initiative. "We are pleased and honored that MBUSI was selected to host DaimlerChrysler Environmental Day on the first occasion on which it will be held outside Germany. We look forward to providing our friends in MBCA not only with the opportunity to display their vehicles, but with a fun and informative day of special events, as well," said Linda Paulmeno, MBUSI Director of Communications.

Please check out the latest information at: <www.bamabenz.com>.

Charity Concour d'Elegance

Date: Saturday, October 7, 2000

Place: MBUSI Facility in Vance Alabama

Time: Setup at 7:30-9:30AM (no cars will be allowed in after 9:30). Judging starts at 10:00.

Fee: \$35 pre-registration to September 30, and \$50 there after.

Contact: Scott O. Suits

795 CR #1 Lot 205

Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Phone: 727-789-4582 (after 7:00PM)

Fax: 727-771-9370

E-mail: <suits @ij.net>

For those showing cars, Scott has 38 rooms blocked at the

Hawthorn Suites Ltd.
11170 Will Walker Rd.
Vance, Alabama 35490
800-527-1133

All suites have queen beds, refrigerator, microwave, and coffee maker. The room rate is \$69 per night, including a complementary hot breakfast. Indicate that you are with the Mercedes Classic Car Show. This hotel is across the street from the plant and they will furnish a car wash area on Friday.

Mr. Ed

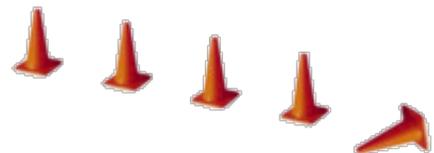
MBCA Problems

In September, you will receive your ballot to select your new MBCA National Board members. In this newsletter (starting on page 13), our current Regional Director and author of High Gear, John Bleimaier, presents some of the happenings at the national level.

Please read John's message carefully. Our club has real problems. The 1999 shortfall of nearly \$400,000 is only the beginning. With a serious cash crunch, the current president sent \$40,000 to Michigan as a bond for the raffle... and got no receipt or contract! The president is prohibited from writing checks over \$5000 without Board approval. He did it anyway.

It gets worse and worse. More next month...

Joe



pylon alley by Joe Wozney

Autocross #2

Rain! Lots of rain! And the Audi boys cheered.
The front-wheel drive folks were thrilled.
Everyone got wet. But it was a rear-wheel guy that took the day.

Ken Lober in his new bad 'n black Mustang surprised everyone with a great raw time and an indexed time that eked out a two-thousandths of a second win over second place finisher Lief Graham. This was Lief's best finish ever and is even more gratifying to him as it was only the second club event for his new VW Golf.

John Woodcock took third and promptly moved to Texas! He'll have to get a NASCAR sticker for his BMW. Good luck, John!

Warren Wang took FTD and fourth place in his no-where-near-stock Audi S4. With the high index factor, Warren would have needed to be another nine tenths quicker to garner a first. The index can punish the modified cars.

Bill Brochu and cousin Steve took the next two places. The rain can also punish the faster cars! Thankfully, the rain also meant that Bill kept his shirt on.

The third of the Brochus, Angie, took the Ladies class but was pressured by Lief's "co-driver," Meghan Furlong. Meghan finished only a half second back. And, this was only her first time in the new car. Well done!

In the battles of the Benzes, there was only one really close race. Jim Smith beat Steve Lobell by three tenths of a second. Steve missed the first event, so that gives Jim two first place events. Steve threatened to bring his lucky charm - his father-in-law - to event three.

In the SL class, Debbie Hirtes defeated newcomer John Robinson. John shouldn't feel too bad... Debbie has a string of consecutive victories a mile long.

Klaus Hirtes had a cakewalk in the Diesel class. We have got to get some more of the big Ds out to these events for Klaus to play with, so we can let Ben and Ted get back to their fight in the "little" oil burners.

Jon Dems, who was new to GWS events but not to autocross, handily took the SLK class from Bruce Roth. Jon ran on street tires which were the wise choice. Bruce's autocross tires were certainly no advantage on this day! What was that song? Oh yeah... Slip Slidin' Away.

So far, attendance has been absolutely great. However, it is disappointing to see so few teenagers. In his articles, Dick has tried to emphasize how great this type of driving is in teaching car control. Who knows? It might save your kid's life. And, it's fun. Please join us.

Club News

Membership Pins

In a few short weeks we will hold our Annual Picnic, and with it comes the year's first opportunity for members to receive their longevity pins. If you still feel confused about how to receive a pin after reading the rest of this article, please email me or send me a note.

We award pins for 5, 10, 15, etc. years of membership in the club. For example, if you joined the club in 1995, you are eligible for a 5-year pin this year. However, and this is a big however, you must be present when the pins are awarded. The "ceremony" takes place just three times a year: at the picnic, at the Annual Membership meeting, and at the Holiday Party.

Invariably, several eligible members attend one or all of the above events but leave before the pins are awarded. We do not mail pins, you need to be present! If, for some reason, you must leave before the event is over, please see me or my wife, Deborah, so we may give you your pin.

The following members are eligible for pins this year:

40 Years! Rudolph Birnbach
 30 Years Thomas Sheppard
 25 Years Kurt Darr
 M. Edelstein
 Thomas Robertson
 Alan Whelihan
 20 Years Jaan Born
 James Davis
 EP Hurley
 Margarite Steelnack
 Frederic Schwartz
 Eckard Liptau

There are also: 30 fifteen-year members
 60 ten-year members
 96 five-year members

If only half of the eligible members show up we'll have a ~~hell~~ heck of a party!

Please note that since the database change at the national office, the date you joined is no longer on the newsletter label. Please check The Star.

One final note. If you are not able to attend any of the above-mentioned get-togethers, you will need to wait another five years before you will be eligible for a pin.

This section offers many different events for almost every taste and fancy for our 1,835 members (as of this writing), so we hope you'll join us for one that interests you. See for yourself what the officers and various chairpersons work so hard to offer you.

And always try to recruit a new member any opportunity you get. We are the largest section within the national club and strive to keep it that way.

Klaus Hirtes
 Membership Chairman

Dear Colleagues

National Board Meeting

By now you are probably aware that for 1999 our club will show a loss of \$351,243 and that membership declined by some 10 percent. There are many reasons for the crisis presently facing the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. Last year's computer system debacle was extremely costly in funds expended and members lost through the failure to send out many renewal notices. Our treasurer failed to establish a reserve to cover the cost of cars raffled off by the club, thus greatly muddying the financial waters. In my opinion, at least \$28,000 was squandered in legal fees paid to C. Robert Beltz, Esquire, a former member of the National Board.

Some \$20,000 was spent by the national president to pay for a partisan political mailing to the membership contrary to the direction of the Election Committee. In 1999, the club president unilaterally suspended the important "glove box membership program," whereby all new Mercedes purchasers had been receiving an invitation to join the MBCA.

Shockingly, the club has foundered for the first five months of the year 2000 without any budget whatsoever. StarFest, our biennial convention, has been canceled. No supplemental raffle rebate was

provided to the sections.

At the May 2000 meeting of the National Board of Directors, the current administration proposed and passed a 28% dues increase for U.S. members and a 47% increase for Canadians. A stalwart minority, of which I am proud to be a member, voted against the radical dues increase. Of course, most Mercedes drivers can afford to pay \$45 per year. However, on principle we ought not ask the membership to carry a heavy burden until the internal organization of the club has been put in order.

The largest single item of expense for the club is the publication of our magazine, *The Star*. This is as it should be. Many members join the club only as a publication subscription and the national periodical is important to virtually all of us. However, because this item is our largest expenditure it is incumbent on our Board to oversee this area with extreme care. At the present time, *The Star* is produced by our publishing middleman, Toad Hall Motorbooks, Inc., pursuant to a contract that runs until December 31, 2001. Under this agreement the club pays for 100 percent of all mailing costs and 97 percent of all printing costs for the magazine. For its services as publishing middleman Toad Hall keeps all advertising revenue from *The Star* up to \$425,000 per annum and 75 percent of any ad revenue above \$425,000. While the Board has not received any audited report from Toad Hall, we were informed at the last meeting that Toad Hall's revenues for 1999 were approximately \$360,000. This represents very substantial remuneration, perhaps an all-time high in the field of automotive journalism. Virtually all printing and mailing costs are borne by the club. Most articles and photos from members are provided gratis. All new product press releases and photography are given to our publishing middleman free by Mercedes-Benz, USA, Inc. Toad Hall apparently has minimal overhead and expenses and comes away with a windfall profit.

Let me give you a simple example of the craziness of our current relationship with *The Star*. Our publishing middleman can charge a premium for color advertising in *The Star*. The increased revenue for the color ads goes exclusively into the pocket of Toad Hall. However, 97 percent of the substantially increased cost of printing the color advertisements in our magazine is borne by the club. Have you noticed the expanded volume of color advertising in *The Star*? You are paying for the increased printing cost, but Toad Hall is taking in the increased revenue!

Historically the Toad Hall contract has been a contentious issue. In 1999, a sharply divided Board voted to ratify the current publication contract despite the fact that we had received substantially lower bids from qualified professional automotive publishers who promised to produce an equal or better product. It has long been my opinion that our relations with our publishing middleman were disadvantageous for the MBCA because the BMW and Porsche clubs are able to provide their members with superior magazines 12 times per year. Toad Hall gives us only 6 editions of *The Star* for a princely remuneration.

At the May Board meeting, I made a motion to request that the club enter into discussions with Toad Hall Motorbooks, Inc. about the possibility of our receiving financial concessions from our publishing middleman in view of the MBCA's dire financial situation and Toad Hall's 1999 windfall. My motion to merely request concessions was voted down. This can only be explained by the effectiveness of a "Save Toad Hall" lobby which actually has supported candidates for the Board in mass mailing to the members.

In last year's club elections, we witnessed the effectiveness of a well financed "Save Toad Hall" lobby which sent out thousands of first class letters to the membership recommending a vote against Board candidates who had not been in favor of the current sweetheart contract with Toad Hall Motorbooks, Inc. We must certainly anticipate a similar effort this year.

That is why I am writing to sections now. The complete story about the current state of affairs in the club will not likely be described in *The Star*. The "Save Toad Hall" lobby will probably once again invest thousands of dollars for a mass mailing to the members, supporting a Toad Hall slate of

candidates. It is only at the section level, at meetings and in newsletters, that a balanced presentation of the issues can be sought. I would encourage you to request a transcript of our last Board of Directors Meeting. It is available for a \$10 charge from the stenographers at 714-444-4100. Study the issues and make up your mind on the club's current state of affairs.

I've been Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for the past 8 years. I represent the numerically largest, and arguably the healthiest, region within the club. I zealously support my sections. On the Board I have consistently advocated fiscal conservatism and careful financial management. I have been willing to take on the entrenched special interests and have long advocated an arm's length, businesslike relationship with our publishing middleman so that we can get the best quality magazine for our members at a reasonable price.

This year I am not running for reelection as Regional Director. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with my sections and have had some truly outstanding section leaders working with me. Last year I attended 37 MBCA events! I continue to enjoy many wonderful friendships with fellow starpeople. However, it's time for a new regional leader to step into my shoes here. I will be leaving my region to my successor in healthy condition! Please note that I will be running for the position of Director at Large. I am certainly not motivated by political ambition. At present the very existence of our club is threatened. I passionately want our club to survive so that we can all continue to enjoy it in the future just as I have since I first joined back in 1982.

You will be asked to vote for four Directors at Large this fall. I hope that you will consider voting for me as one of your choices. My personal other selections will be Joe Wozney, Chuck Landenberger and Walt Anderson. I will not be voting for Peter Watson, Donald Leap or George Murphy. Mr. Watson was our treasurer at the beginning of our current financial crisis. This year Messrs. Watson and Leap, as president and vice president respectively, have failed to take decisive action to rescue our club. I personally find that Mr. Murphy, as a parts merchant and contributing editor for The Star, has an inherent conflict of interests which should preclude his service on the Board. All three gentlemen, Watson, Leap and Murphy, voted not to even request that Toad Hall Motorbooks, Inc. be asked to make financial concessions in connection with our publication contract, despite the club's dire plight. Undoubtedly they will be supported by the "Save Toad Hall" lobby in this year's election.

Cynics have suggested that this fine old club should be allowed to die. They expect that after its demise Toad Hall will purchase the name, The Star, from our estate in bankruptcy, that the magazine will go on and the publishing middleman will wax even richer, sans our club. Is that what we who have worked hard to build up our sections and regions want?

I love this gallant company of car enthusiasts and will fight for its survival!

John Kuhn Bleimaier
Mid-Atlantic Regional Director
DAL Candidate

High Gear

I am not a movie buff. I seldom go to the cinema and I don't have a television in my home. However, I recognize that the motion picture has had a powerful influence on western culture and that the movies have been an important vehicle for the expression our deepest human emotions. This being the case I am surprised to note that with few exceptions the motion picture industry has not addressed one of contemporary humanity's most fundamental passions: the bond of affection between man and motorcar. Surely this oversight will soon be rectified and a new film genre will arise.

I can see it now... legends of the silverstar screen... the blockbuster motion picture: "Gone With

The Exhaust Gas." In the opening scene we see our heroine, Starlette O'Hara, a perky, redheaded member of the MBCA Peachtree Section, in the opulent setting of the colonnaded portico of her local Mercedes dealership. She is surrounded by handsome suitors vying for a place in her garage. There are twin sprightly C240s, a solidly conservative E320, an ML420 and her heart's secret love, Ashley, a sensitive and aristocratic S-Class sedan. This drama of love and loss takes place against the backdrop of a civil war in Starlette's car club which has pitted brother against brother in a life and death conflict for the control of the destiny of her beloved MBCA.

As the action progresses Starlette is disappointed when Ashley, the S-Class of her dreams, is acquired by her friend Mela Nini. Experiencing a turmoil of competing emotions Starlette signs a long term lease for the conservative E320, although she does not really love this perfectly serviceable and worthy family car. However, the plot thickens when the E320 is unexpectedly totaled and Starlette finds herself once again in the market for new wheels. During her official period of mourning, and even before she has settled with her insurance carrier, Starlette is swept off her feet by Rhett, a raffish SLK, who is daring blockade runner. There is a fantastic scene, with great special effects, where Rhett drives Starlette through the ravaged streets of Atlanta showing off his strength and courage, his ABS and Electronic Stability Program. After the conclusion of the disastrous civil strife in the club, Starlette and Rhett tie the knot and our heroine at last finds herself in the fast lane.

But as a true classic of the silverstar screen, this movie does not take the easy cop out of a happily-ever-after conclusion. There are ups and downs and calls for roadside assistance. In a surprise twist toward the end of the film, Starlette's friend, Mela Nini, unexpectedly loses her license and Ashley, the sensitive and aristocratic S-Class sedan, comes back on the market. In the closing scene, Starlette pensively leafs through the Used Car Trader. The sun sets below a rosy horizon. We see the opulent colonnaded facade of the local dealership in the background. As our heroine considers the option of a pre-owned Starmark Mercedes she intones her personal credo as a car shopper, "Tomorrow is another day."

John Kuhn Bleimaier
Mid-Atlantic Regional Director

TradingPost

250SE Coupe, 1967: Metallic brown, brown leather. A/C, 4-spd. manual. Engine rebuilt. New brakes, alternator, battery, exhaust valves. \$7800 in receipts. Inspected. Beautiful condition. Sell for \$8500 obo. Call Kieran Murphy at (h) 410-662-9303 or (w) 410-955-8525.

250SL, 1968: White/red interior. Automatic, both tops. 105k miles (rebuilt at 99k). CA car in excellent shape, new tires, battery. Records. \$25,000. Call David Godbold at 703-787-6899 or <david_godbold@attglobal.net>

600SWB, 1970: Just in from its original Beverly Hills home. Outstanding 40k mile example. Why not go first class? Some trades O.K. Lowered to \$38,500! Call Ron at 301-855-7774.

450SEL 6.9, 1978: Midnight blue/blue velour. 72k miles. New alloy wheels and Michelin tires. Fresh tune and oil, fresh wax on original paint. Garaged. \$9500 or nearest offer. Car cover incl. Call Fran at 410-963-3058 anytime.

300D, 1979: Silver/blue. Original owner. New A/C, tires, front end, injectors, chain. Garaged. Service just completed. Excellent condition. 240K miles. \$3500. Call Rick Race at (w) 703-607-6301 or (h)

703-759-7233.

240D, 1983: Exceptional condition. New engine in 1999 from MB w/warranty. Multiple new parts (list avail.). 4-spd manual. \$5750 obo. Call Peter at 410-464-0692. More Trading Post on page 15
300SD, 1983: Black/black leather. 233k miles. A real beauty, always garaged, driven daily, runs perfectly. Recent exhaust, radiator, tires, shocks, mats, and more. Sheepskins. Legal tint. Great stereo. \$5100 obo. Call Perry at 301-774-8189.

500SL, 1985: Anthracite/black. Euro AMG package. Both tops. Needs mechanical work. Discount. 70k miles. Unique/fast. Call Jim at 703-534-6162 or email <jimkerrigan@hotmail.com>

560SEL, 1987: Diamond blue/gray leather. Exc. condition, very clean, non-smoker, ABS, SRS, seat heaters, cold A/C, new timing chain, no leaks/rust. 188k miles. \$13,500. Call Charles at 302-856-9336 from 6:00 to 10:00PM. **560SL, 1989:** Pearl black/black leather. 89k miles. Flat-face chrome Mercedes wheels. CA car, stunning, always garaged, non-smoker. Rear seat, both tops (black). New Michelins. \$25,000. Top hoist. Call Don Hagen at 703-534-3003. Pix: <www.angelfie.com/va2/560SL/mercedes.htm>

Hardtop: 280SL hardtop. Original condition. No rust or damage. \$500 obo. Call Bob Jr. at 703-941-1160 before 6:00PM.

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