



July 2003

## Annual Picnic/Concours

**Great Food!**

**Fantastic Cars!**

**The Pool is Open!**

**M**r. and Mrs. Hank Harris will host our Annual Picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours at their home in Potomac, Maryland, on Sunday, July 27. This is the Greater Washington Section's biggest event each and every year.

Your fellow club members, officers, and board members will be in charge of the cooking again—so you know the hamburgers and bratwurst will be great! (No remarks, please! They are volunteers!) And, of course, you can expect a repeat of the excellent work of our biermeisters and wine sommeliers who will dispense the "gute Deutsche bier und wein" to slake your thirst. We'll also have soft drinks and water on ice. And, there will be lots of watermelon. So be sure to bring a big bib or your raincoat.

Bring your swimsuits so you can enjoy the pool. And, don't forget to bring blankets or chairs to stake out a great spot on the lawn.

The Concours d' Elegance has no entry fee. On the registration form, please fill out your 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. Add something nice to the list of goodies! All items sell to the highest bidder. Please indicate your contribution on the centerfold registration form.

Anniversary pins will be presented to our section members who are celebrating their five-year, ten-year, fifteen-year, etc., memberships. This is one of three events each year where the anniversary pins are presented—along with the Annual Membership Meeting and Holiday Party. Recipients must attend one of the three events to receive their pins or wait another five years.

**Times:** Members with cars in the Concours should plan to arrive between 9:00 and 10:30AM.

We will have a Clean Car/Display Class that is not judged—folks attending the picnic will vote for their favorites. Wash it up and bring it out!

The Street and Show Class cars are judged. Show Class cars will have their undercarriages judged. Judging begins at 11:00AM and awards will be presented at 3:30PM. Food "judging" begins at about

## What's Inside

[Annual Picnic/Concours](#)  
[Membership Longevity Pins](#)  
[DIY Tech Session](#)  
[Vehicle Prep Center Tour](#)  
[Calendar of Events](#)  
 • [GWS](#)  
 • [MBCA](#)  
[President's Message](#)  
 • [On the Road Again...](#)  
[Pylon Alley](#)  
[Tri-O-Rama 2003](#)  
[MB News](#)  
 • [SLR McLaren Debuts](#)  
[High Gear](#)  
[Trading Post](#)  
[Advertisers](#)

[GWS Home Page](#)  
[Newsletter Archive](#)

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 .8 miles onto Query Mill Road and then turn right again into the entrance of Hidden Hill Farm.

The Picnic registration form is in the centerfold. If you have any questions on the Concours, call **Bruce Roth at 301-774-5390**.

For questions on the registration or silent auction, call **Judy Roth at the same number**. The club does not mail tickets for the Picnic/Concours. Cost is \$15.00 per person. Cost at the gate is \$20. Food will be served until 1:30PM or until it runs out.

The rain date is August 3... but as you know, it never rains at one of our events!

## Membership Longevity Pins

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**E**ach year, the Greater Washington Section of the Mercedes Benz Club of America awards longevity pins to members according to how many years they have been with the club (in increments of five years; e.g., 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.)

We have many opportunities during the year to get together for club events, but at only three of these events are the pins awarded. Our Annual Picnic—coming up July 27—is the first such event this year. The other two are the Annual Membership Meeting in the fall and the Holiday Party in December or January.

That means that if you joined the club in 1998, you are eligible for a 5-year pin this year. If you joined in 1993, you will get a 10-year pin, and so on.

There is one catch, however; you must be present when the pins are awarded.

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 at that time. Otherwise, you'll have to wait five more years before you are eligible again!

The following members are eligible for pins this year.

### 30 Years!

Herbert Claybourne

James Stevens

George Benson, Jr.

### 25 Years!

William Connor

James Manion

Peter Chapin

William Mentzer, Jr.

Kent Laikind

### There are also:

18 twenty-year members

21 fifteen-year members

47 ten-year members

120 five-year members

The Greater Washington Section offers events for almost every taste and fancy for our 1,700 members, so we hope you'll join us at one that interests you. See for yourself what the officers and various chairpersons are working 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 Chair

## DIY Tech Session

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**P**ut this on your calendar right now! American Service Center in Arlington will host a Do-It-Yourself Tech Session on Saturday, August 23. In addition, certified technicians will perform the required pre-event tech inspections for Tri-O-Rama.

The action starts with member processing at 8:00AM. The Service and Parts Departments will open their doors at 8:00AM. ASC will have coffee and pastries for the early birds. Lunch will be provided at about 11:30. The event will end promptly at 3:00PM.

Please remember to order your parts in advance from **ASC** at **703-525-2100**. This is the only way to be sure that the parts you need for the work you've planned will be on hand.

ASC will have service techs on hand to give you advice and keep you out of trouble. They are there to guide you, not do the job for you. Members are allotted two hours for their work. Do not bite off more work than you can finish. Second cars will be put at the end of the line.

This event will fill quickly. So, it will be first come-first served. Please fill out the form in the centerfold and mail it in immediately. The charge is \$15 per person. There will be no charge for cars which are only being inspected for Tri-O-Rama. If you have questions, please contact **Steve Walters** at **703-765-9405**.

## Vehicle Prep Center Tour

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**O**ne of the most popular events of the year is back! For all the fans of the latest and greatest from Mercedes, we will return to the Mercedes-Benz North America Vehicle Prep Center in Belcamp, Maryland, on Saturday, October 4.

The VPC tour will show you how cars from Germany are prepared for delivery to dealers and, eventually, to customers. We always get a surprise—one year it was an A-Class. Who knows what we'll see this year. More next month!

## Calendar of Events

### Greater Washington Section Events

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Jul 13	<b>Autocross #4</b> James Wood H.S. Winchester, Virginia Contact: Tom Newman Call: 703-378-6737	Aug 23	<b>DIY Tech Session</b> American Service Center Arlington, Virginia Contact: Steve Walters Call: 703-765-9405
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Jul 27	<b>Picnic/ Mid-Atlantic Concours</b> Harris Estate Potomac, Maryland Registration Contact: Judy Roth-301-774-5390 Concours Contact: Bruce Roth-301-774-5390	Sep 7	<b>Autocross #6 JWHS</b>
Aug 3	<b>Picnic-Rain Date</b>	Oct 4	<b>Vehicle Prep Center Tour</b> More later!
Aug 10	<b>Autocross #5</b> WSSC Silver Spring, Maryland Contact: Tom Newman Call: 703-378-6737	Oct 5	<b>Autocross #7 WSSC</b>
		Oct 25	<b>White Post Restorations Tour</b> Contact: Bill Hopper Call: 202-363-4189
		Nov 2	<b>Autocross #8 JWHS</b>
		TBA	<b>Annual Holiday Party</b> Contact: Bill Hopper Call: 202-363-4189

## Regional and National Events

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Jul 19-22	<b>StarTrack 2003</b> Pittsburgh Section <a href="#">BeaveRun Motorsports Park</a>	Sep 12-16	<b>Tri-O-Rama 2003</b> Greater Washington Section Virginia Intern'l Raceway Contact: Joe Wozney Call: 703-437-7866
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## President's Message

### On the Road Again...

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**T**here's a saying which is attributed to Isak Dinesen, author of Out of Africa, that God made the world round so we would never be able to see too far down the road.

Those words are incredibly thought provoking. For those of us that enjoy performance driving and especially autocrossing, the road changes every time there is an event, even though it is held on the same parking lot. It makes us think. It challenges us. It throws new difficulties and, therefore, learning opportunities our way.

Last weekend, we held a Defensive Driving and Autocross School. It was the second year in a row after an absence of a couple of years. I'm glad it's back. We had the best turnout of young people ever!

Tom Newman and a crew of volunteers laid out three courses for our group of about 30 folks (with about 10 teens). There was a skid pad (a 70 foot circle) to teach control and slip. There was a slalom to teach rapid transition control by creating a back and forth series of turns. And, there was an accident avoidance maneuver to simulate an obstruction in the driver's path on a two-lane road.

It was exciting to see folks gain confidence and push their cars harder and faster yet be smoother and better at maintaining control. The full relationship of eye-hand coordination and the concept of looking as far down the road as one can versus just over the hood of the car will come in time. But the learning has started!



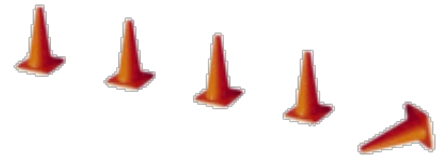
After a lunch break, we set up a simple autocross using parts of the same Defensive Driving School. The difference was that the drivers were timed. Control, knowledge of the car's brakes and handling characteristics, and using the eyes to drive competitively in a safe environment made a learning experience a fun activity—a sport, a new turn in the road.

However, that's not the only road that Ms. Dinesen was talking about. She was talking about the unexpected twists and turns and hills and valleys that make life an interesting ribbon of events—or unforeseen events that make life, well, life.

Two weeks ago, a forty-foot branch broke off a big old maple in our yard under the weight of too much rainwater on its leaves. It did slight damage to our deck and broke some branches on the rhododendrons around it, and it took me away from my work.

While spending time in the yard with the tree removal crew, I noticed a small, incredibly beautiful black and white cat. I thought it was a neighbor's. It wasn't theirs. It wasn't, as it turned out, anybody's. Someone said it had been around all week. Our last cat died at the age of 19 a few months ago. We said "no more cats for a while." The road had taken another dip... That little black and white cat is ours now.

Joe



## pylon alley by Tom Newman

### Autocross #1 and #2

The beginning of this year's season has brought about a lot of firsts—a new location, new faces, and a new driving events coordinator. For those who don't know me, my name is Tom Newman and I am succeeding Joe in running our driving events. I am very honored that the board and my fellow autocrossers nominated me to this position. I will do my best to make each and every event safe and fun.

**AX #1  
Results**

**AX #2  
Results**

### Autocross #1—"Ode to NASCAR"

The lot at WSSC is fantastic! There is plenty of space, lots of runoff room (ask Harry) and the ability to design a wide variety of courses. The surface was a little rough and had a fair amount of sand and pebbles, but for the next event we are bringing leaf blowers to try and clear the surface of debris. Another bonus to the lot is the covered awnings that will shade from heat and help us stay dry during inclement weather. For our WSSC inaugural course, we chose ovals and used the smaller portion of the lot to tighten things up and even the playing field. Bill Stewart made a triumphant return to stake his claim as the fastest Benz in the field. Deborah Hirtes secured top honors for the lady Benz drivers. Marty Gallagher found out that tight corners and horsepower don't always mix. Gonzo Puig and his WRX snuck up on Marty to take FTD. The overall winners in the "foreign car" classes were husband and wife team Bill and Angie Brochu.

It was a truly great event. A wide variety of cars on hand made for great conversation and competition. Steve Roberts EVO VIII certainly got everyone's attention. Once he gets used to the car...look out. That thing is fast! For the first time in several years, we reached a nearly 50/50 split between Benz drivers and non-Benz drivers. Special thanks go to Bruce Roth for doing the legwork on getting us the facility.



## Autocross #2—"The Wheel of Eeeeeevil"

We returned to James Woods H.S. and found a cold, dreary, wet lot. Loosely translated, typical Mercedes autocross weather... and we love it! Well, most of us. Like those with traction control, all wheel drive, small wheelbases.... The course was very tight. Quick gates from the start and a skid pad set in the center, repeatedly challenged our competitors. There was much growling and grumbling by the high horsepower pony car crowd that humbled them to the all weather fighters that came out to play.

Fastest Benz honors go to John Robinson in his 1988 560SL squeaking out Ted Joseph in his 1999 CLK. Debbie Hirtes continued her reign as the fastest lady in the Benz group.

Gonzo was unable to repeat his FTD of the previous event – just too slick for him. Instead, Andrew Lee claimed the honor in his Audi S4. Your autocross chair (that would be me) was also humbled. Not once, but twice. First, getting lost on the very course I designed and then again when proudly I proclaimed a 6 tenths of a second advantage over my father (Harry). He, on his very next run, promptly bettered my time by 2 tenths of a second to secure third place. Adding further credence to the old expression... "Youth and skill shall never overcome old age and treachery."

Our autocross season is off to a great start. It is really great to see the old gang mixing it up with fresh faces and all equally enjoying themselves. I will continue to try and accommodate everyone's requests and suggestions as appropriate. I appreciate your feedback and ask that you continue to voice your opinions. So until next time, keep the shiny side up.

Next month—"O Slalom Mio!"

*(Tom's dad, other "over 40" drivers, and I take umbrage with the term "old age." Mr. ed)*

## Tri-O-Rama 2003

A few weeks ago, three of us made the trip to Virginia International Raceway and to nearby South Boston, Virginia, to finalize track and hotel arrangements for this national MBCA event.

I can state without reservation that the track is fantastic! VIR is a like a country club for cars. If you have not yet been there, the 3.27 mile course winds up and down the beautiful countryside like a ribbon on silk. The attendant facilities are first rate.

And, the hotel? We selected the Marriott Berry Hill Plantation—a 30-minute drive from the track. In a recent article in the Washington Post, automotive writer Warren Brown wrote about MBUSA's introduction of the new E55 at VIR and his stay at Berry Hill. Like us, Mr. Brown was impressed with the care taken by both Marriott and the former owner (a European insurance firm) to preserve the heritage and condition of the plantation, including the slave quarters and grave site.

This 1840s plantation has been completely restored and a modern hotel wing has been added. It's absolutely incredible! You'll be very impressed with the prices and the food! But... I don't want to get ahead of myself.

We understand that some of you cannot attend the full four days of Tri-O-Rama. So if you're looking for a great weekend getaway, this is the place!

Registration opens on Friday, September 12. On Saturday, we'll host the Concours d' Elegance on the hotel grounds—there is absolutely no need to go anywhere else and there isn't a more beautiful site for more than a hundred miles. On Saturday evening, the first social event—the Welcome Reception—will also be held at the hotel in the original mansion.

On Sunday, the Tri-O-Rama Autocross and Rallye will both be held. And in the evening, Concours and Rallye awards will be presented at the Biergarten dinner.

Monday will be a full day of track events at Virginia International Raceway with Defensive Driving,

the Performance Driving School, and Acceleration Runs.

On Tuesday, it's another day at VIR with full-course time trials. The event wraps up that evening with the Grand Finale banquet back at Berry Hill. All of the driving event awards will be presented that evening.

Berry Hill is only four and a half hours from Washington. Whether you can come for all four days or just for the weekend, you will thoroughly enjoy this event! If you're a track junkie, this is the place for you. Paul Newman has called VIR the most beautiful track in America. I agree completely!

For a registration packet check the section's [web site](#). All forms can be downloaded as PDFs. You can also send me an [e-mail](#). Or, you can drop me a note at: 1625 Park Overlook Drive, Reston, VA 20190

Remember! You must preregister for all events.

## MB News

### Mercedes-Benz to Debut SLR McLaren This Fall

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**T**he new Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren, which will make its world premiere this fall at the Frankfurt Auto Show, celebrates the formidable SLR race cars of the 1950s and marks a new era of Mercedes-Benz passion for grand touring sports cars. A futuristic interpretation of styling elements from the original 300SLR and from the latest Formula 1 Silver Arrow race cars bridges the past and future, bringing cutting-edge motorsports-inspired design and technology to the road—just as the SLR did in 1955.

The new SLR allows Mercedes-Benz and its Formula 1 partner, McLaren, to showcase their collective experience in the development and production of high-performance sports cars. This unique combination of expertise is evident not only in the pioneering developments and impressive performance of the new SLR, but also in its high levels of safety, as well as the grand touring comfort already associated with the renowned SL.

The limited-production SLR will go on sale in Europe late this year, and its U.S. market launch is planned in mid-2004. While pricing will be announced later, it's expected to be in the mid-\$300,000 range.

One dramatic example of technology transfer from Formula 1 racing is the carbon fiber composite construction of the new SLR McLaren monocoque and body panels, which provides rigidity and strength never before achieved in road-going vehicles, with reduced weight to help ensure the SLR's targeted performance characteristics. Equally impressive is its high level of occupant protection—specially designed crash structures of carbon fiber help this car set new standards in energy absorption.

Brake discs on the SLR are made of a new composite material—a fiber-reinforced ceramic that boasts extremely high heat resistance, outstanding structural strength, reduced unsprung weight, and long service life. The SLR sports car will be one of very few production cars to make use of ceramic brake technology.

Under the SLR hood in a front mid-engine location lurks a supercharged V8 engine with dry-sump lubrication developed and built by Mercedes-AMG. Delivering unprecedented levels of horsepower and torque, each SLR engine is hand-built at AMG's manufacturing facility.

The first SLR was one of the most successful sports racing cars of all times, achieving a string of five 1st and 2nd place finishes in 1955 with drivers such as Stirling Moss and Juan Manuel Fangio. Like the new car, the SLR of the 1950s combined leading-edge technology from the 300SL sports car and the Mercedes-Benz Formula 1 race car. Its three-liter, straight-eight engine made 310 horsepower, pushing the SLR to speeds of around 190 miles per hour.

Perhaps the original SLR's most astonishing feat was in the 1955 Mille Miglia, at the time a no-holds-barred race through Italy over twisty public roads. Setting a record never matched, Stirling Moss and Dennis Jenkinson piloted the 300SLR over the 1000-mile road course in 10 hours, seven minutes and 48 seconds -- an average speed of about 100 miles per hour!

*(If every GWS member gives \$200 to our SLR fund, we could buy one car and draw for a week's use! And the first name drawn is Joe ...)*

## High Gear

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**H**ave you ever read the old Perry Mason novels? I'm really very fond of them. No, I am not a detective story junkie. There are two things that I find ineluctable about these dime novels of old. First, it's absolutely charming to realize the assumptions of a common morality that underlie these tales of adventure and crime. Erle Stanley Gardner just took for granted the fact that his readers abhorred fraud, infidelity and vice, while they admired honesty, integrity and virtue. Quaint notions today in a brave new world of moral diversity.

Secondly, I love to read the descriptions of old southern California. A land of orange groves and white clapboard one-story farm houses; of palm shaded bungalows with wrap around porches and crystal clear views of the Angeles Crest. I can smell the eucalyptus trees and taste the dry, dusty endless summer. I remember the red rock of the canyon roads and the "g" forces generated by the "s" curves.

When I was a kid, I got in on the tail end of the old California. I first visited the west coast as a toddler in 1952. But subsequently we moved there and I became a teenager during the period from 1960 to 1963 when my parents lived in the golden state. I still love to visit California. There's something devil-may-care about living on the fault line. The blood red sun dropping into the Pacific and starry nights on the high desert of the Joshua tree remain unique. But it's a different country now, you see. There isn't a single orange grove in the San Fernando Valley and Laguna Niguel is a series of housing developments, not a lonely stretch of wind swept beach. But the old golden bear republic still lives on the yellowing pages of Erle Stanley Gardner's novels and in my dreams.

Imagine my state of mind two weeks ago when I woke up and found myself a passenger in a fast moving Mercedes cresting a golden brown hill with a verdant valley of orange groves spreading out in fanlike rows before me. I rubbed my eyes and gazed out upon a pastoral scene of surpassing beauty. The purple shadows delineated the folded creases of a chain of rugged mountains. The azure, cloudless sky shimmered in the golden light of dawn. Into the switchbacks we flew as the fleet Benz headed down toward the valley floor. I recognized the red rock canyon walls and all my senses came alive to the wafting dry scent of the mighty eucalyptus trees.

Thomas Wolfe told us that we can't go home again. But as I gradually emerged from the world of sleep to wakefulness my consciousness screamed out, "No! You can go home!" There below me was the old California just as I had remembered her. I felt the comforting, familiar rumble of a Mercedes diesel engine. I had the assuring sense of my dear family around me. I could swear I was going back. Back into the valley of citrus. Back in our old diesel finback. Back to the loving embrace of my parents and my grandmother.

Then I saw the minaret... and it all came into focus. I was in Turkey; traveling from Dalaman to Marmaris; in a Mercedes van owned by the Pupa Yacht Club, in the company of my Swiss cousin and our saucy, sailing crew. We were on our way to join our 52 foot Benateau to set sails for Daga and the Aegean coast.

I braced myself in my seat as the driver executed a neat down shift and took just the right line through an off camber sweeper. I recollected that in my sea chest stowed in back I had a copy of a



Perry Mason novel and a newly acquired Meerschaum pipe.

Thomas Wolfe was right after all. You can't go home again. But life can still be good. Somewhere in a distant, strange land, oranges grow in a shimmering dale and a trusty Mercedes is scrubbing rubber in tight, red rock-bound curves.

John Kuhn Bleimaier

## TradingPost

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**250S, 1967:** Dark green/tan. One owner since 1976. Major eng. repair (5/01), chassis (4/03). New grill, old-style alloys. \$7000 obo. Call Ralph at 301-868-3974.

**280SL, 1970:** Dark blue/blue. Orig. interior. 94k miles. Perfect body, chrome, man. trans, jump seat, Becker cass., both tops, R134A A/C, SS exhaust, orig. tools, records, window sticker! \$27,000 obo. Call Dom at 703-255-1487 or email at <ric12os@earthlink.net>

**280S, 1971:** Silver, 6-cyl limo. Large front grill, double vertical lights, fog lights. Huge trunk. Best offer. Call Rudolf at 202-362-9337 or fax 202-363-4062.

**280SE 4.5, 1972:** White/Cognac. Second owner last 15 years. Very good example. \$5400. Call Ron 301-855-7774.

**450SL, 1975:** Teal/black. 54k original miles. Hard and soft tops. Garage kept. Excellent condition. Paid \$21,000. Asking \$18,500. Contact Kelly Webb at 540-955-3688

**450SL, 1976:** Black/black leather. Restored, recent paint, well maintained. Hard top and new soft top. Garage kept. Runs great. Excellent cond. \$17,500. Call Joan at 540-338-8045.

**300SD, 1980:** Blue. Auto. Sun roof. MD inspect. Avg. 25 mpg. Well maintained. Driven daily by current owner for 6 yrs. \$4500 obo. Call Bill Gheen at 301-770-6787.

**300SE, 1988:** Black/red. 137k miles. Updated A/C. New radiator, fuel distributor, alternator. Jensen stereo w/6 CD changer. MD inspection. \$6500. Call Bill at 301-972-8698.

**560SEL, 1990:** Light blue/light blue. 133k miles. One year old Michelins and radiator. K&N 100k air cleaner. Excellent in and out. \$8500. Call Jesse at (w) 202-268-3457 or (h) 540-822-4810.

**300SE, 1992:** Smoke silver metallic/Parchment soft leather. 98k miles. Orig. owner, always garaged, non-smoker, excellent cond. All dealer maintenance. New A/C compressor. \$13,500. Call Uwe at 301-257-5522 or email at <ulscherf@starpower.net>

**400E, 1992:** Dark blue/saddle. 120k miles. ASR. Beautifully maintained. Orig. paint, flawless interior. \$8950 obo. Call David at (w) 703-533-3577 or (h) 703-522-7134.

**E320, 1996:** Emerald green/Parchment. 72k miles. Excellent cond, garage kept, dealer maint. CD changer, integrated phone. Extras. Moving. \$22,500. Call Keith at 202-726-2905.

**Parts Car-300CD, 1980:** Blue/blue. Rims and tires good. Glass in great shape, good body panels, slight bit of rust in rear. Heck, its only \$300. Call now! Call Ben Weber at 703-777-2982 or email at

<weber4blueridge@yahoo.com>

**EZ-Top Hoist:** For SLs. Incl. hardtop cover. See [www.eztop.com](http://www.eztop.com). Worked perfectly. 1-person operation. Sold car. Asking \$200. Call John at 571-278-0609.

**Wheels:** 4 chromed orig. alloys from '89 560SL. Good cond. 4 new chromed center caps. 3 Michelin MXV4s, 205/65R15, very good. \$500 for all. Call Doug at 410-592-2962 or email at <sundog@comcast.net>

**Wheel:** 1 6J x 15H wheel from W201 190 with Michelin Rainforce tire. Some road rash but good. \$35 plus shipping or will deliver at GWS event. Call Bill Hopper at 202-363-4189.

**Wanted:** 300SEL 3.5 or 4.5. Prefer dark color w/burlwood and leather. Concours or excellent cond. Call Andrew at 202-452-7723 or email at [squasher@starpower.net](mailto:squasher@starpower.net)

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