



June 2002

Drive and Dine Celebrate Father's Day In The Alps

Come celebrate Father's Day in Alpine style at the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown, West Virginia on Sunday, June 16. The day will start with members and their families who want to caravan up the twisty roads to Shepherdstown as a group, at Potomac German Auto at 4305 Lime Kiln Road south of Frederick, Maryland, just off Route 270.

Potomac German Auto is hosting morning coffee and a small tour of their facility for members who gather there at 10:00AM. At 11:00AM groups will take off for the drive to the Inn. Driving through historic Civil War countryside, they will pass through the interesting Maryland towns of Middletown, Boonsboro and Sharpsburg, and cross the bridge into Shepherdstown West Virginia to the Bavarian Inn, where lunch will be served at 1:00PM.

The Bavarian Inn is built in the Alpine tradition with old world buildings and a great location atop a bluff overlooking the scenic Potomac River. The Inn brings the traditions of the old world with wonderful Alpine painted chalets that overlook the river's bend. And, a special Mercedes-Benz-Club-only parking area will be available for members who attend.

Lunch will be served with a choice of four entrees; Chicken Prince---tender breast of chicken served with asparagus and whipped potatoes; Sauerbraten---choice marinated beef served with red cabbage and dumplings; Crab Cakes; and, for the vegetarians, Portobello Wellington served with spinach and julienne vegetable in puff pastry. As well as hors' d'oeuvres, salad, ice tea, wine and desert. A special reduced price children's meal of chicken tenders and potatoes is also available for the kids.

After lunch, members are encouraged to go into the quaint Shepherdstown and explore the many specialty shops and interesting tree-lined side streets of this very charming college town.

The cost is \$45 per person---\$30 for the children's meal. Please fill out the centerfold coupon and let us know your choice of entrée, Chicken, Bavarian, Crab Cakes, or Vegetarian.

If you are bringing Dad along, or will be celebrating yourself as a Dad that day, let us know when sending in your reservation, as we will be honoring Father's this year. Please send in your reservation coupon (see the centerfold) and your check made out to GWS-MBCA to: Bill Hopper 5455 Broad Branch Road N.W. Washington, DC 20015-1753. For more information, call Bill at 202-363-4189. For

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those looking to stay overnight contact the Bavarian Inn directly at 304-876-2551. For Bed and Breakfast style accommodations, contact the Thomas Shepherd Inn at 304-876-3715.

Also check out these sites on the Internet: [Potomac German Auto](#), [The Bavarian Inn](#), [The Thomas Shepard Inn](#).

Tri-Star Challenge

Saturday, June 22 through Tuesday, June 25. Four days of fun, and learning for the novice as well as the experienced driver, and those who love to show off their cars! Sponsored by the Western Reserve Section

Saturday Registration, tech inspection, rallye, welcome cocktail party.

Sunday Concours d' Elegance, performance driving school, rallye, and Concours banquet.

Monday and Tuesday Driving School and Time Trials at Nelson Ledges Road Course.

Tuesday Defensive driving, autocross, and acceleration runs at Thompson Drag Raceway. Awards Banquet at Avalon Inn.

Headquartered in the Avalon Inn Resort in Warren, Ohio 800-828-2566. Ask for the MBCA package. For information and a registration package, call John Morrison at 330-673-7885 or email: gobenzing@aol.com

Defensive Driving School

The section is offering a defensive driving school for our Mercedes-Benz owners on June 9 at James Wood High School in Winchester, Virginia, starting at 8:30AM. This will be the only defensive driving school that we will offer this year. The school provides an excellent opportunity to "improve" and "brush-up" your driving skills, especially as we head toward summer vacation driving. The driving school is a wonderful opportunity for your household's young drivers to improve their driving skills in a controlled environment.

The school will provide an overview of safe driving techniques followed by a "hands-on" maneuvering (at controlled speeds) of the school's driving course in your own Mercedes. By driving your own Mercedes, you will become more comfortable and better acquainted with your car in challenging situations. There will be several instructors available for personal assistance.

So bring your Mercedes and your young drivers to the school.

Complete the centerfold coupon with the \$20 per person fee and mail it today. The fee at the gate will be \$25. The cost of the school includes a noontime sandwich lunch!

Remember, this is the only defensive driving school to be offered this year, so make plans to attend today! If you have questions or desire additional information, contact Mason Beale at 703- 941-1055. See the next two articles for info on the autocross part of the day, directions, and what you'll have to do to prepare for the event.

And...

Mercedes-Only Autocross

The section will also hold a Mercedes-only autocross on June 9 at James Wood High School in Winchester, Virginia, following the defensive driving school. The approximate start time is 1:00 p.m.

Many Mercedes owners have requested that we offer this type of autocross, so tune-up your Mercedes and dust off those race tires (if you have them) and come to the autocross ready to show your "stuff."

The event is open to all Mercedes drivers, with a special invitation to our former Mercedes autocrossers who have not attended an event for some time. We look forward to renewing friendships and reestablishing good-natured challenges on the course. Even if you have never attended an autocross, bring your Mercedes out and see the great fun associated with this event and how it improves your driving skills. We drive rain or shine...except for thunderstorms.

Fill out the centerfold coupon and identify yourself as an autocrosser and mail the coupon and \$20 fee today. The fee is \$25 at the gate. Arrive early and join our post-defensive driving school lunch. There is only one fee per person, whether you attend the defensive driving school, the autocross, or both. Make sure you let us know if you'll be joining us for lunch. If you have questions or desire additional information, contact Mason Beale at (703) 941-1055.

Directions to James Wood High School: Take Route 7, Route 50, or I-66 west. Get on I-81 north to the Route 37 and Stephenson exit. (The Route 37 exit is one exit north of Route 7 and two exits north of Route 50.) Turn left at the traffic light at the end of the ramp. Stay in the right lane and take the Route 37 Bypass (road splits). Go to the next exit (Berkley Springs) and turn right at the traffic light. Go to the next traffic light (100-200 yards) and make a right on Apple Pie Ridge Road. The entrance to the school parking lot is the next left. You will see our group from there. Allow an hour to an hour and a quarter from the Beltway.

Calendar of Events

Greater Washington Section Events

June 9	Mercedes-Only Defensive Driving School and Autocross James Wood High School Winchester, Virginia Contact: Mason Beale Call: 703-941-1055	July 14	Annual Picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours Hank Harris's Estate Potomac, Maryland Contact: Judy Roth Call: 301-774-5390 For Concours--- Contact: Ed Ayre Call: 301-654-0837
June 16	Father's Day Drive and Dine Potomac German Auto and Bavarian Inn Shepardstown, West Virginia Contact: Bill Hopper Call: 202-363-4189	August 25	Autocross #5
June 23	Autocross #3 James Wood High School Winchester, Virginia Contact: Joe Wozney Call: 703-437-7866	September 22	Autocross #6
July 7	Autocross #4	October 13	Autocross #7
		November 3	Autocross #8

James Wood High School
Winchester, Virginia
Contact: Joe Wozney
Call: 703-437-7866

January 2003 **Annual Holiday Party**

Regional and National Events

June 22-25 **Great Lakes Tri-Star Challenge**
See Page 13

August 11-16 **StarFest 2002**
Indianapolis, Indiana
See *The Star* for information

President's Message

Thoughts of a Car Guy

Congratulations to American Service Center for being the first of our Washington area dealers to open a second dealership in our area. Mercedes-Benz of Alexandria opened, in March, on South Pickett Road off Duke Street in Alexandria. ASC bought the former Stohlman Oldsmobile store.

Oldsmobile as we sadly know will be retired as an American marque this year after a proud history. Those late fifties cars were true automotive rockets.

The location will undergo a complete facelift over the summer. Carl Patton transferred from ASC's service department to the new location to provide the best of service right from the start. The rumor mill has it that our other large dealers, Euro Motorcars and HBL, will also get second authorized locations from MBUSA further out in the burbs. We look forward to scheduling a tech session at the new Alexandria dealership in the late summer to get everyone acquainted. If you are in the Landmark area stop by and say hello and wish them good luck.

The Deutsche Marque Concours event was a huge success. More cars than ever before, and on a simply gorgeous day. David Stitzer from Philadelphia took top show honors again with his award winning blue with white interior 300SL. Fellow Philadelphian Bob Platz took the street division with his splendid black 190SL.

Our own Frank Spellman took the display category with his very original 1963 ivory 300SL. Dozens of beautiful Porsches, BMW's and Mercedes were on display followed by a wine, beer, and cheese reception put on by our own queen of social events, Judy Roth, and assisted by our king Bill Hopper.

I hope many of you will join us for our summer drive and dine to the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown on Sunday, June 16. It should be a truly spectacular event on Fathers Day.

Please plan to attend our annual picnic at the Hank Harris estate in Potomac on Sunday, July 14. Bring the kids and lawn chairs for this family event. They all love Hank's pool. We will also host the Annual Mid-Atlantic Concours (car show) on the lovely grounds. We will award trophies to those in both the judged and display classes.

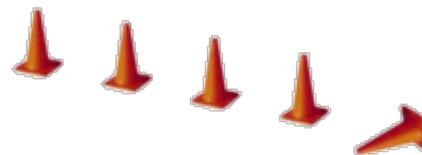
Judged class means we judge the cleanliness and originality of the body, interior, and engine. Display is just how the exterior presents itself.

And again, don't forget StarFest, MBCA's national convention with show, social, driving, and technical events for everyone to be held in Indianapolis beginning August 11.

See you there.



Dick



pylon alley by Joe Wozney

Autocross #2

**AX #2
Results**

Old-timers came out of the woodwork... Let me rephrase that... Folks who haven't autocrossed with us in quite a long time joined us for our second event of the year.

Bill Stewart, Rick and Cindi Ellinger, and Ben Weber all drove their Mercedes but only Bill drove his "old" car. Speaking of Bill... he drove his 190E 2.3-16V like he'd never missed an event, taking yet another Fastest Mercedes Time of Day. Rick and Cindi, on the other hand, suffered defeat at the hands of their teenage son, Richard... who's still driving on a learner's permit! The horror!

Five sedan drivers vied for the six-cylinder class with Larry Taylor taking the honors and Jim Smith finishing second.

Steve Walters had a big win over Janet McFarland in the older eight-cylinder class.

In the SL classes, Al Angulo and his 12-cylinder beast had the best overall time and John Robinson eked out a half second win over Debbie Hirtes.

After seeking (and getting) permission to drive his wife's wagon (mit diesel), Ben Weber's return was spoiled by Klaus Hirtes who had a fantastic 60-second run.

In the non-Benz class, the weather tables were turned on the FWD/4WD folks as Bill Brochu took the honors. Bill Lear---last month's winner---was second. Jack Douglas placed his Subaru a close third. Harry Newman (also in a Subaru) was 53 thousandths back in fourth. FTD went to Andrew Lee, who placed fifth in his incredibly fast Street Mod Audi S4. Second fastest time overall and sixth place went to Jon Kintner and his Mustang.

Angie Brochu, driving her BMW 325, also got her revenge for the RWD cars by taking first in the Women's Class and Fastest Ladies Time of Day. Audi driver Dana Argiro---last month's champ---was second. Newcomer Sigrid Braeckeveldt was very impressive in her first-ever event in a Subaru Impreza RS.

Okay... we've had a rainy day and a cool (cold?) day. Next up... hot and dry?

And, don't forget! There are **two** events for June---the Mercedes-only event on June 9 and the series event on June 23.

Prepping You and Your Car for Defensive Driving

Do I need race tires for defensive driving or autocross? No! But to make your car handle better for these events, add ten pounds of air over the Mercedes recommended pressure (not what it says on the tire). The same still applies if it's raining. There is a Sheetz station a half mile from the high school where you can add the air you'll need. We suggest you add the air before coming to the school. Drive on a full to nearly full gas tank.

2002 Autocross Dates

June 9 (M-B only)
June 23
July 7
August 25
September 22
October 13
November 3

Remove everything from the car you won't need and leave it at home. Bring plastic trash bags to store the items you do bring along. You will have to remove **all** items before running the course. No leather soled shoes or sandals. Wear sneakers. Bring a rain jacket, an umbrella, and something warm to wear if it turns cold cool. Bring portable chairs. Bring a camera!

Loaner helmets will be available. They are required for autocross and are optional but recommended for defensive driving.

We'll have water and soft drinks. Drink lots of water... especially if it's a warm day. You'd be amazed at how fast you become dehydrated.

Annual Picnic/Concours

Live Music Again! The Pool is Open!

On Sunday, July 15, 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 (and articles).

We expect Tom and Mary Kestel and Debbie Hirtes will be in charge of the cooking again. So you know the hamburgers and bratwurst will be great! And, of course, we're expecting 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.

Bring your swimsuits 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. 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 MBCA members celebrating their five-year, ten-year, etc., memberships.

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 into the entrance of Hidden Hill Farm.

The registration form is in the centerfold. 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. Cost at the gate is \$20. Food will be served until 1:30 or until it runs out.

Membership Longevity Pins

Each 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 lapel pins awarded. Our annual picnic---coming up in July---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 1997, you are eligible for a 5-year pin this year. If you joined in 1992, you will get a 10-year pin, and so on. There is one catch, however---**we do not mail out pins, so you must be present when the pins are awarded.**

Invariably, eligible members attend one or all of the above events but leave before the pins are awarded. If, for some reason, you must leave before the pin presentation, please see me or my wife, Deborah, and we will give you your pin at that time. Otherwise, you'll have to wait five more years before you are again eligible!

The following members are eligible for pins this year:

35 Years!!!

Goetz Oertel

30 Years!!

Kim Calvin

Igor Islamoff

There are also:

41 fifteen-year members

32 ten-year members

111 five-year members

25 Years!!

Charles Borsom

William Branamen

Christa Lazell

Frederick Leonhardt

Richard Liebhaber

Ronald Miller

Perry Smith III

Ray Stroh

Max Van Valkenburg

Bradford Walton

20 Years!

Nicholas Brame

Robert Nutting, Jr.

Richard Priestler

Grace Russell

James Samuels

Eric Svendson

R. H. Troyer

Francis Walsh

Rodney Williams

Even if you are not eligible for a pin this year, we would love to have you join us at the picnic and all the other opportunities to get together. This section offers many different events for almost every taste and fancy for our 1,700 members, so we hope you'll join us for 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.

If you are not certain as to the date you joined, send me an e-mail with your name and member number at <kdhirtes@comcast.net> , and I'll check it out for you. For those of you without email, call 703-521-3120 (not after 7PM, please).

See you at the picnic!

Klaus Hirtes

Deutsche Marque 2002

There is an old adage that says "Time flies when you're having fun," and this is not truer than when the 19th Annual Deutsche Marque Concours was held in Nottoway Park in Vienna, Virginia.

Every year the event is hosted by the great gang of the GWS Section---Ed Ayre, Mason Beale, the Roths, and Dick Pedersen.

Legend has it that spectacular sunshine on a breezy spring day is de rigueur at this event, and judging from my tanned forearms sporting a pale white watchband mark and feet tops resembling

grilled meat from my sandals, I would say this year again that the Concours d' Elegance---first outdoor show of the season---was blessed eternally once again with the sweet kiss of solar rays.

I had to drive down to Virginia on Friday night after work in my Volvo 850 sedan, as my selection of show cars was already sleeping down there awaiting my arrival. My ride in the performance Swedish sedan was a smooth one, but under the cover of darkness. I was mostly focusing on my driving rather than being able to enjoy the explosion of select apple, cherry, and wildflower blossoms I knew were pollinating in profusion all around me, sprinkling their microfine green powder everywhere. In order to remain alert, I slipped on my pair of tight red leather Mercedes Parisian driving gloves, and with a firm grip on the padded steering wheel, my job was to arrive safely without a deer hit before the midnight hour. And so I did, and for my reward a mysterious hand was extended upon a knock to Fred's apartment door offering me a well-deserved chilled glass of zinfandel to herald the start of a Concours weekend.

Saturday dawned brilliant, breezy, but cool. We began our round of errands in keeping with work (chores) before play (detailing the Stars.) We outfitted the Volvo with a full set of Michelin high performance V-rated tires, and when done, we sailed over to the secret location where we keep the Southern Stars of our collection, and swapped the Swede for two choice Benzes for the next day's competition, selecting Star Cruiser, the Wisconsinite SEC, and Arctic Star---the 107 white dazzling convertible. We brought them over to Fred's complex where, under rapidly changing skies, we hurried to beat the clock in a game of "afternoon detail." Polishes, waxes, and dressings aren't as effective in cool, damp, rainy conditions, so by 7:00PM our work was curtailed until the following morning when the Washington weatherman assured us we'd have plenty of sunshine to finish our preparations.

Sunday morning ten o'clock was roll call check in for the Concours, and we were right on time. Tidy lines of Porsches, BMWs, and the Mercedes were already forming neatly over the grassy knoll, and we were directed to park likewise into the exciting line up. A perfunctory glance assured me we'd have plenty of variety here today, from Carreras to Coupes to C-Class. The show cars sparkled like jewels in the early morning sunshine as the dewy grass tickled the toes of my bare feet as I bent over my entry, carefully prepping her in the two-hour staging time for the judges's inspection. At noon, it was hands-off, and the socializing began. One of the nicest things about Concours is greeting old friends and making new ones in the arena of breath-taking, beautiful German machines.

Douglas DeBoard of German Auto Tours tossed me the keys to his 1994 diesel Geländewagen and insisted I test drive the beast over the terrain. In a matter of minutes I was lazily making circles around the concourse, beeping and waving with pleasure while having fun behind the steering wheel of my very first G-Wagen ride. Fred had to try it out too, and declared it capable on hilly driving conditions.

Late in the afternoon we gathered near the Mercedes assembly to hear the results of the Concours judging---always a tense and adrenaline pumping moment for the contestants. New Jersey swept the gold for NNJS with Ellen and Fred receiving First and Second Place right behind each other, Bob Platz took the trophy for historical restoration, and Best of Show was David Stitzer's trailered 1962 300SL. Let's hear a round of applause for the Garden State Stars!

Unfortunately I had to return to New Jersey the same day, and reluctantly handed over the Benz keys for the Volvo's for the return trip following a victory ride in Midnight Star, our dunkelblau 450SL. I thought it a good idea to check the oil before my high speed highway flight, so we popped the hood and rallied 'round the front to the engine bay to check fluid levels.

Jumping back with horror and shrieking, I was greeted, rather unceremoniously, by a pile of fiber and fuzz over the battery compartment the size of a small poodle!

Just what was this onerous stuff, I'm thinking, and as I plunge my hand in to scoop up the fluff before it caused a fire. I uncovered five wriggling little pink creatures wiggling away happily in the warm nest of the now shredded hood pad. I could not believe they were still alive after my travels! We

managed to clean the compartment satisfactorily, glad that it happened in the 850 instead of the 560!

With all the excitement of a whirlwind weekend behind me, the hundred or so show cars of the Deutsche Marque Concours bid farewell until next year. Will I see you there in 2003? Auf Wiedersehen!

Ellen Ruck

(Ellen is the NNJ Section newsletter editor and attends numerous GWS events. Mr. ed)

We are a serious club, right? We are also something of a fraternal (sororal) organization, are we not? Well then, in my humble opinion, we need more formalized institutions and rules of conduct. We may already have a club flag and logo. We also need a club song, a club mascot, a secret handshake and a code of ethics. I'm not joking. If we could model ourselves after the Odd Fellows, the Elks, or the Masons it would transform this car club forever!

As a secret society we could covertly advance the fortunes of selected brothers and sisters. We could wear distinctive regalia at mysterious meetings. We could promote a hidden social agenda. This would certainly increase the pleasure of ownership of our Mercedes starships and ultimately reverse the declining membership numbers for the club. What an exciting opportunity!

I personally have always wanted to belong to a secret society. When I was in college I fervently hoped that some shadowy fraternity that was not officially recognized by the school's administration would surreptitiously tap me on the shoulder and I would be initiated into a world of mystery, intrigue, conspiracy, and the attainment of ultimate riches. It never happened.

When I began my professional life I dreamed of the day when the representative of some powerful old boys' network would take me aside and offer me entrée into the fabled world of the insiders who really run society. No such luck. I guess I still kinda hope that I will be invited to join the quadrilateral commission or the millinery-industrial complex so that I will be able to participate in running the newest world order.

But realistically the probability of my actually joining the ultimate THEM or the ultimate US, is sort of low. My only hope is to transform our car club. After all, a lot of our M-Class members are movers and shakers in society. We have a number of folks on the books who possess genuine savoir faire; who can change oil, bleed brakes, resurface a clutch or set timing. You can't buy even a used Mercedes unless you've got the scratch to pay for premium fuel. We are potentially powerful people. Let's do it. Let's remake the world!

Our club song... that's easy: When You Wish Upon a Star. Club mascot: the starfish. From now on, when you shake hands use your pinkie to gently scratch a three-pointed star on the palm of every new acquaintance. If your interlocutor looks at you sort of queer, just excuse yourself for a nervous tick. If, on the other hand, your companion scratches a circle of laurel leaves with his or her pinkie, then you know... "One of US!" Our code of ethics must prescribe yielding the right of precedence in order of engine displacement rank; changing oil at 3000 mile intervals; as well as doing all in our power to advance the economic goals of some of our brethren and sistern. Club meetings must be closed to outsiders and we should all wear shop aprons on these special occasions. Our social agenda should include the promotion of democracy and the guarantee of equality of opportunity for folks of the compression ignition orientation.

Of course, half the fun of having a membership organization is in developing procedures for disciplining or expelling wayward members. I propose that folks who run with underinflated tires should be compelled to do penance with a maximum speed governor installed under their accelerator pedal. Members who allow their starships to become clunkers or who fail to piously and reverently read our club's scriptural magazine should be expelled and banished for eternity. A banished member must be shunned by all other members for life, at least. The shunned should be treated as if their

Mercedes never came down the production line at Sindelfingen. It's as if they never existed.

It was either Karl or Groucho Marx who said that he never wanted to join a club which would admit people like himself. Let us be true to this eternal verity.

John Kuhn Bleimaier

Want to Look Professional while working on your Mercedes-Benz?

At a recent Tech session, one of the club members remarked that it would be nice to have shop coats to not only protect our clothing while working on our cars, but to give a professional look with the club logo on it.

Well, we've found a source for a really nice Men's Shop Coat, in Navy Blue with the embroidered MBCA logo over the left breast pocket. These long sleeved shop coats are 7.5 ounce 65% polyester/35% cotton twill, have two breast pockets, two large lower pockets, concealed gripper closure, side and back vent openings, and are about 43 inches long. Sizes are from 38 to 50. Member cost is \$49. Please allow 4 weeks for embroidering and shipping. For further information, please contact Werner Fehlauer at 856-224-1792, or email at: w.fehlauer@att.net.

Mercedes-Benz Tied-In with Men in Black II

Intensifying its brand strategy to reach out to a wide range of audiences, Mercedes-Benz has implemented an exclusive, national marketing partnership with Columbia Pictures' highly-anticipated *Men in Black II* (MIB II).

The film, which opens July 3, features the all-new Mercedes-Benz E-Class, which goes on sale in the U.S. in September.

A special E-Class feature in the film is a keyless remote control that summons the car to the Agents Jay and Kay "at a blink of an eye," and is driven by a remote controlled agent that is sucked back into the air bag before the two film stars enter the vehicle.

"What more exciting venue to illustrate the fun-to-drive factor and the latest in cutting-edge technology of our all-new E-Class than the adventurous and cool environment of *Men in Black II*?" said Dave Schembri, vice president of marketing for Mercedes-Benz USA.

The marketing partnership with Columbia Pictures goes beyond a simple product placement or promotional tie-in. Instead, Mercedes-Benz will coordinate an integrated promotional campaign with the studio involving:

- Creative inclusion of the 2003 all-new Mercedes-Benz E500 in the film;
- Use of *Men in Black II* version of the MIB Strike Cruiser Vehicle toy produced by Hasbro;
- An on-line sweepstakes for five pairs of winners to receive tickets to the Los Angeles premiere of *Men in Black II* on June 26;
- A summer 2002 local screening program with invitational screenings on July 9-11;
- A direct marketing campaign for Mercedes-Benz customers and prospects to see *Men in Black II* gratis, at their leisure after the debut, courtesy of Mercedes-Benz USA and Movie Magic.

Men in Black II also marks the first time Mercedes-Benz has granted the use of its logo for a licensed children's toy. The MIB Strike Cruiser, a spaceship operated by the MIB agents to pursue the lead alien's spaceship, morphs into the new E-Class in the movie. The toy spaceship---which is being sold

with a MIB II toy agent (Agent Jay)---is manufactured by Hasbro and will hit store shelves in mid-June. The estimated retail price of the MIB strike cruiser is \$21.99 and is intended for children 4 years of age and older.

As exclusive automotive partner for *Men in Black II*, Mercedes-Benz will also create advertising, direct marketing, and online media, timed for the pre-release of the movie in the U.S. The U.S. advertising is a humorous spot that adapts themes and /mts/archive/images from *Men in Black II*.

The new E-Class is a stylish vehicle that sets new benchmarks for contemporary design, luxury, and truly useful technology. With a new, sleeker exterior and sportier interior, the new E-Class builds on the value, quality, and reputation that only Mercedes-Benz can deliver. The suggested retail price of the all-new E-Class will be unveiled later this summer.

A Columbia Pictures presentation of an Amblin Entertainment production, *Men in Black II*, is the sequel to *Men In Black*, one of the top-grossing films of all time. Since the release of the original blockbuster in 1997 by Columbia Pictures, the movie has grossed more than \$589 million dollars.

The Konjic Hillclimb Tourist Trophy---A Boy Racer Story

There are any number of forms of racing, even vehicular (Hmmm---another car story). They vary enormously over participation and type. A popular form, especially in the early days (before safety become a paramount concern) in Europe, was the Tourist Trophy (TT). TT races were generally run over everyday roads, sometimes in neat venues like a lap around the Isle of Man, or even Sicily, or a large chunk of Italy. The cars were also generally everyday, and classes sometimes permitted a "run whatcha brung" philosophy, especially for the club racers.

Okay---this sets the participation. Of the many types of auto racing there is one particular form called hillclimbs. The Brits excel at this, however, you can generally find it all over. The gist of it is to find a steep, twisty road and send cars up it one at a time, the object being the shortest time. The vehicles are mostly the same as the ones which go around tracks and all, it's just that you don't have the wheel to wheel stuff going on.

Probably the most notable---perhaps in all the world---is the annual July 4 Pikes Peak Hillclimb, in which folks throw themselves in all kinds of generally exotic vehicles up about a 9,000 vertical foot climb to the top of (naturally) Pike's Peak. This is the mother of all hillclimbs. In the emerging nation which I live and drive in I also have a nominee, albeit not as well organized. Participation runs the gamut of whatever happens to show up. It runs all the time (thus permitting cheap practice sessions), but, as in most racing series, the best action occurs on Sunday afternoons. Combine TT with a hillclimb and you may be on to something. I will nominate Bosnia's entry as the Konjic Hillclimb Tourist Trophy (KHIT).

The Venue. The town of Konjic (CONE-yick) lies, oh, about 60 KM (40 miles) west of Sarajevo. It sits in a narrow canyon, fenced in by 6,000 foot mountains, and has about one road which passes through it. I checked, and it sits at about an elevation of 350 meters, or about 1000 feet. A couple kilometers east of it, in the narrow canyon the road follows, the road begins a fairly momentous ascent, gaining about 400 meters in the first few KM at an indicated grade of 9% (why do they always list the grade of an elevation as a percentage, anyway?). Trucks must use low gear, whether climbing (by necessity) or descending (oh, just to make the turns...). After briefly leveling off, it continues into the second stage another 300M (900 feet) ascent which ends at Ivan Tunnel, a straight uphill shot through the mountain's crest. The road itself is three-lane, having the relatively rare distinction of a passing lane on the climbing side. The road is mostly carved out of the side of the mountain, has some really great drops of major magnitude, and mostly has a guardrail. The ascent is on the open side of the hill.

There's only one real hairpin (2nd gear for most), but lotsa tight turns otherwise. This is a serious hill.

The Racers. Run whatcha brung. Everything from tandem semis to diminutive Zastavas, consider it an Open Class. Though open 24 hours a day, every day, the Sunday afternoon cavalcade from the coast to Sarajevo---literally thousands of vehicles---is the real attraction.

The madcap driving and antics generally hit an immediate clog when it arrives at The Hill. To boot, generally everyone is in a gawd-awful rush to be the first to get into the traffic jam trying to enter Sarajevo. As a final touch, most everyone has their throttle just flat floored the entire ascent---it's the only way to do it. Sadie is a steady, though unspectacular performer, but that's at max throttle plus whatever I can push through the floorboard (sorry---it just happens) and third gear, mostly.

Since a large percentage of the vehicles over here are diesel, everyone has a rich plume of brown smoke just blasting out the pipe. Observation: most drivers don't understand energy conservation, or the fastest, most efficient line. To lift the throttle is to immediately fall into the clutches of Newtonian physics as gravity asserts itself. Therefore, the optimum line straightens out the curves, and thus keeps the engine revs up. Stay in the power band---to lose it is to sink into ignominy in the right lane. Max throttle running, think ahead, pass where and when the geometry permits. This is a hoot.

Race Day. We're returning from the beach, leaving about 3:45 to avoid the traffic. Jimmy Buffet on the CD. As we depart Konjic there's a line, lead by a lavender VW Beetle. Great. Five cars behind that, a VW van painted in 60s psychedelic motif. Cripes. We're about five behind the van, and there's folks behind us. No way to pass until we enter the two-lane, but this is simultaneous with the initiation of the steep climb. Due to traffic, I'm late getting on the throttle---damn. Folks immediately assert themselves into the left lane (me included), trying for a few positions immediately off the grid. Remember---this is a rolling start! I immediately downshift to keep Sadie in a helpful rpm range. At least the van has the good sense to glue itself into the right lane, but this is creating a minor jam as folks try to effect a pass. I get by, but we're literally wheel to wheel, around the corners, advantage only coming when I gain the inside of a turn or accelerate on the outside. We approach the hairpin, a sharply climbing right hander. Omigod---there's an accident right at the sharpest part! Two cars are stopped---looks like someone backended a slower car going around the inside. I'm in the outside lane, but now we have a pack of cars (remember, we were originally bunched up by the lavender pace car at the start) bearing down on the corner. Cars all over---kinda like a fracas at the first corner of a Formula Ford race. Wonderful. To boot, the idiot in front of me slows to rubberneck. He doesn't understand energy, obviously. Furiously downshifting to first, I hit the horn (why not?) and we swing wide through the oncoming lane and slip back into our lane. I'm floored but slow, and, mindful of more powerful cars tailgating me, I dutifully pull into the right lane - WAIT A MINUTE! Two more cars stopped in the right lane---looks like overheating! Blocked! Back into the left lane, we're really sorting things out now. Nose-to-tail, NASCAR-style, I'm losing ground in third. I momentarily consider how many revs Sadie's little four cylinder diesel can handle, and shift down to second. Wow---hear that baby scream. This is the first real engine abuse I've dosed on her. I manage to keep up and pull away, until I look in the rearview mirror and realize that the guy behind me either: a) can't see, or b) thinks I've blown an engine, or c) tossed up a smokescreen to hide my escape. Wow! I'm amazed and embarrassed.

I still haven't passed the lavender Beetle, but he's only two cars ahead. Whoops---he's in the left lane, having found something slower than him---a micro-sized Zastava huffing and puffing as best as it's twinky- sized engine can pull it. We close to NASCAR-close. I urge the guy in front of me---"Pass him. Pass him!" Okay ---we're ALREADY in the passing lane, but hey---there's still one lane left---right? (Ah - left, I suppose.) Sure enough, the white Golf makes his move, and rather than lose precious energy, I follow. Three abreast, this is real racing (er - driving, right?! It's a minor sort of straight stretch, but I have enough delta mach (difference in speed) to make the overtake and revert back to normal, wheel-to-wheel careening up the hill in our own lanes. What a ball. We finish the first

stage fairly sorted out, the faster Mercedes, BMWs and the like blowing off peasants like me. That's okay---the second stage is pretty open, and I can drift in and out of turns, all the while keeping the throttle floored. Approaching Ivan, I'm being overtaken and pull to the right lane. At least, I think it's the right lane. I think this is a three lane tunnel, well, we made it one, but will have to check this closer next time to make sure (and win a bet). There are no lines or anything in the tunnels, but they're working on this niceity. Good thing most of the cars over here are sorta small---a couple of sport-utes and a Chevy Caprice would muck things up mightily.

All the while Buffet has been carrying on and occasionally I'm singing along and beating out a tattoo on the steering wheel. Lou and Bill have been pretty silent. I think they trust me, or used to. We'll see if they come along again. Another quiet, reposed weekend at the beach, lazing in the sun, relaxing and unwinding. Another Sunday at the races.

Sam Shaver

Sam is a former USAF fighter pilot and a long-time motorhead who campaigned a Formula Ford in England. In 1997-98 he was working on a contract in post-war Bosnia and bought Sadie---a 1981 200D.

TradingPost

240D, 1983: 2nd owner. Moving---must sell! 214k miles on odo. Alloys. Engine and trans replaced March 02. New muffler, water pump. Recent clutch, master cylinder, ignition lock, locks, shocks, A/C. New battery Jan. 2000. Still 77k left on warranty on Toyo tires. All work done at RC Imports and Benson Motors. 3k mile oil changes. Price negotiable. Set of MB blue sheepskins, separate but negotiable. Call William Aycock at 202-234-5577.

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Wheels: 4 16-inch wheels from 1997 SL. Excellent condition. Tires marginal. \$150 obo. Call Peter Garahan at 703-757-7985 or email at: peter@garahan.com

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