



May 2000

## Tech Forum/Car Clinic

**O**n July 8, the section will hold a general maintenance Tech Forum/Car Care Clinic at the Merchant's Tire Training Center in Manassas, Virginia.

The clinic will begin at 9:00AM with coffee and donuts. The morning session will include tire and oil specialists as well as local experts on Mercedes-Benz maintenance and repair.

Lunch is included in the \$15 registration fee and will be served at noon. The session will continue with discussions on maintenance issues and will feature a question and answer period by our presenters and other MBCA members. The clinic will conclude at 3:00PM or when the last question has been answered.

To reach the Merchant's facility proceed on I-66 West and take Exit 53 (Route 28 South). Travel for approximately seven miles. Turn left on Liberia (Burger King is on the left). Proceed two streets and turn left on Euclid Avenue. The Merchant's facility is on the right just beyond Eastern Manufacturing.

Previous clinics at the Merchant's facility have experienced large numbers of members in attendance. Space fills quickly! Complete the registration form in the centerfold and mail to Tech Chairman Mason Beale.

## Camera Police Return

**S**everal years ago when we realized that many of you were showing up at events and leaving your cameras at home, we threatened to have the Camera Police confiscate them. These are cameras that cost anywhere from twenty to several thousand dollars, and many of you were using them to photograph the bottom of drawers and the insides of closets they are stored in. They must make great dust collectors and paperweights.

Well, the Police are back! Use it or lose it! The Annual Holiday Party is eight months away, so time is no excuse. Start taking pictures now for the (resumed) Annual Photo Contest. Prizes will be awarded at the Party.

Categories will be: 1) Mercedes-Benz art (car, grill, reflection, etc.), 2) Mercedes-Benz people and

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their cars and scenic, 3) Mercedes-Benz action (driving events, rallies, etc.).

Rules: amateurs only; professionals may submit for display; no limit to the number of entries; black and white or color prints 5 by 7 or larger; no slides; digital shots have to be converted to prints; pictures must be taken after January 1, 2000; affix a label or write your name and address on the back of the photo only; include a title (optional); and, include an envelope with return postage or plan to pick up your photos at the Holiday Party.

Send your photos to Joe Wozney. Entries must be received by November 1, 2000. All members failing to participate will have to deal with the Camera Police after the party. They're looking for Hassies, Nikons, Canons, even Brownie Hawkeyes. They especially like all the new digitals... the more expensive the better. We know where you live and we know (pretty much) what you drive. You will be reminded several times over the contest period, so there is no escape!

## Calendar of Events

### Greater Washington Section Events

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April 30	<b>Autocross #1</b> James Wood High School Winchester, Virginia Contact: Joe Wozney Call: 703-437-7866	June 25	<b>Autocross #3</b>
		July 23	<b>Annual Picnic and</b> Mid-Atlantic Concours Harris Estate Potomac, Maryland Contact: TBA
May 7	<b>Deutsche Marque Concours</b> Woodlawn Plantation Alexandria, Virginia Contact: Ed Ayre Call: 301-654-0837	July 30	<b>Autocross #4</b>
		August 13	<b>Autocross #5</b>
May 28	<b>Autocross #2</b>	September 10	<b>Autocross #6</b>
May 18	<b>GWS Board Meeting</b> The section Board Meeting is open to members. Because space is limited, you are asked to call Dick Pedersen to confirm your attendance.	October 15	<b>Autocross #7</b>
		December 2	<b>Annual Holiday Party</b>

Possible additional events include a fall trip to the Mercedes-Benz Vehicle Prep Center, a drive and dine, and Do-It-Yourself and classroom tech sessions. Remember to check the web site for regular updates!

### Regional and National Events

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May 20	<b>Star-O-Rama 2000</b> Clearwater, Florida Contact: Scott Suits Call: 727-789-4582	Sept. 23-26	<b>Tri-O-Rama 2000</b> Summit Point, West Virginia and Winchester, Virginia Registration packets will be available in June
August 19-22	<b>Gemütlichkeit 2000</b> Nelson Ledges and		

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

## President's Message

### Thoughts of a Car Guy

**J**ohn Bleimaier, bless his soul, is the consummate car guy. I must share with you a story John may also tell, but perhaps in a different context. I spoke with John the other day and, after exchanging the basic pleasantries, he mentioned he would be in Charlestown, West Virginia the following day. I replied, why?

It seems that John got a speeding ticket upon returning to New Jersey from one of our events last fall. I assumed the worst, reckless driving, perhaps an accident. No... it was a ticket for doing 72 in a 60 mph zone. I wondered aloud if the ticket was completely bogus. "No," was the answer, "it's fun to go to court and make them prove it." I asked, "how many points do you have?" The answer, "None."

Okay, let me get this straight... the ticket is from West Virginia and they will not contact New Jersey, so there are no points. The mail-in fee is \$75.00, what am I missing? What I missed is what we love about John. John is taking a day trip to a quaint West Virginia town to an even quainter magistrate's court to mingle with unforgettable characters.

John will plead his case before a stern hometown magistrate and talk about how the officer had his daughter in the police car eating ice cream while he was running radar. That's right, the little girl was eating an ice cream cone. Either day care was closed or perhaps it was daughter's day at work. Was the daughter working the radar? John may have a good case. Stay tuned for the conclusion next month.

Ready! Set! Go!

Our events are about to begin. The 2000 Autocross Series begins on April 30 and runs through October (November is being saved for any makeups). The Deutsche Marque Concours with the BMW and Porsche clubs will be held on Sunday, May 7. The Annual GWS Picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours has been set for Sunday, July 23. With the cancellation of StarFest 2000, we will host Tri-0- Rama 2000, a National Event, on September 23-26. And to finish the year in style, the Annual Holiday Party at the Belle Haven Country Club will be held on Saturday, December 2. Don't forget to mark your calendars with your favorite events.

We hope to be able to add more opportunities for you and are looking into another trip to the Vehicle Prep Center and a classroom tech session. There is a possibility that we'll be able to do one more DIY session, too. Please make the effort to bring your teenage drivers to our 2000 Autocross Series. They don't have to drive the family Benz. What they learn there will make them significantly safer and more confident street drivers. Join us!

**Dick**

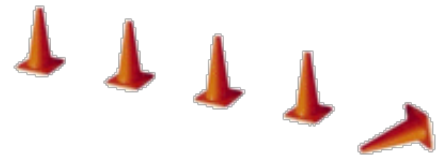
**Mr. ed**

**W**e're getting back on track! This issue of the Tri-Star is not quite as early as I'd hoped for, but there has been an effort at some major catching up. Now for the really good news! By the time you read this, we will have ordered our new Mac - love 'dem Apples! (Please, don't tell Ralph!) I hope that the June Tri-Star issue will be fully prepared on Xxxxx.



I say Xxxxx because I don't have a name for the new machine. Like our cars, I won't be able to give it a name until I see it and live with it for a while. What was the name Burt Reynolds chose for his son in Paternity? Quimby! Nah. That doesn't have a ring to it. It'll come to me.

Joe



## pylon alley by Joe Wozney

Autocross 2000

**B**y the time you receive this, we would have had our first fun-filled autocross of the year and will anxiously be preparing for Autocross #2. Last month, we discussed the "rain rules." Let's go over a few other important points to remember when attending a GWS autocross.

- If you need air in your tires, please remember that there is a station (Sheetz) right near the school. Try to add 10 or more pounds to your street tires before arriving at the school. It's always easier to remove air if you've added too much than to race down the hill for more.
- If you're running race tires, please try to arrive early enough to change them before the walk-through.
- Register upon arriving or as soon as it's set up. Early registration helps us establish the run groups so we can begin on time.
- Before tossing your cans and water containers in the recycle bags, please empty any left over liquid. (It gets my concours "show" truck all sticky.)
- Don't be afraid to offer to help. If you're "new" we'll get someone to show you the ropes.
- Do not encourage Bill, Klaus, or the other bad boys to take their shirts off! We have to bring a level of decorum back to the events.

## Club News

### German Car Day

**T**he SCCA Washington Region has invited the German car clubs to a day at the races on Sunday June 18th. This will be the First Annual German Car Day at the Track. A special place will be set aside for the clubs and all will be invited to take a parade lap around the course. I would imagine the action begins about 10:00 am or so. The cost is \$10.00 per person.

Racing that day will feature over 250 racecars in 34 classes. Eight full races are scheduled for Sunday. GWS will have at least two local entrants, including Rick Ellinger of RC Imports. Consider attending this action packed event with your friends and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow German car enthusiasts. For additional information contact Jeff Janoska with the SCCA at (w) 202 624-2140 (h) 301 946-2323.

### Summit Point 2000

**A**s the dawn began on Saturday, a cold crisp morning, drivers were filling themselves with not only great anticipation of the days events, but six dozen donuts and coffee. Next up after much conversation was Bruce Reichel's track speech which should not be missed even by veterans, as nobody can remember everything pertaining to driving the track. The step before was to have everyone line up for a tech inspection and the torquing of all wheel lugs. This was accomplished by Ed Ayre, Bill Brochu, Tom Newman, and other volunteers.

After eagerly (or skeptically) awaiting the first thrust on the track itself, Joe had set four groups (red, blue, green and white) to run with approximately 10 to 15 cars in each group. Those groups not only consisted of members' Mercedes, but also BMWs, Porsches, Corvettes, Fords, racecars, and others. Needless to say to have an event run flawless is too much to ask. The first glitch was that track instructors had gotten wrong information, so GWS officers and others filled in to help with the first-time drivers. This went extremely well and many new friendships were made.

The 20-minute track sessions went on until noon when all festivities ceased and we feasted on a delicious catered lunch. An hour later it was back to the asphalt and time to play. This went on until about 5:00PM. When the last group finished, we packed it in for the day.

Saturday evening was filled with a regional meeting emceed by our Regional Director, John Bleimaier. The turnout was immense and many topics were covered. A great dinner was held at the Winchester Holiday Inn. One notable absence was Joe Wozney's disappearance mid way through the meeting. It seems some college basketball team from New York was playing.... or trying to! John ended the meeting at 10:30 and, surprisingly, most were still awake!

As we all know the weather bureau can sometimes err big time, and Sunday was no exception. Sunny and crisp was called for, and snow flurries a reality. However, all groups proceeded in the same vane as Saturday and with only one mishap due to a deer taking a liking to a white SLK on the track. No one was hurt but the deer met its demise.

We hope everyone had a great time and also hope that all Mercedes participants will decide to attend Tri-O-Rama 2000 in September.

**Ed Ayre**

## **Formula 1 Race Fans Wanted!**

**J**oin other members and Formula 1 fans on F-1 race days at Revolution Coffee Lounge in Herndon, Virginia! Revolution is a fun, cutting-edge venue in Old Town Herndon. The Lounge serves great food and even better thirst quenchers.

Watch qualifying runs and the race back to back at their state of the art facility. Meet new friends and enjoy the F-1 experience.

Each event will include elements of the host country, including food and drink specials and door prizes. Upcoming F-1 events are:

- Sunday, May 21 1:00 PM: European Grand Prix
- Sunday, June 4 1:00 PM: Monte Carlo

For directions go to the Revolution web site at: [www.revolutioncoffeelounge.com](http://www.revolutioncoffeelounge.com) or call 703-689-0099

## **Baltimore Car Care Clinic**





**O**n April 8, sixteen members attended the first ever Baltimore Car Care Clinic in Towson, Maryland. Star Auto Service owner and Greater Washington Section member Bob Hafenmair inspected cars while a mini-tech seminar was held in the parking lot. Members went from car to car and shared their repair experiences. One member asked for help in removing his 450SL's hard top. Bob and three other members quickly found the problem... a jammed release latch.

Fran Newbern distributed a packet of M-B technical and historical data sheets. Joe Rizzutto is planning a timing change replacement and informed everyone that they would be welcome to participate.

Star Auto Service donated door prizes and offered members discounts on future service. Bob Lennon and Cliff Geare won oil changes and two members won GWS tee shirts. TMC Publications donated an original 1964 220SE brochure. Mike McGeady won a dinner for two.

Most stayed for the whole program. The members exchanged phone numbers and other pertinent information so they could get together later to work on their cars. We thank the staff of Star Auto Service for their wonderful support! The attendees raised \$36 for the section's charities - Children's Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children.

**Art Buker**

## **Mercedes-Benz News**

### **Coulthard in Plane Crash**

**R**euters reported that McLaren Formula One driver David Coulthard was released from a French hospital after a miraculous escape from the wreckage of a plane which crashed at Lyon airport, killing the pilot and co-pilot. Coulthard, his fiancée Heidi Winchelski and his personal trainer, escaped injury after the Lear Jet they were travelling in crash-landed at Lyon-Satolas airport and caught fire.

The front of the aircraft totally disintegrated but the rear was left largely intact. The three passengers, who climbed from the plane unaided, were taken to Lyon's main hospital but later released. Coulthard's McLaren team issued a statement which quoted the driver as saying: "Obviously I am relieved that Heidi, Andy and myself are unhurt but I would like to express my deepest sympathy to the families of the two pilots. It is inappropriate for me to go into details of the accident but we were very lucky to walk away." McLaren spokeswoman Anna Guerrier said they expected he would be driving at the Spanish Grand Prix this weekend.

The plane had taken off in England heading for Nice when the pilot requested an emergency landing because of engine trouble, airport sources said. Jacques Bellissen, Lyon-Satolas airport general manager, said: "For all three passengers to be unharmed, without any burns or scratches, they must have been born under a lucky star. What saved them was that Coulthard was quick enough to leave the plane before it caught fire."

Coulthard, winner of the British Grand Prix at Silverstone last month, is currently second in the Formula One world championship.

### **Third Best Month Ever**

**M**ercedes-Benz USA, reported sales of 17,889 new vehicles during the month of April 2000, a 10.6 percent increase over last year's April sales record of 16,180 - the highest April sales volume ever by MBUSA, the third best month and the twelfth consecutive month in which the company posted year-over-year sales gains. Year-to-date sales increased 15.8 percent to 65,677 versus 56,716

vehicles sold during the first four months last year.

Volume for the month was led by the E-Class with sales of 4,390. The M-Class continues its impressive performance with 4,283 units sold, an increase of 29.7 percent over the same month last year. C-Class sales were 2,551 units, an 11.7 percent decrease from 1999. The S-Class recorded a 52.2 increase in April sales - the best April ever for the S-Class - with 3,025 units sold versus the 1,988 sold last April. The all-new, top-of-the-line CL500 posted 220 units in its fifth month on the market. The SL-Class finished the month with 528 units sold, a decrease of 35.2 percent. The CLK established an April sales record with 1,808 units. The SLK230 Kompressor showed a slight decrease of 4.2 percent to 1,084. Joining the SLK model line this month is the new V-6 powered SLK320, which sold an impressive 207 units during its first two weeks on the market.

Year-to-date, the M-Class accounted for the largest volume with 17,291 vehicles sold, up 36 percent. E-Class sales increased 1.1 percent to 16,221. S-Class sales increased 38.2 percent to 9,697. The CLK line sold 6,850 units, up 38.3 percent. Sales of the SL-Class decreased 25.1 percent. The SLK had a marginal decrease of 2.1 percent to 3,701, and C-Class sales remained on par with last year as the current model continues through its last year of production.

**BERLIN (AP) By Hans Greimel**

## **DaimlerChrysler Earnings**

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**D**aimlerChrysler AG surpassed Wall Street's predictions today with first-quarter earnings above expectations due to vigorous sales of Chrysler trucks and Mercedes-Benz luxury cars.

The German-American company said net income was up 3 percent in the first three months of the year to 1.69 billion euros (\$1.62 billion), or 1.69 euros (\$1.62) a share, compared to 1.64 billion euros, in the same period last year before one-time charges and gains.

The latest results beat Wall Street estimates of \$1.58 a share for the quarter. Net earnings for the first quarter of 1999 were adjusted to exclude one time gains from the sale of telecom unit Debitel AG and losses from German tax reform.

Revenues for the quarter also rose 17 percent to \$39.2 billion. That was led by a 24 percent increase in revenues from the Chrysler group and a 17 percent increase in revenues for Mercedes-Benz passenger cars.

Operating profit for the first quarter, however, decreased 3 percent to \$2.3 billion. The company attributed the slide to increasing competition and higher interest rates, especially in North America.

While North American sales for the Chrysler group's high margin minivan and Jeep lines are still strong, analysts said the revenues are not growing as fast as they once did as competitors crowd the market. Chrysler plans to counter that by launching all new minivan and midsize car lineups later this year. "The results were in line with expectation, but nothing to get excited about," said Erik Burgold, an auto analyst with BHF Bank in Frankfurt. "Our outlook for the year is still one of increasing profits." In morning trading on the New York Stock Exchange, DaimlerChrysler shares were down \$2.0625 a share, or 3.2 percent, at \$62.5625.

The company recently took a 34 percent stake in Japanese automaker, Mitsubishi Motors.

The Chrysler division had revenues of \$18.2 billion for the first quarter, an increase of 24 percent over last year. That was driven by a 10 percent increase in the number of vehicles sold. The Mercedes-Benz and Smart car division had revenues of \$9.5 billion, a 17 percent increase over last year. Sales of Mercedes-Benz passenger cars were up 7 percent in the quarter. Sales of the compact Smart car, available only in Europe, totaled 18,500 for the quarter, more than doubling the figures from last year.

The company's commercial vehicles division had operating earnings of 246 million euros (\$236 million), an increase over last year. The services division Debis posted a 5 percent gain in operating

earnings to 195 million euros (\$187 million).

Aerospace unit Dasa reported its operating earnings were 117 million euros (\$112 million), an increase of 26 percent, despite a slight drop in revenues. DaimlerChrysler announced this year that Dasa would merge with a French company, Aerospatiale Matra to form the European Aeronautic, Defense & Space Co. That company is expected to go on the stock market this summer.

## Virtual Reality Center Opens

**D**aimlerChrysler's Virtual Reality Center in Sindelfingen houses more virtual reality capabilities and computer power than any facility of its kind in the automotive industry. DaimlerChrysler estimates that the new facility will reduce costs of making Mercedes-Benz prototype models by up to 20 percent and substantially shorten product development times while improving quality. "Simulations and visualization allow us to examine a greater number of variants in a shorter period of time and at lower costs," said Hans-Joachim Schopf, Chief Engineer for Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars and smart. "As a result, we can rule out non-viable options more quickly."

The combination of various virtual reality tools under one roof is what makes Daimler-Chrysler's facility unique. The key systems are described below.

- \* The "Powerwall" - The 23 feet wide by 8 feet high Powerwall is a visualization screen that can display both two-dimensional and three-dimensional data in detail or in actual size. The Powerwall will be used primarily for small group discussions. Several projectors cast images of the generated model onto the semi-transparent screen. Data-intensive tests, such as simulated crash tests, are viewed on the Powerwall. After a virtual crash test, engineers can fade out certain parts to get a better view of what happens to components on the inside that are normally concealed.
- \* The "Cave" - To analyze design options involving the interior or driver controls, DaimlerChrysler engineers retreat to the one-of-a-kind Cave. The five-sided Cave has three, eight-foot long sides and a ceiling and floor. Unlike other caves, the walls are made of acrylic glass for much clearer and more detailed images than traditional fabric walls. Each of the five walls gets its images (projections) from separate graphics computers. The difference between a Cave and a conventional monitor display or large-scale projection is that the user is not only an external viewer but the user becomes part of the virtual environmental. By wearing a data glove, an engineer's actual hand movement can be viewed in the virtual world.
- \* Curved-Screen Projection - Once the vehicle has reached an advanced stage of development, the teams begin working with a partially constructed vehicle in front of a curved-screen projection surface. The screen is a 14 feet by 23 feet cylindrical projection screen covering a 200-degree angle. The user is immersed in a virtual world with sight and sound. For example, the screeching tire sound of a vehicle in a tight curve is heard while the driving dynamics are viewed on the screen. The Virtual Reality Center uses a graphics computer from Silicon Graphics; this clustered computer has more than 60 processors, 15 gigabytes of RAM and 14 graphic subsystems (graphic pipes) that operate independently. As configured in Sindelfingen, the computer has a memory bandwidth of 22.4 gigabytes per second - more than 200 times the computing power of a typical personal computer. (They haven't seen my new Mac! Mr. ed)

## Facelifted 2001 SLK On Sale

**M**ercedes-Benz' highly successful SLK230 Kompressor, the first modern convertible with a fully automatic retractable hardtop, furthers the company's value pricing efforts by reflecting a price reduction of over five percent. Now available at M-B retailers, the SLK230 for 2001 has a suggested price of \$38,900, down from \$41,000 in 2000. Counting additional standard equipment, the



SLK230 reflects an equipment-adjusted decrease of 8.7 percent.

The SLK230 is joined by a V6 powered edition of the popular coupe/roadster with a suggested price of \$43,900. The SLK320 adds V6 performance, refinement and an even higher level of standard equipment to the roadster class. Simultaneously, both SLK230 and SLK320 undergo design and equipment enhancements across the two-model range for 2001.

All 2001 SLKs include the ESP Stability Program (with the sophisticated yaw control program), the Tele Aid emergency call system, and either the newly-developed six-speed manual or a five-speed automatic with Touch Shift manual gear selection. Among the visual changes on all 2001 SLK models are new front and rear aprons, sculpted rocker panels, revised headlights, turn signal repeaters in side mirrors, body-color door handles, and two-color taillight glass (red/clear). All SLK320s receive a new 5-spoke wheel (7x16 front, 8x16 the rear), a unique air dam, metal plate door sills, power seats, telescoping steering column, wood interior trim with a combination leather/wood steering wheel and shift knob. There's a new rear stabilizer bar, a larger fuel tank and a new trunk lid opening mechanism.

Inside, the SLK interior receives a host of new/revised appointments: more ergonomically-designed seats; a new steering wheel; metallic trim (in place of carbon fiber on SLK230); a gear indicator in the instrument panel (with Touch Shift); a new shift lever; new overhead console; SL-style door panel finisher; and a chromed hand brake button.

Several option packages are available, including power seats and telescoping steering column (std. on SLK320), CD changer, and a package with headlight washers, heated seats and, for the first time on SLK, Xenon headlights.

While the new SLK320 is powered by a 215-hp V6, the 2001 SLK230 has been beefed up, as well. The SLK230's intercooled, supercharged, 2.3-liter DOHC four delivers more power, up from 185 hp to 190 hp. Even more impressive is maximum torque being on tap from 2,500 to 4,800 rpm, giving the SLK230 quick off-the-line response coupled with potent midrange punch. Along with the 215-hp V6, an all-new six-speed manual transmission makes its debut in both models. This new six-speed uses an internal shift rail, providing positive shift feel and closely-spaced gear ratios.

The SLK is a sports car for all seasons. Pushing one button triggers a sequence of events that transforms the SLK from a closed coupe to a fully open roadster in 25 seconds. The hardtop provides increased security against theft, and the glass rear window ensures clear visibility. Double wishbone front suspension and the patented five-link rear suspension and new stabilizer bar endow the SLK with the handling reflexes expected of a modern sports car.

## High Gear

**I** was hurtling through a pine forest at 45 miles per hour on a narrow logging road covered alternately with blowing powdery snow and cold black ice. You begin to wonder... Why am I doing this?

After all, it is dangerous; storming at full throttle between immovable objects; taking right angle curves flat out and sideways next to a 300-foot drop off; putting four wheels in the air over a frost heave. It demands every ounce of concentration from two weary-eyed people - one straining to make out the contours of the road ahead, the other trying to focus on a set of cryptic instructions affixed to a bouncing clipboard. This is work. Some would think that you couldn't pay anyone enough to fill these two seats, even in a bear market. Yet here we are, volunteers. Not just the two of us, but a whole gallant convoy strung out in the forest, flying in the face of peril, daring the fates. No, not for money would we dash across this pale, frigid desolation: not for lucre place all our golf balls on the line. But, mayhaps, yet for glory!

It's funny how your mind can be totally concentrated on the physical environment, can coordinate

your every muscular response, while still retaining the capacity for flights of fancy far and wide. At times like these a couplet or quatrain of poetry may flit in and out of consciousness helping to maintain mental acuity.

Ours is not to reason why,  
Ours is but to do or die!

Why, indeed, are we here bashing athwart the north woods of a cheerless winter eve? But of course, to bring up cartridges to a hunkered down battalion ringed with fire on the ice. Low, the blizzard sky is now alight with the flash as a field piece brings to bear while the pine needles tremble with the concussion. Left and right the tracers arch through the blackness to their mark. Every choice of turn upon the bleak road is critical not to stray across the lines to hostile ground or blunder into the line of fire. Pray for traction. Pray for grace.

Off the road's edge we pass the desolation of an abandoned farmhouse with tumbled down barns. The stone fence rows between pastures long untended and breached agape. In the event of a withdrawal from the advance position all these features of the terrain will provide fallback cover and, per chance, a sniper's nest. But, away these thoughts of retreat as we scramble to the front. It is in order to help hold this salient that we barrel through the snow.

Now before us on the track I spy a peculiar symbol. Is it the battle device or ensign of an unfamiliar corps? A dot and a check mark, fluorescent on a board beside the road. My navigator wildly gesticulates to me to halt. I put "both feet in," depressing clutch and brake pedals to the floor simultaneously as we skitter sideways to a stop. Suddenly, the whiff of cordite clears. The detonations die away. I can no longer see the muzzle flashes. I only hear the ticking of my mechanical stopwatch and feel the rapid thumping of my heart... Ah yes. This is a checkpoint on the "Cabin Fever Rallye" run by the Finger Lakes Region of the Sports Car Club of America. Checked in and flagged out in a twinkling of an eye; we are hanging our tail into the next curve as our knobby tires snatch for grip among The rosewood bodied 1939 Lagonda with W.O. Bentley designed V12 was a showstopper. The 1938 Horch and the 1950 Cisitalia not only showed on the field but they had run flawlessly in the classic car rallye two days earlier. There was a covey of Mercers on display. This fine American automobile was built here in New Jersey, just 15 miles from Falkenhorst!

Many people consider Mercer to have been America's premiere sports car. I am inclined to agree. When a vehicle is conceived to address the driver's dionysian sporting urge rather than his apollonian practical requirements, then you have a sports car! With its monocle windscreen, long businesslike hood and low slung barrel fuel tank, there is little that can match a 1912 Mercer for sheer visceral excitement.

What a way to spend a March weekend! A dash across Dixie; a ride in Packard rumble seat; monitoring the madness of a classic car auction; breaking clays with a Parker in the Okefenokee; getting up close and personal with some of the finest cars ever built... Sometimes, before winter turns the corner into spring, you gotta do what you gotta do!

I drove back from Florida even more quickly than I had driven down. It was lucky that I found myself flying in a like-minded squadron of fast moving enthusiasts on Route 95. However, after Emporia, Virginia we had to fly in the "missing man formation," as a smoky bandit got on one of our guy's tail and brought him down by the side of the road in a haze of swirling dust and strobing red. We will never forget our fallen comrade... May he never have a points problem!

**John Kuhn Bleimaier**  
**Mid-Atlantic Regional Director**

**TradingPost**

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**220S Convertible, 1959:** Wood, upholstery, chrome, like new. Pampered, always garaged. Just the model you've always wanted. Runs beautifully. \$25,000. Call Murdaugh Madden at 202-833-3360. On weekends call 202-333-7491.

**190SL, 1962:** White/red leather. Both tops - hard top white/black soft. Outstanding condition, beautiful car. 55k miles. Sheepskins. \$45,000. Call Fred Moran at 301-622-0197.

**280SL, 1969:** Bone white/beige leather and top. Mechanically sound. Needs body work. Must sell. \$15,000 obo. Call Maureen at 703-875-6261.

**600SWB, 1970:** Just in from its original Beverly Hills home. Outstanding 40k mile example. Why not go first class? Some trades O.K. \$44,500. Call Ron at 301-855-7774.

**450SL, 1973:** New Icon gold paint with ZEN aerodynamics. Both tops, new soft top. Garaged, covered/records. Beautiful. \$21,500. Call Steve at 888-349-8627 or <sjlocke@us.fortis.com>.

**450SLC, 1973:** Sand beige/Palomino. Originally from Palm Springs. Shows 68k two-owner miles. Bare metal respray in 1997. Everything works but the clock. Close to concours. \$17,950. Call Bruce at 703-360-1726.

**450SL, 1980:** Signal red. Both tops. Pristine condition. Garaged, only goes out in sunny weather. 117k miles. All records. Mechanically superb. Recently appraised at \$18,100. Selling at \$16,000 firm. Call Carol at 301-888-1323 or <cauletta@aol.com>.

**300SD, 1982:** Light blue/dark blue. Strong engine, excellent interior, new tires, new brake booster, gaskets, seals, battery, radiator. Body fair. Needs trans work. Will sell for \$1000 obo. Call Andrew Strasfogel at 202-452-7723 or 202-966-6168 or <mthura@yahoo.com>.

**380SEL, 1983:** Black/gray leather in showroom condition. Concours street class first place winner. 15 inch 8-hole alloys w/225- 60R15 tires. Well maintained. \$9,995 obo. Call David at (w) 703- 934-8130 x158 or (h) 301-831-4532.

**500SEC, 1983:** Silver. Paint and interior two years old. Two owner, 140k miles. Driven to work daily. Moving in August. \$9500. Will consider trade for pickup. Call 703-339-9823 or <WFLADA@aol.com>.

**C280, 1997:** Black/black. 7k miles. Moon roof, factory phone. Excellent condition. All records. Always garaged. No snow/ice. Rain once. CLK320 coming May. Asking \$31,250. Call 202-255-3037 or <woodyww@usa.net>.

**420SEL, 1983:** White/palomino leather. Loaded. Excellent condition and maint. Looks and drives like new. No dings. Recent major service. Garaged, not smoked in. 130k pampered miles. \$10,000. Call Robert at 301-251-3894 or <ChefRobert1966@hotmail.com>.

**450SEL 6.9, 1978:** Midnight blue/blue velour. 72k miles. New wheels and tires. Fresh tune and oil. \$11,900 or nearest offer. Call Fran at 410-963-3057 anytime.

**240D, 1983:** English red. Interior perfect, no rust or damage, paint faded. New battery. Manual transmission. Meticulously maintained past 12 years. Asking \$4000. Call Jon at 703-644-6598 or

<lechevet@worldweb.net>.

**560SL, 1989:** Pearl black/black leather. 88k miles. Flat-face chrome Mercedes wheels. CA car, stunning, always garaged, non-smoker. Rear seat, both tops (blk.). New Michelins. Top hoist. \$25,900. Call Don Hagen at 703-534-3003. Pics at <www.angelfire.com/va2/560SL/Mercedes>.

**350SD, 1991:** Black pearl metallic/cream leather. All options, ASD, passenger airbag. Never in bad weather, only 30k weekend miles. No kids, pets, smoking. Always garaged and covered. 30k service. Mint/concours! \$35,000. Call Ron at 301-854-4817.

**500SL, 1992:** Silver/blue leather. Both tops – hard silver, soft blue. 25k miles. Garaged, never in snow. Original owner, all records. \$42,500 firm. Call A. W. Griffith at 410-643-9015.

**Sold 420SEL:** Parts! Stereo w/12CD changer. 2 snows on orig. 15 hole M-B rims, oil filters, fuses, hoses, fan belts, plug wires, O2 sensor, brakes w/sensors. MORE! Call Robert at 301-251-2894.

**Tire racks:** Store tires for summer/winter. Cost \$150. Sell for \$100. Still in boxes. Holds 4 tires. Isidor at 301-871-6871 <ciciinc@erols.com>.

**Headlights:** Pair of used Euro headlight assemblies with new PIA blue bulbs for 107 SL in excell. condition. \$450 obo. Call 410- 263-8308.

**Sto' Away electric hardtop lift:** With cover. Should fit most SLs. See Jan/Feb The Star, p.70. \$400. Call Jim Kirk at 301-277-8374 or <jakirk@fareinc.com>.

**ML Running Boards:** Brilliant silver, new in box, small scratch on one. Dealer price \$990. Will sell for \$550 firm. Call Rob at 410-571-1414.

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