



May/June 2003

## Summer Drive and Dine

### Gardens, Vineyards and Fine Motoring

**Sunday, June 29, 2003  
11:00AM to whenever!**

**D**rop the top or open the sun roof and roll down the windows to enjoy the scenery as you drive the twisty, winding, and hilly roads of the rural Maryland countryside. This year we will be doing a self-guided tour of the quaint towns, local wineries, antique shops, and the colorful country back roads of Harford and Baltimore Counties, north of Baltimore.

On this Dine and Drive, it is very much okay to get lost! No doubt you will find some interesting out of the way places that you may never knew existed. Our rendezvous spot for the afternoon will be Ladew Topiary Gardens with an afternoon meal at the Ladew Cafe in Monkton, Maryland.

Our members and guests will start the day at Star Motors, just off of the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) at exit 26A. Owner Bob Hafenmair has offered to give us a tour of his facility, after which you will receive maps and directions to the Ladew Gardens and local vineyards. If you prefer, you make up your own tour and have a leisurely afternoon drive through the countryside.

Ladew Topiary Garden will be our rendezvous spot and meal stop. Ladew is one of the best-known, small house and garden museums in the Mid-Atlantic region. You will be amazed by the design and execution of the topiary gardens that surround this wonderful old house in the middle of Maryland's horse country. Fifteen outdoor "rooms" - each with its own theme - make up the 22-acre estate.

The manor house tells of a life of worldly sophistication and country pleasures, and provides a glimpse at the life in a mid-Twentieth Century manor house. The house's Oval Library has been featured in the book *The 100 Most Beautiful Rooms In America*.

If you like, for an extra charge, there is an evening concert, featuring the Peabody Ragtime Ensemble, at 6:00PM in the Great Bowl. You can upgrade your ticket the day of the event at Ladew.

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Lunch offerings include: Summertime crab cake served on a soft potato roll with old fashion cabbage slaw; summer salad sampler; roasted chicken over black olive crisp with confetti rice salad; or, honey glazed ham on a giant cheddar biscuit and roasted vegetable salad. All entrees include desert, soft drink, and a glass of wine or beer.

You can stop and do some wine tasting along the way at vineyards such as Boordy, Woodhall, and Basignani. These small local wineries that provide an interesting view inside a part of Maryland's agricultural industry.

Boordy offers tours on the hour, every hour, from 1:00 to 4:00PM - a tasting and tour ticket is included. Basignani and Woodhall offer tours from Noon to 6:00PM - no ticket required.

Join other Greater Washington Section members, reconnect with old friends, and meet new ones during this day in the Maryland wine country. The cost for this event is \$39 and \$29 for those under 18.

Please fill out the centerfold coupon and mail it to: Bill Hopper; 5455 Broad Branch Road, NW; Washington, DC 20015-1753. Please include your selection for lunch, Crab Cake, Summer Salad Sampler, Roasted Chicken or Honey Glazed Ham. If you have questions, call Bill at 202-363-4189.

## Club News

### Defensive Driving School

The section will offer a defensive driving school for our Mercedes-Benz owners on June 22. The event was originally planned for March 30, but had to be rescheduled to permit time to finalize facility arrangements. This will be the only defensive driving school that we will offer locally this year. There will also be a school at Tri-O-Rama in September.

The school is an excellent opportunity to "improve" and "brush-up" on your driving skills, especially as we head toward summer vacation driving. The driving school is also the perfect 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. We will have experienced instructors on hand to "walk" you through the exercises.

Teens under age 19 will be permitted to use the car they would normally drive, even if it is not a Mercedes-Benz. If possible, we would prefer that those teens be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

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.

Remember, this is the only local defensive driving school to be offered this year, so make plans to attend today! If you have questions or desire additional information, contact **Tom Newman** at **703-378-6737**. See the next two articles for info on the autocross part of the

## GWS Officers & Board Members

### President

Joe Wozney

### Vice President

Harry Newman

### Secretary

Jim Glenn

### Treasurer

Al Angulo

### Metro Tri-Star Editor

Joe Wozney

### Regional Director

Robby Ackerman

### Appointed Members

Bruce Roth

Janet McFarland

Dave Thompson

Paul Vandenberg

## Committee Chairs

### Driving Events

Tom Newman

### Membership

Debbie and Klaus Hirtes

### Technical

Steve Walters

### Social

Judy Roth

Bill Hopper

### Newsletter

Joe Wozney

day, directions, and what you'll have to do to prepare for the event.

**And...**

## Mercedes-Only Autocross

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**T**he section will also hold a Mercedes-only autocross on June 22, after the Defensive Driving School is completed. The start time is planned for 1:00PM. The only exception to the Mercedes-only rule will be for those teens that will have driven another car in the Defensive Driving School.

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 your 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. There is only one fee per person, whether you attend only the defensive driving school, only the autocross, or both. If you have questions or desire additional information, contact **Tom Newman** at **703-378-6737**.

## The Place!

Both the Autocross and Defensive Driving School are scheduled to be held in Maryland, just off the Beltway, at a Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) site. The biggest advantage of this site is that the timing and waiting area is all under cover! You won't get wet even if we see yet more rain!

### Directions to the WSSC site:

1. From the Beltway (outer loop): Take exit 28 (New Hampshire Ave./Route 650) northbound to Columbia Pike (Route 29) northbound. Continue on Route 29 until you reach Industrial Parkway. Turn right onto Industrial Pkwy. Straight ahead to the gate and take directions from the MBCA member at the gate.
2. From the Beltway (inner loop): Take exit 30 (Columbia Pike Route 29) northbound to Industrial Parkway. Turn right onto Industrial Pkwy. Straight ahead to the gate and take directions from the MBCA member at the gate.
3. From Route 70 area: Take Columbia Pike south to Industrial Parkway. Make a left turn onto Industrial Pkwy. Industrial Pkwy. is two to three miles south of the 198/29 intersection. Straight ahead to the gate and take directions from the MBCA member at the gate.

## Defensive Driving Prep

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### Webmeisters

Dave Thompson

Paul Vandenberg

### Past President

Chuck Landenberger

### Technical Advisors

**Larry Digges**

Younger Mercedes-Benz

**Rick & Cindi Ellinger**

RC Imports

**Larry Hook**

American Service Center

**Bob Hafenmair**

Star Auto Service

**D**o 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. We suggest you add the air before coming to the school. Drive on a full to nearly full gas tank.

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

**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 you 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 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 on page 21. If you have any questions on the Concours, call **Bruce**

**Great Food!**  
**Fantastic Cars!**  
**The Pool is Open!**

**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!

## Social Committee Report

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**W**e are barely into spring, and 2003 has been quite a year. If you missed the Holiday Winter Brunch in Chevy Chase, you missed a great time. Greater Washington Section members filled the main dining room of La Ferme Restaurant, everyone enjoyed themselves immensely, and many members left with one goodie or another - all donated by the section's benefactors and sponsors. Potomac German Auto gave a C-Class Car Cover and plenty of note cubes and pens. Mercedes-Benz of Annapolis gave a \$250 service certificate along with some great hats, shirts, key chains, and mugs. HBL provided a great watch and Euro Motorcars some Mercedes-Benz polos. Everyone enjoyed the cold wintry day (a dry, snowless one) and got to catch up with old buddies and make new friends, which is what being a part of this club is all about.

GWS members spent February under a considerable amount of snow, but by March everyone was quite busy attending the section events: the Concours Prep School - Maguire's Wash and Wax class; Concours Judges School; not to mention the Driver's Ed weekend at Summit Point Raceway. Section members even went west to Colorado Springs for a going away party for National Membership Coordinator, Bill Hilborn. And, a contingent of the devoted drove up for the Delaware Valley Section's Spring Tech Session.

A very happy group of GWSers attended a special tour of the Philadelphia Flower Show, where one member asked, "Where are all the cars?" Well, this was the opportunity to cleanse the palate and take a break from the smell of tires and fuel, and, for a change, smell roses, grass, and wonderfully blooming trees. Attending spouses and significant others were happy for the change! This event was an overnight one, and started at Zorba's Greek Restaurant in Philadelphia. Yes, it was like the recent hit movie! Then we got our own special guided tour of the show without having to deal with the regular crowds. Being a GWS member does have its privileges! What a great mid-winter and mid-week get-away that was!

The rest of the year is shaping up to be a great one, with plenty of events in the calendar every month. Make sure you sign up for the online newsletter so that you get the latest information on what's happening and what has changed. Mark your calendars for upcoming events such as the Summer Drive and Dine and on June 29, the Annual Picnic and Mid-Atlantic Concours on July 27, Tri-O-Rama 2003 in September, and the White Post Restoration Workshop Tour on October 25. Lots of good times to be had this year... Don't miss them!

Bill Hopper

## Best First-Quarter Ever

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**M**ercedes-Benz USA reported the best first-quarter in company history as sales of 19,837 new vehicles sold in March brought the first-quarter total to 51,577 - a 2.7 percent increase over last year. "New product launches have enabled Mercedes-Benz to kick-off the year with another record-breaking quarter. We anticipate continued success as we launch the CLK-Cabrio, E-Class wagon and E55 AMG in the coming months," said Keith May, vice president of sales for MBUSA.

The continued sales growth for Mercedes-Benz vehicles is a testament to the company's strategy to

offer the most diverse product range of any luxury auto manufacturer.

From entry-level sedans to high-end coupes, MBUSA saw sales increases for the month and for year-to-date. For the month, the C-Class family of sports sedans, coupes, and wagons rose 24.6 percent; the highly acclaimed E-Class sedans and wagons posted a 43.6 percent gain; and the all new CLK models marked a 26.8 percent jump compared to March 2002.

First-quarter sales also posted increases across product lines: the C-Class was up 16.1 percent; the E-Class jumped 35.4 percent; and the S-Class and CL-Class rose 13.2 and 7.4 percent respectively compared to the first three months in 2002.

Recent extensions to the product lines also recorded gains over the first quarter of 2002, such as the company's 4MATIC all-wheel-drive vehicles (up 55.4 percent) and high-performance AMG vehicles (up 7.7 percent).

Separately, through its Starmark pre-owned vehicle program, MBUSA recorded sales of 4,345, breaking last March's record of 3,867 with a 12.4 percent increase. This establishes the best month ever for Starmark. On a year-to-date basis, Starmark sales increased 8.3 percent.

## Calendar of Events

### Greater Washington Section Events

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June 22	<b>Defensive Driving/Autocross</b> WSSC Lot Silver Spring, Maryland Contact: Tom Newman Call: 703-378-6737	Aug. 3 Aug. 10	<b>Picnic/Concours Rain Date</b> <b>Autocross #5</b> WSSC Silver Spring, Maryland Contact: Tom Newman Call: 703-378-6737
June 29	<b>Drive and Dine Event</b> Ladew Topiary Gardens Contact: Bill Hopper Call: 202-363-4189	Sept. 7 Oct. 5	<b>Autocross #6</b> <b>Autocross #7</b>
July 13	<b>Autocross #4</b> James Wood H.S. Winchester, Virginia Contact: Tom Newman Call: 703-378-6737	Oct. 25	<b>White Post Restorations Tour</b> Contact: Bill Hopper Call: 202-363-4189
July 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		

### Regional and National Events

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July 19-22	<b>StarTrack 2003</b>	Sept. 12-16	<b>Tri-O-Rama 2003</b>
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[Pittsburgh Section](#)  
BeaveRun Motorsports Park

Greater Washington Section  
Virginia Intern'l Raceway  
Contact: Joe Wozney  
Call: 703-437-7866

## President's Message

### It Was the Best of Times...

**I**n a week or two, you'll be able to download the information and registration forms for Tri-O-Rama 2003 from the section's web site <[www.gws-mbca.org](http://www.gws-mbca.org)>.

Three of us made the trip down to Virginia International Raceway and to nearby South Boston, Virginia, to finalize the track and hotel arrangements for this national MBCA event.

I can state without reservation that the track is fantastic! VIR is a like 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 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 gravesite.

This 1840s plantation has been completely restored and a modern hotel wing has been added. It's absolutely incredible! You'll be 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.

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 track day at Virginia International Raceway with Defensive Driving, the Performance Driving School, and Acceleration Runs.

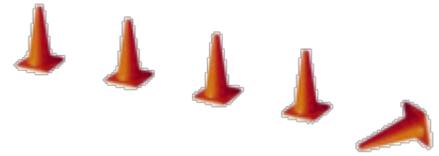
On Tuesday, it's another day at VIR with full-course time trials. The event wraps up that evening with the Grand Finale banquet back at Berry Hill. All of the driving event awards will be presented that evening.

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! Joe



## pylon alley by Joe Wozney

### Autocross 2003



**J**ust before Autocross #3, Tom Newman was finally able to get the information for the car classes, but it was too late to prepare the results for the first two events. (How can the SCCA run out of rulebooks just as the season is beginning?) We'll catch up in the July and August Tri-Star issues. In place of my column, I thought you would enjoy reading the following note from one of our better-known members and autocrossers.

### By the Side of the Road

**S**tuck by the side of a busy road is not the most fun place to be - and that's just where I found myself Sunday, June 8, as I was making my way up to the autocross.

A red light appeared on the dashboard at the point where the George Washington Parkway splits to go to either Maryland or Virginia. I chose to ignore it, hoping it would go away. Wrong! I finally stopped about five miles later on I-495 when the noises coming from the engine compartment made me a little nervous. I got out and looked around. There was coolant all over the ground.

Fortunately, I had my cell phone with me and called Klaus (who had just had surgery three days earlier and should have been home with a bag of ice on his knee). Then I called AAA.

But even if I had not had my cell phone, I would have been well taken care of. Five separate cars of autocrossers stopped and offered to wait with me or help in any other way - among them were Jim Smith, Lief Graham, Ben Weber, Ted Joseph, and one of the VW drivers. I am tremendously grateful to all of them.

After the state police stopped and suggested I call #77 rather than wait for AAA, the flatbed truck arrived and towed me home (about an hour-and-a-half later), where there was a concerned message from Joe Wozney on the answering machine.

Norbert Lamp then came to the rescue. He drove to the house, diagnosed the problem, fixed it, and then followed me back up to the autocross so I could at least get in my afternoon runs. It was a fan belt problem - there was none! (I was told I was fortunate. It could have been a seized engine since I had driven so far without the belt.)

And once I got to the WSSC area, Steve Walters gave me a quick overview of the course layout as well as helpful hints to get around it.

I can't say enough about my fellow MBCA members. Thank you all. I really appreciate the concern you all showed.

Debbie Hirtes

### An *Outsider's* View of the GWS Drivers' Ed Event

**J**on Kofod is not a member of MBCA. However, he did attend our Drivers' Ed event at Summit Point in March. This is his web site report.

**Dates:** March 8-9

**Location:** Summit Point.

**Weather:** Unbelievable, both days. Afternoon temps of 50+ degrees.

**Track Conditions:** Mostly dry with two small streams of water across Turn 2.

**Number of cars:** 30+

**Notable cars:** Slew of AMG models (C32s, E55s, CLK55), SL600, older SLs, an S-Class Turbo Diesel, Honda CRX ITA car, three Spec Miatas, WRXs, another race prepped M5, an E36 M3 Lightweight, a street M5, a race prepped M5, and a 535is.

After two events this year with chilling weather mixed with rain and snow the Mercedes Club event provided us with unbelievable weather, great food (none of that terrible Summit Point chili), and plenty of hard driving.

Let me drop all the preconceived notions that this would be an event with a bunch of folks doing parade laps in their S-Class cars. This event had some of the best drivers I have run with from a track day perspective. I knew the cars would be fast in a straight line, especially the AMG cars with their massive horsepower and torque, but what surprised me the most was how well they were driven in the corners and under braking. Keep in mind that unlike a BMW or Audi event, where every car has brake upgrades and race rubber, these cars were mostly stock.

In my run group - Red - the drivers were all very good and didn't seem one bit fazed to have a race prepped BMW on their bumpers. Everyone was predictable and courteous. The C32s impressed me the most as they were very fast through the corners, not to mention the straights. I think in terms of straight-line speed I couldn't pull away on the straights even with much faster speed through the corners. If Mercedes ever builds a lightweight version of the C32 I might be in trouble. I was also impressed with the SL600 in my group and Klaus Hirtes S-Class Turbo Diesel as well (he actually wins autocrosses in that car!).

Had a blast on Saturday running with Jason (Curry's/CRX ITA car) and Payton (Spec Miata). We were all running about the same lap times though I had the edge by a bit due to my greater straight line speed (extra 170 hp helps). I would reel them in on the straights and then they would be inches off my bumper from Turn 1 to Turn 9. We were all running in the sub 1:30s and passing and repassing each other the entire afternoon. Payton and Jason are both incredible drivers/racers with years of experience and a few SCCA championships under their belts. What really blew me away was Jason's ability to brake late and Payton's exit speed through turns 3 and 10. He had both inside wheels off the pavement and was clearly faster through those corners than I could muster.

Sunday was also a fun day with plenty of other race prepped cars to play with including Chris Coulter's M5, a couple of Spec Miatas and Warren Wang's Acura Type R Honda Challenge car. Also had fun trying to chase down Mike Cannery's ZO6. I tried and tried to catch him (he was on street tires) but was always a second or two behind. Mike races an AS Mustang in SCCA and is quite a driver.

I ran three straight days at Summit and went through two sets of Hoosiers, plenty of videotape, and a set of pads and rotors. I had a personal best time of 1:27:76 nearly a full second faster than my best time last year with the old suspension. Given the stream of water in Turn 2 it's a sure bet that there is at least another half second on a completely dry track. Overall a great event.

## Note to File!

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**M**emo for "my" 2004 calendar - actual dates to be announced later.

----- Cut Here -----

Summit Point Raceway is great fun! I need to try a Summit Point Raceway Drivers' Ed event! I am depriving myself of a fantastic learning experience by sitting at home instead of trying a track event - even if it is in March!

----- Cut Here -----

Paste on your 2004 calendar.

This calendar reminder brought to you by: Tom Newman, Joe Wozney, the GWS Board

## **Concours Corner**, by **Bruce Roth - The Concours Curmudgeon** **20th Annual Deutsche Marque**

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**S**unday, May 4, 2003 started out as something less than desired - it was overcast, dark, and even some drizzle was thrown in to make things perfectly miserable. Then the first Mercedes showed up at the Nottoway Park Deutsche Marque Concours site and the sun came out! That of course was to be expected, it **never** rains on Mercedes Club events, right?

We had a good showing of SLs - both older and newer versions, SLKs, sedans, and a few of the high-performance AMG cars.

Here's a list of the winners:

### **Best of Show**

	Jim Pancoast	1972 280SE
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### **Newer SLs and SLKs**

1st	Fred Perry	89 560SL
2nd	Ray Miller	03 SL55
3rd	Ellen Erickson	02 SLK32

### **Older SLs**

1st	Debbie Hirtes	67 230SL
2nd	Harvey Cherner	69 280SL
3rd	Tom Heacock	66 230SL

### **Sedans**

1st	Larry Ledbetter	66 250SE/C
2nd	Chris Mangold	70 300SEL
3rd	Keith Morgan	67 300 SEL

### **Display Class**

1st	Tom Newman	67 Finback
2nd	Ed and Betty Hainke	80 300SD
3rd	Bill and Debbie Repass	02 E55

We need more cars... lots more cars. The Porsche and BMW clubs have many more cars entered and make us look like we don't care about our beloved Mercedes. Was your Mercedes missing? Why? With a little effort on your part, you could go home with a very nice trophy.

We're going to do this again next year. Drag out the vacuum cleaner and spend some quality time

with it and your Benz - the results can be amazing. Some people have found hundreds of dollars in loose change under the seats. Okay, maybe a slight exaggeration, but that months old French Fry will finally be gone, and maybe you'll find the wife's earring she lost so long ago.

A little closer than the May 2004 Deutsche Marque is our own Annual Picnic/Mid-Atlantic Concours which is coming up on July 27. This is an MBCA regional event. You'll be coming to the picnic to enjoy the fine food and great company, so why not put a little effort into cleaning up Gertrude or Fritz or whatever you call your Mercedes (when no one is around) and have some fun with the GWS Concours crew.

We're also counting on those members who recently completed the Concours Judges School to give us a hand at the picnic, which is our biggest event of the year!

## High Gear

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**H**ey, when you buy an enthusiast car you are joining a club. In the olden days when one MG TC encountered another on a winding country road the drivers would doff their tweed caps and flash their Lucas head lamps (when operational). Morgan owners do the same today. When you buy a Porsche you almost certainly will join an active cadre of fun-loving car people known as the Porsche Club of America. The big "P" only sells 47,000 cars per year in the U.S., but the membership of PCA is 52,000. You get the message.

Being a card-carrying car club member is clearly worth the investment in annual dues. I belong to the Mercedes-Benz Club of America and to the Porsche Club of America. My car club memberships are an important part of my life. In my PCA region we have frequent rallyes, concours, autocross and track events, not to mention monthly meetings, tech sessions and some social activity. I get a fine monthly magazine for my \$42 per year price of admission. If you are so inclined you can organize your whole existence around your passion for motorcars.

Not long ago I was in California on business. I had nothing to do on a Sunday. I checked out the local PCA region on the internet and attended a jolly event at the foot of Mount Diablo. The Porsche company doesn't run the club but they provide good support. They realize that an active club translates into activity in the showroom. In fact from time to time the company will provide PCA members with a factory direct discount on a new car purchase. Now, that'll get your attention!

I've never owned a BMW but I've seen their great monthly periodical, Roundel. It looks like they have a pretty nice organization too. They have 71,000 members, local and national events, the whole shebang. Dues are \$35 per year.

The Mercedes-Benz Club of America has 23,000 members, a lot of potential and many local units, particularly in the Mid-Atlantic Region, which are very active and really well run. Alas, however, we have a declining membership and a magazine that only comes out only six times a year. That's a real shame because Mercedes is marketing some wonderful sporting machinery from the C230K sports coupe to the SLK, from the AMG screamers to the new SL roadster. These models and others appeal strongly to car enthusiasts who are potential club members. Tuners like Brabus, Lorinser, Carlsson and Kleeman can tweak a starship so that it will be able to walk away from most any stock Porsche Boxster or Bimmer M3.

In my opinion, the new, enthusiast Mercedes buyers crave an active car club with a monthly, first rate magazine. If we can attract them with a quality periodical we can swell our club's ranks and provide a swell assortment of additional national events. The presence of a charged-up, expanding club will sell more Benzes creating a win/win situation.

Wake up call for MBUSA, the company: You guys need to help rejuvenate MBCA - the club!

When I buy a sporting Mercedes I want to be able to subscribe to a great monthly magazine about the cars I love. I want to have ready access to track events in order to hone my driving skills. I want to navigate through the countryside on frequent rallyes. I want to scrub rubber off my Z rated tires between autocross pylons.

The demographics of the new customers Mercedes is courting seems out of synch with some of the old line thinking in our club. We need the top brass of MBUSA and DaimlerChrysler to bend (twist) the ears of the club's top brass. If the company decides that the club needs a revitalized, monthly publication, we will get it. That will be the stepping-stone to a jump in membership and an expansion in the events we can offer.

Great marques inspire enthusiast clubs. The existence of an active club attracts more enthusiast buyers. Mercedes has the heritage. They've got the cars. Now all we need to get fired up is a bright, new, monthly STAR! Get with it, Montvale and Stuttgart!

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, 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.

**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.

**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>

## StarTrack 2003

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**C**oncours d' Elegance \*\* Defensive Driving \*\* Autocross Track Events \*\* Fun \*\* Food  
Schenley Park

Saturday, July 19 • MBCA Display Show at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Featuring Peoples Choice Award and Special Category Awards • Watch Vintage Race Cars in Practice and Qualification Races from the show area. There will be over 2000 cars of various makes in shows throughout Schenley Park.

Sunday, July 20 • MBCA Parade Lap of the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Circuit • Concours Judged Show with awards in all classes • Watch Vintage Races and special events

BeaveRun Motorsports Park

Monday and Tuesday, • Defensive Driving - Autocross - Time Trials - Acceleration Run

July 21 and 22 • All events feature qualified instructors and safety is stressed • Awards will be given in all classes plus special awards for improvement

The Embassy Suites Pittsburgh will be the host hotel for StarTrack 2003. Special rates have been arranged and include breakfast and a nightly cocktail reception. Contact them at 412-269-9070 and specify the Mercedes-Benz Club of America rate.

The StarTrack Banquet enjoys a great tradition of MBCA fun combined with great food. Several less formal dinners are also in the works to assure all participants a chance to experience Pittsburgh Section hospitality and MBCA friendship.

To receive your information packet, please visit our website at [www.mbcapitt.org](http://www.mbcapitt.org) or make your request by email or phone to the contacts below. You may also make your request via U.S. mail.

StarTrack 106 N. Harleston Drive Pittsburgh PA 15237

Contact: Dave Fabyonic [davidfab@usa.net](mailto:davidfab@usa.net) 724-327-7361

Bob Speer [respeer@attbi.com](mailto:respeer@attbi.com) 412-487-7501

Watch for updated information on the section's website: [www.mbcapitt.org](http://www.mbcapitt.org)

We Hope To See You at StarTrack 2003

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