



GREATER WASHINGTON SECTION MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA

METRO TRI-STAR

www.gws-mbca.org

September 2005

Last Call for Tri-O-Rama 2005

September 10-13, Virginia International Raceway

Join us September 10-13 as the Greater Washington Section hosts what has become one of the premier national events.

This year's Tri-O-Rama will once again take place in and around Danville, Virginia. Located near the Virginia-North Carolina border, Danville is roughly a four-and-a-half hour drive south from Washington, D.C.

As with Tri-O-Rama 2003, the Courtyard by Marriott in Danville will be the event headquarters. Be sure to make your reservations now, and mention that you are with the Mercedes-Benz Club to get the special rate. Track events will be held at Virginia International Raceway—a track Paul Newman called the most beautiful track in America.

While we've planned four fun-filled days, Tri-O-Rama is also a great opportunity for members who cannot participate during the week to join us for two action-filled days over the weekend. And, whether you participate in one, two or all events, this promises to be the best, most exciting Tri-O-Rama ever.

As an added treat (at a slight additional cost), we've reserved the track on Wednesday, the 14th for an extra (non-competition) day on the track. MBCA members who have the time

and desire can experience the stress-relieving pleasure of honing their driving skills on one of the country's premier tracks.



The registration package for Tri-O-Rama 2005 is now available online. Please be sure to complete and return your registration as soon as possible. Contact Joe Wozney at (703) 437-7866 to request a printed copy of the package.

VPC Tour Postponed Until Spring

The anticipated tour of the Baltimore Mercedes Vehicle Preparation Center (VPC) has been postponed until the spring of 2006. The postponement is due to planned extensive construction at the facility. As you may know, the VPC has greatly expanded its capacity to a 10,000-12,000 vehicle parking area, and is to have an associated facility to handle that many vehicles. This facility is yet to be completed.

So put the next VPC tour on your calendar for the spring of next year. There should be much more to see at the new facility. More detailed information will be forthcoming in subsequent newsletters and on the web site.

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Calendar of Events

Greater Washington Section Events 2005

- | | | | |
|-------------|--|---------|--|
| Sept. 10-13 | Tri-O-Rama VA International Raceway (VIR) Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866 | Oct. 23 | GWS Annual Meeting American Service Center, Arlington, VA 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. |
| Sept. 14 | Open Defensive Driving Day at VIR Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866 | Oct. 27 | Maryland Public Television Pledge Drive Owings Mills, MD — see next month's <i>Metro Tri-Star</i> for more details |
| Sept. 25 | Autocross #6: Winchester, VA Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866 | Nov. 6 | Autocross #8: Winchester, VA Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866 |
| Oct. 2 | Deutsche Marque Nottoway Park, Vienna, VA See page 9 | Nov. 12 | Junkyard School, 107 SL Windows & Heat Potomac German Auto, Frederick, MD |
| Oct. 16 | Autocross #7: Winchester, VA Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866 | | |
| Oct. 22 | Dent Wizard - Rockville, MD | | |
| Oct. 22 | Oktoberfest at American Service Center Arlington, VA — see page 17 | | |

GWS ANNUAL MEETING 2005

Sunday, October 23, 2005

1 p.m., American Service Center, Arlington, VA

Each year, the GWS Section holds an annual meeting to bring its members up-to-date on the status and the business of the section.

We are again the guests of American Service Center in Arlington, Va., which has always provided the membership with a wonderful venue and treats for the section's annual meeting.

A special guest speaker, Alex Lee, Project Coordination Assistant Manager for the Potomac Crossing Consultants, will make a presentation at this year's meeting on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project.

This monumental road project is not only a transportation super project, but also a real feat in both engineering and architecture, as the new bridge spans will bring much new technology and efficiency to the operation of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Many GWS members find that the annual meeting is a great place to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. And with American Service Center as our host, it will be a good opportunity to kick some tires and see the wide selection of new and used Mercedes-Benz automobiles they have to offer.

Regional and National Events

- Sept. 10-14 Tri-O-Rama 2005: Danville, VA
Hosted by GWS
Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866

Other Scheduled Events

- Oct. 8 Historical Photo Rallye and Dinner Party
Fredericksburg, VA — The history and the scenery are two great reasons to join us for this rallye event. But we'll also enjoy dinner at a colonial restaurant, event prizes and more. We'll meet in the Fredericksburg area and drive the back roads until we reach our destination. You will be challenged to identify the landmarks in the pictures provided to win rallye prizes. Contact Richard Schwartz at (540) 891-5334.
- Oct. 9 2005 Colonial Polo Cup
Shirley Plantation on the James River
Charles City County, VA
(The organizers would welcome antique MB cars for the pre-game parade.)
Contact: Robby Ackerman — (757) 877-9113
E-mail: robb@ackerman.net
- Oct. 28-30 Pupkin Run
The Northeast Rally Club (Delaware) is hosting a 3-day time-speed-distance rally to benefit the Millsboro Volunteer Fire Co. A "how to rally" class will be offered on the 28th. For additional information about the Northeast Rally Club, visit their website at www.northeastrallyclub.com, or e-mail them at: info@northeastrallyclub.com

From the President . . .

What I Did on My Summer Vacation — Part I

In late spring, I was contacted by a friend who wanted to know if I was interested in going on a trip to Germany with the Smithsonian as a tour study leader. The itinerary was an all-cars week. I spent a tenth of a second thinking about it before screaming “yes!”

The weeks seemed to drag by, but in mid-July I was off on a Lufthansa flight to Munich. We started with a guided walk around parts of the city and ended day one with a marvelous dinner.

On day two, we were off to the BMW factory and museum. The museum is in very small temporary quarters while the new museum and a new car delivery center are nearing completion. The cars and motorcycles were stunning and included a wonderful 1930s streamlined 328 Mille Miglia, an early Dixie, a 1500 (precursor to the 2002), and an Isetta.

The factory in Munich can grow no larger by spreading out—the city has grown around it—so it has gotten a bit higher. Like Mercedes-Benz, BMW has opened a major new plant in eastern Germany where there is a waiting labor pool and more space. We saw 5-series and 3-series in production. Simply fascinating! We saw stamping machines producing body parts, robots welding those parts into car shells, all painting steps, the installation of windows, windshields, dashboards, interiors, and drive trains. Finally, we saw cars being driven into testing booths, run hard, and tested again at two more stations, and then driven off for delivery.

While in Munich, we also went to the Deutsches Museum transportation collection which included a 300SLR, an Auto Union record car, an early Porsche 911 in stainless steel (it was a never-painted test vehicle), a BMW 507, a Rumpler “teardrop” car from 1921, a replica of the 1886 Benz three-wheeler (the Patent Wagen), a large Isetta collection (some had tiny camping trailers), a Mercedes-Benz W154 Silver

Arrow, and so much more! I almost filled the flash memory on my little digital camera and had to switch to film.



Then it was off to Stuttgart! We had a marvelous evening walking the restored old town. In the morning we were taken to the Porsche Museum. It's a very small museum but contains some fantastic cars, including Porsche Number One—the Gmund Coupe, a 959, a 910 and a 917. Porsche, BMW, and Mercedes are all building new and much larger museums that will truly display their heritage and better meet the demand of the brands' fans and provide better tourist delivery services.

After spending some time at the museum store and the separate Porsche Design store, we walked to the factory dealership a few blocks away. They had more new and used Porsches than I've ever seen at any U.S. dealer—kind of like a giant candy store.

We returned to the factory and had an incredible tour of the new 911 in production. We also saw production versions of the new Cayman on the line. The Cayman will be built here until the plant in Finland is tooled up. The Cayman is a stunning coupe! There was a lot more “hands-on” construction of Porsches than we'd seen at BMW. There was no stamping facility... those parts are brought in from off-site... but we did see the 911 motor assembly line. Wow! Because of a scheduling change made weeks earlier, the Porsche tour ended way too soon... more on that later.

Back on the bus and off to the Mercedes-Benz factory in Sindelfingen. The tour of the factory started in the visitors and delivery center. It was enjoyable seeing the new owners filling out paperwork and picking up their “babies,” which are all lined up and waiting to be taken home. There is a story told by the guides that one man was so excited about picking up his new Mercedes that he left the center and drove for 45 minutes before remembering that he'd left his wife behind!

Continued on page 11

September 2005

22nd Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance

Sunday, October 2, 2005 — 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Nottoway Park, Vienna, VA

The 22nd Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance has been rescheduled for Sunday, October 2, 2005 from 8:30 - 5:00 p.m. at Nottoway Park in Vienna. (Heavy rain caused the cancelation of the May 1 scheduled event.)

Everything from vintage classics to the modern marvels belonging to members of the Mercedes-Benz, Audi, BMW and Porsche Clubs will be on display.

The Concours d'Elegance is a time in which one can appreciate fine German automotive design. Each marque will be judged on its appearance, condition, authenticity and cleanliness, with special emphasis given as to how well the vehicle has been kept to its original design.

Two classes will be on display: (1) Street/Show, and (2) Display. Experienced judges trained for each marque will judge the Street/Show class. The general public will judge the Display class with a "peoples' choice" ballot to determine a winner in each marque.

Nottoway Park and the historic Hunter House are located at 9601 Courthouse Road in Vienna. Situated on 84 acres of parkland, Nottoway Park, a former vineyard, is the perfect setting for the 22nd Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance. This event is open to the public. Those of you wishing to show your Mercedes-Benz, Audi, BMW or Porsche will need to register to show your car. The grounds open at 8:30 a.m. for vehicle placement and 9:00 a.m. for spectators. No vehicles will be placed on the field after 10 a.m.; judging starts promptly at 10:30 a.m. Parking for non-display or show cars will be available in Nottoway Park's various parking lots.

Directions to the Park:

Nottoway Park may be reached by taking Beltway Exit 49 (Route 66) west to exit at Route 243 or Nutley Street north. Turn left on Courthouse Road from Nutley Street. The park entrance will be on the left.

Schedule:

8:30 a.m.: Grounds open to show participants for placement onto the field.

9:00 a.m.: General admission to the public begins.

10:00 a.m.: Final staging of judged vehicles.

Vehicles not in place on the field will not be allowed to be shown—no exceptions.

*10:30 a.m.: Judging begins

* 3:00 p.m.: Scores are tallied.

* 3:30 p.m.: Wine and Cheese Reception — Awards will be given at the reception.

**Denotes approximate time—actual time depends on the number of judged entries.*

For those showing or displaying vehicle(s), the entry fee is \$25 per vehicle if pre-registered by September 25, or \$30 per car if registered afterward (including registering on location the day of the show). Registration includes one Wine & Cheese Reception ticket; additional tickets are available at \$10 each.

For registration, please send the year and model of your car, along with your check (made payable to GWS-MBCA) to: Bill Hopper, 5455 Broad Branch Rd., N.W., Washington, DC 20015-1753. A registration form is available on page 15.

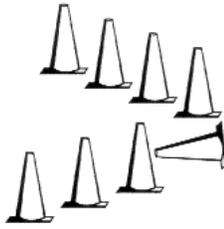
Awards will be the following: Best of Marque, Judges' Choice, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for number of anticipated classes in the Street/Show Class. Display Awards (1st, 2nd and 3rd) will be selected by popular vote of members and attendees. All vehicles participating will receive a dash plaque to show their participation in the event.

Those of you who registered for the May event will need to re-register. Please fill out the form on page 15 and send it to Bill Hopper at the address indicated.

Additionally, anyone who would like to volunteer to help out that day—staging and directing cars, tallying score sheets, etc.—is welcome. It's a great way to see all the cars and meet their owners.

pylon alley

by
Joe Wozney



Autocross #4

Our July autocross was thrown a curve ball. Because the school had scheduled a baseball game and our event on the same day at the same end of the school's property, the school board asked us to consider an alternative site. Harry Newman and I met with school board representatives and agreed that James Wood Middle School would be just fine.

It was obvious that the smaller, more rectangular lot suited some folks to a tee. Jim Smith cleaned up in the 190 Class, handily besting Julian Reeves, Jim Lozoskie and Al Angulo. Jim almost didn't make it... he never got the word and was busy changing his tires at Millbrook when Bobbie pulled up to tell him we'd moved!

Debbie Hirtes beat Greta O'Malley in the antique class by a full second. And Klaus Hirtes took Hans O'Malley by a bit more than a tenth of a second.

In the V8 class, John Robinson (560SL) took Bill Repass (400E) by six-tenths. And Ted Joseph beat Denise Dersin in their 190E-16 Valve by a little more than a tenth. Denise took Fastest Ladies Time of Day, beating her nearest competitor by four-tenths. Denise has this FLTD thing wrapped up!

Ben Weber drove his 1981 240D to another class win over a field of dream diesels. Where's

the competition? Will no one challenge this giant of a driver?

Bruce Roth won in the AMG Class and Fastest Mercedes Time of Day by two-tenths over a rapidly improving John Krahulec. Larry Paulick was just another tenth behind.

Mike Wirt decided it was an Audi kind of day and drove his S4 to a great index time (and very good raw time) for first place in the non-Benz Class. François Bru had FTD and second best index time in his Street Mod WRX. Pete Gochman was third and a half second behind François.

Fernando Puig took an impressive fourth place with his ESP Mustang. With gobs of power on hand, he found the lot's traction just right. Bob Robinson must have felt the same with a strong fifth-place finish. Harry Newman indexed to sixth place with an index time only one one-thousandth slower than Bob Robinson... now, that's close!

Elizabeth Krug out-indexed Bobbie Wozney by 81-thousandths of a second, but Bobbie had Ladies Best non-Mercedes Time of Day.

Maybe it was the lot... Maybe it was the summer vacation schedule... but this was one of the lightest turnouts of the year. Don't forget—if you find a lot that ends up being usable for autocrossing, you will run the next year for free!

We're halfway through the season and the class races are tight... just where they should be.

Autocross Schedule

Autocross #6.....September 25

Autocross #7.....October 16

Autocross #8.....November 6

2005 Autocross #4 Results

| DRIVER | CAR | BEST TIME | POINTS |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| Ted Joseph | 86 190E16V | 39.87 | 10 |
| Denise Dersin* | 86 190E16V | 40.046 | 9 |
| Jim Smith | 92 190E 2.6 | 40.525 | 10 |
| Julian Reeves | 03 C 320 | 40.904 | 9 |
| Jim Lozoskie | 91 190E 2.6 | 41.833 | 8 |
| Al Angulo | 89 190E 2.6 | 42.470 | 7 |
| Deborah Hirtes | 67 230 SL | 40.854 | 10 |
| Greta O'Malley | 72 300 SEL 4.5 | 41.803 | 9 |
| Klaus Hirtes | 67 230 SL | 40.097 | 10 |
| Hans O'Malley | 72 300 SEL 4.5 | 40.214 | 9 |
| John Robinson | 88 560 SL | 39.811 | 10 |
| Bill Repass | 93 400E | 40.470 | 9 |
| Bruce Roth** | 02 SLK32 AMG | 37.935 | 10 |
| John Krahulec | 04 E55 AMG | 38.169 | 9 |
| Larry Paulick | 04 SL55 AMG | 38.257 | 8 |
| Jim Glenn | 03 E55 AMG | 41.749 | 7 |
| Ben Weber | 81 240D | 45.593 | 10 |

OTHER MARQUES

| DRIVER | CAR | BEST TIME | CLASS | INDEX | INDEX TIME | POINTS |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------|-------|------------|--------|
| Elizabeth Krug | 02 VW Jetta | 42.390 | GSL | 0.782 | 33.148 | 10 |
| Bobbie Wozney*** | 85 Porsche 911 | 40.475 | BSL | 0.821 | 33.229 | 9 |
| Mike Wirt | 00 Audi S4 | 37.958 | DS | 0.796 | 30.214 | 10 |
| François Bru**** | 02 Subaru WRX | 36.007 | SM | 0.842 | 30.317 | 9 |
| Pete Gochman | 03 Honda S2000 | 36.522 | BSP | 0.839 | 30.641 | 8 |
| Fernando Puig | 99 Mustang GT | 37.573 | ESP | 0.805 | 31.035 | 7 |
| Bob Robinson | 87 Corvette | 37.786 | AS | 0.828 | 31.286 | 6 |
| Harry Newman | 97 Subaru SVX | 40.009 | GS | 0.782 | 31.287 | 5 |
| Joe Wozney | 85 Porsche 911 | 38.645 | BS | 0.821 | 31.727 | 4 |
| Ramsey Khoury | 04 Subaru WRX | 38.344 | AS | 0.828 | 31.748 | 3 |
| Bill Lear | 92 Integra GSR | 38.751 | DSP | 0.822 | 31.853 | 2 |
| Gonzalo Puig | 02 Subaru WRX | 37.842 | SM | 0.842 | 31.862 | 1 |
| Kyle Newman | 05 Mazda 3S | 41.309 | GS | 0.782 | 32.303 | 1 |
| Ron Mummert | 93 Nissan240SX | 42.447 | GS | 0.782 | 33.193 | 1 |
| Matthew Zint | 05 VW Jetta TDI | 44.757 | HS | 0.777 | 34.776 | 1 |

* LFTD - Ladies fastest time of the day

** MB-FTD - Fastest time of the day in a Mercedes-Benz

*** OM-LFTD - Ladies Fastest time of the day in a non-MB marque

**** FTD - Fastest time of the day

Scores also are available on-line
at www.gws-mbca.org

Summit Point in July

When you hold a Summit Point drivers' ed event in July or August, you can usually count on one of two things—hot and rainy or just plain hot. We had neither. It was just very warm. It was a fantastic weekend!

More than 90 drivers signed up. While most drove on both Saturday and Sunday, 10 or 12 drove for just one day. Two drivers decided that Saturday was so much fun they came back and registered for the second day. I'm sure others wish they had!

This event was a success because we had so many dedicated volunteers—instructors and workers. I'd like to thank Harry and Tom Newman. Harry helped with grid tech and pit out. Tom instructed and also helped at pit out. Debbie Hirtes and Bobbie Wozney handled registration. Klaus Hirtes was our instructor coordinator and also spent nearly every session instructing. Bruce Roth did not drive but came out to instruct.

Five or six instructors who are not members, and who did not drive at the event, gave their time to work with students. We were fortunate to have club and non-club members who drove and also instructed. Our thanks go out to Bill Lear, Reggie Forster, Hunter Johnson, Jesse Lauterbach, Brian Shafranek, Adam Trusilo, Garret Williams, Robert Hines, and Phil Ackley. If I've missed anyone, please accept my apologies.

For those of you who have wanted to attend a drivers' ed event but have put it off, make sure you put next year's event on your calendar as soon as it's announced! You will always wonder what you've been missing if you don't give it a try.

(See page 9 to see what one member thought of the event.)

The Magic of Dent Wizard

Jim Adams of Dent Wizard has again offered to reveal the secrets of painless dent removal to the club. Two years ago, Jim put on an amazing demonstration for us. He removed dents from a club member's car as we watched. While the work was in progress, Jim explained the tools and techniques used by Dent Wizard. If you have ever wondered how it works or ever wanted to talk to an expert about fixing a door ding in your "pride and joy," this event is for you.

The date is Saturday morning, October 22, 2005, in Rockville, Md. Watch this space next month for details, or contact Steve Walters at gwsTech@earthlink.net.

Swan Song for Tech Talk

Your Tech Chair is sorry to announce that the Tech Talk summer hiatus has proved fatal. We had a very dedicated group of participants (to whom I'd like to express my sincere appreciation), but in the end, too small a group to keep it going.

For those of you who didn't attend, Tech Talk was two hours (early on a Saturday morning) in my basement talking about cars. At the end of the session, I would chase everyone out, but it wasn't unusual to find the participants in my driveway an hour later, still talking about cars.

Use your imagination, and let me know what you think would be a fun way to get together and talk tech (gwsTech@earthlink.net).

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Are You a Good Driver?

It has become a bit of a ritual by now. Getting the dates set, clearing my calendar for the weekend, getting our cars prepared, reviewing video and notes, making arrangements for the hotel and talking with friends who will also be going, packing some long sleeve cotton shirts, sunscreen and a few tools. A short vacation? Well sort of: It is the annual GWS drivers' education event at Summit Point Raceway.

The driving school is a 1 or 2 day event at our "home track"—Summit Point in West Virginia. It includes all classes of drivers (novice to expert) in virtually every imaginable type of automobile. Students are placed in groups according to experience and, with the help of expert instructors, are taught the fundamentals required for competent high speed driving—a skill essential to what Hemingway described as one of three true sports: "There are only three sports: bullfighting, motor racing, and mountaineering; all the rest are merely games."

One of the obvious reasons people attend a driving school is to improve their driving. Are you a competent driver? Ask that question and usually about nine out of 10 drivers will answer "Yes." After all, they drive every day and have for years. But the act of getting a license and driving around on public roads does not automatically make someone a good driver any more than walking to work is training for a marathon.

The monthly autocross events and the drivers' education schools organized by the Greater Washington Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America can make you a safer, more competent driver. It was this reasoning that led me to start attending the regular GWS autocrosses and to encourage my wife, Barrie, to participate as well. This led to several years of autocrossing and eventually to the more demanding, higher speed events, but the main reason to attend is to have FUN.

This became readily apparent while watching Barrie's reaction at Summit Point. She had a fairly good time at her first Summit event, found it slightly

daunting but decided to try another event. She attended her second driving school at beautiful Virginia International Raceway—and that hooked her.

A combination of beautiful facilities and weather, great instructors and camaraderie among the GWS members made for a truly fantastic weekend. It was a great way to spend our wedding anniversary together, and we know another GWS couple who spent their anniversary at Summit Point this year (could insert joke here about the couple that races together, stays together.....). What stands out from that second event are Barrie's smiles and the pride she expressed at her growing driving experience and skills. At this most recent event (her third) held at Summit Point, Barrie moved up from the novice to the beginner group and once again had a blast. I did not think anyone could possibly enjoy this more than I do, but I would have to say that Barrie probably did.

The development of driving skills, exploring your limits and the limits of your automobile, making new acquaintances (and for some reason people involved in motorsports tend to be interesting characters indeed) are all reasons to attend. So, if you want to be able to raise your hand truthfully in response to the question "are you a competent driver?" attend any of the GWS driving events (monthly autocrosses, the driving schools, Tri-O-Rama, etc.). The icing on the cake is that you probably have not had this much fun in a long while. See you out there.

—Pete Gochman

Audi Club at Summit Point

The Potomac Chapter of the Audi Club of North America has openings in its Monday-Tuesday, October 3-4 Drivers' Ed School at Summit Point Raceway. For more information and a registration packet, go to:

<http://www.audiclubna.org/chapters/potomac/>

High Gear

Greatness is where you find it. We all know the names of great men and women: Alexander Hamilton, Marie Curie, Thomas Edison, Jane Austin, Richard Wagner, Florence Nightingale, Gottlieb Daimler and hundreds more. But these are folks who were lucky enough to have been in the right place at the right time so that they were able to make their great contributions to society. Someone pushed them forward at the proper moment and revealed their inner light to the world. However, believe me, there have been many, many individuals possessed of the seeds of greatness who never had their crowning moment on the world stage, not even posthumously. C'est la vie... So ist das Leben... that's life!

The same applies to automobiles. We have all heard of the Mercedes gullwing, of the Porsche Carrera spyder, the model J Duesenberg, the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost, the Bugatti type 35, the Ferrari Testarossa. But there have been other great cars that were never properly marketed or which did not arrive on the scene at an opportune moment. I have owned some great, yet unsung, cars. Case in point:

My Mercedes C230K sports coupe is a truly great automobile. It can show its heals to a Porsche Boxster (non "S"); has a panorama roof which provides better open touring than many ragtops; features a slick 6-speed manual tranny; and cost thousands less than its natural competitors. However, it failed miserably in the U.S. market. Why? Because some marketing guys determined to sell it as an "entry level" Mercedes. Human nature being what it is, nobody wants an "entry level" Mercedes. Those who buy the three-pointed star for status want to announce that they have well and truly arrived... not that they are knocking at the door. However, the fact that the world does not know that my C230K sports coupe is a great automobile does not prevent me from having a blast behind the wheel. The marketer's booboo even helped me latch on to my vehicle at a really great (reasonable) price!

What gets me started on this topic is that I just

bought what I believe will turn out to be another great, yet unsung, car. Here's the scoop. I have to have at least one four-wheel drive vehicle. That's because I live on a farm, work in town and have a driveway that is one-half kilometer long. Naturally, I first considered the new Mercedes ML to replace my faithful old '91 Explorer. The ML is a very fine SUV, but alas, the marketing guys have once again reared their ugly heads. While the world at large can purchase an ML with manual transmission, we in the U.S. of A. are only found to be worthy of automatics. While I fully realize the virtues of the Mercedes automatic transmission, it is a matter of quasi-religious conviction with me that I must shift for myself. End of story.

My next move was to consider another DaimlerChrysler product. I looked at the Jeep Liberty, particularly because Jeep has a new direct injection diesel engine available. At various times in my life I have been moved by the fervor of compression ignition. I have been a believer. But alas, the marketing department at Jeep has determined that if I want their virtuous oil burner, I must take their uninspired slushbox. No manual transmission diesels for the U.S. market. Expletive deleted!

Well, I just happened to have taken a look at the spec sheet for the base model Jeep Liberty, and something caught my eye. The base engine is a gasoline-powered 2.4 liter straight four with four valves per cylinder and double overhead camshafts. Its engineering specifications reveal this to be a genuine high performance motor. And in the base vehicle, it's mated to a close ratio 6-speed manual transmission. Was I dreaming or what? One test drive and I was sold. The base Liberty with the 2.4 mill handles like a sports car. That's because the 2.4 liter engine weighs a couple of hundred pounds less than the ubiquitous 3.7 liter V6. Saving weight in the nose results in a very favorable polar moment of inertia and delivers great handling and braking. I've already

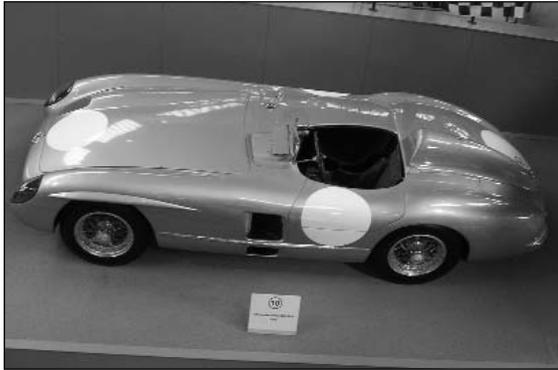
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From the President — Continued from page 4

The factory tour begins with a movie and presentation. Then it was on to the plant, which is huge and produces 2000 cars a day! The stamping facility is enormous and the large dies are constantly being moved as model production changes. The factory seems much more automated than the BMW plant. As an example, the workers at the BMW plant guide the dashboards into the new cars by hand. At Mercedes-Benz, a robot moves the dash into place and actually “screws” it in. Absolutely amazing as the cars are C-Class and E-Class, and wagons and sedans, and left and right hand drive!

After the almost three-hour tour, we hopped on the bus and were transported to the corporate offices for a look at the multi-building campus and dinner in the employees’ lounge. In front of the campus in a large courtyard we saw several of the new S-Class cars, the new R-Class, a Smart roadster, A- and B-Class cars, a C55 station wagon, and gobs of cars we don’t get here. It was like a mini auto show! Mercedes-Benz does it right!

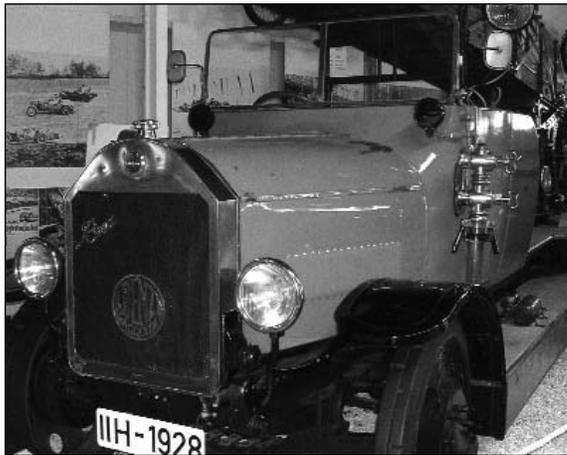
Early the next morning we were off to the Gottlieb Daimler workshop which is as it was 119 years ago—so much genius in such a little shop! Then we were off to the Mercedes Classic Center in Fellbach.



This Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR was built in 1955. It is now in the Deutsches Museum.

While there were customers’ cars being restored (and cars for sale!) most of the current crop are factory-owned cars being readied for the new museum opening next May. There was a 1930s SSK Roadster in dark brown that is one of the most beautiful cars I’ve ever seen. The young man working on the car was from Pennsylvania (!) and an intern from McPherson College. McPherson is an MBCA Foundation scholarship recipient. We were told that nearby garages held completed cars waiting for transport to the museum. I did not want to leave!

However, the next stop made leaving the Classic Center more palatable. The Mercedes-Benz Museum in Untertürkheim is a true gem! We started with lunch in the cafeteria and then had a tour guide give us an introduction to the collection. After that we were on our own and toured with display description phones (in English). The cars are displayed in a timeline from the 1886 Patent Wagen to the more modern and includes a fabulous collection of racecars. The new museum will house many more cars plus trucks and specialty vehicles. Staff members were setting up tables and chairs for an evening event and a gorgeous, very red SSK was the centerpiece. What ambiance!



A 1920s Benz (not Mercedes) fire truck can be viewed in the Sinsheim Museum.

Part II of Joe’s summer vacation will appear in next month’s Metro Tri-Star.

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Greetings from Iraq

Our former GWS secretary, Marianne Sener, left the Washington area last June. A major in the U.S. Air Force, she accepted a one-year assignment in Baghdad, where she is involved with “knowledge management.”

Here are a few photos from her album as well as a brief description of what’s been happening there.

This collection [of photos] includes the gradients of dust storms from heavy to clear, and our office cook-out by the pool. We get our cook-out food from the Dining Facility (DFAC). For health code reasons, the DFAC doesn’t give us raw food to cook, they just cater cooked food. We put their cooked hamburgers on our little charcoal grill to warm them up, just to add the BBQ feel and flavor! The pool was dry for our pool party BBQ, but we made the best of it!

Coalition contractors are still hard at work to bring Iraq infrastructure up to code. Iraq has about 14 hours of electric power per day, on average. That number varies from city to city and day to day, depending on local capability. The insurgents are still hard at work to hinder progress, so sometimes some cities have fewer hours of power. Some areas are getting electricity for the first time. The military installations run on generators since local power is not reliable. The generators that we use in the trailer park were Saddam’s. I guess he used generators too! I included a couple photos of these truck-sized generators with



A pool party without the pool can still be fun.

exhaust pipes as big as a culvert. The next time you walk behind an industrial-sized exhaust like that, you’ll have an idea of how a breeze feels in Iraq in the summertime!

High temps average around 115-120 degrees Fahrenheit. Lows are about 85 degrees. Thank the Lord for air conditioning and power generators!

I went from Camp Victory to the International Zone a couple of weeks ago, about a 10-mile trip. We flew up on a Black Hawk helicopter in the morning and returned via Humvee convoy in the afternoon. While there, our counterpart took us to see the Iraqi Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Crossed Swords that you see on TV sometimes. The Crossed Swords are over a parade route. The nets at the bottom of the arms holding swords are full of Iranian soldiers’ helmets. Saddam had these monuments built to commemorate Iraq’s “victory over Iran.”

I bought a bicycle! I have a long commute between my trailer lodging and the Palace offices; about .75 mile—a good 13-minute walk in the blazing heat. It just goes faster on a bike—five minutes!

I looked at the draft Iraqi Constitution this week. It is quite different from America’s Constitution! I would like to edit it for them! The framers have some disagreements to work out this week. They’ll finish drafting the constitution by 15 Aug.

Ten months to go in Iraq!

— Marianne Sener



Marianne and her new bicycle.

September 2005

Thanks Matt . . .

Once in a while something bad happens. When it happens at a Greater Washington Section event, there is always someone who will say “I’m happy to help, that’s what the Club is all about.” During the July drivers’ education event at Summit Point, Matthew Yip said that to me. And he really, really helped me out. I just wanted to share it with you, because it is what the Club is all about.

It was my last run on the last day. The parking area was looking a little thin because many of the drivers had already started home. My intrepid instructor, Klaus Hirtes, and I were both on guard against the effects of driver fatigue. Things were going fine. We had done a couple laps with no problems when I approached Turn One. The speedometer had just inched past 120 mph when I started my braking. So far, so good. As I neared the end of the braking zone, I tried to downshift from 4th to 3rd. I couldn’t find 3rd gear. Rats. I couldn’t find 4th gear. Rats. How bad a driver am I? As it turned out, I couldn’t find any gear. We coasted off the pavement and shut off the engine. The clutch pedal in my (Porsche) 944 was stuck on the floor. After a minute or two, Klaus yelled to the corner worker, “We need a tow.” One adventure had ended, and another had just begun.

When we got back to the pits, I started thinking about my options. The first was to leave the car overnight and return with parts and tools. Klaus kindly offered me a ride home. Someone else noted that Matt lived nearby and had brought his car in a huge, enclosed trailer. (It was so huge it had a kitchen, or at least a barbecue grill and some cabinets.) It occurred to me that Matt’s house would be a better place for my car to be, and that Matt had the means to get it there.

I have known Matt for at least a decade. That is to say, I have known who Matt is for a decade. I can remember him providing lively PA (public address) commentary at some of the first autocross events I attended. At some point after that, Matt learned my name, and we would always say “hello, how you

doing...” Like everyone else, we’d talk cars from time to time, but that was the extent of our interaction. So, when I asked Matt for help, it wasn’t as a life-long friend, it was just as a fellow club member. I was a little embarrassed to ask, and I didn’t really expect him to say yes, but he did. Good thing, too, because as it turns out, the clutch had already left West Virginia and was in smithereens.

Off we went, moving our cars back to Matt’s house. As Matt was driving, there were lots of wheels turning. For some reason, he decided that the real solution was to trailer my car from his house to my house (from Winchester to Alexandria). In order to do that, he had to borrow a second, smaller trailer (non-enclosed, sans kitchen) from a friend of his. This he arranged on his cell phone as we were headed back to his house. We pushed my car onto the second trailer, and headed “back east.”

I don’t know what time Matt had started out that day. I first saw him when he was doing grid tech inspections at 7:30 a.m. At 11 p.m. he was at my house (an hour and a half drive from his home) helping me push my disabled car into the garage.

— Steve Walters

High Gear — *Continued from page 10*

taken delivery and I’m really happy with this new DaimlerChrysler product in my barn.

But don’t forget the theme of our little discourse: unsung heroes. I’m afraid you won’t be readily able to go out to your local Jeep dealer and get a clone of my 2.4 liter Liberty with the 6-speed manual tranny off the lot. You see, the marketing guys have decided that you need the ponderous, lack luster, optional 3.7 liter six with the unexciting automatic gearbox. That’s what the dealers have in stock aplenty. Even with a Jeep, it will take some doing to find the road less traveled!

— John Kuhn Bleimaier



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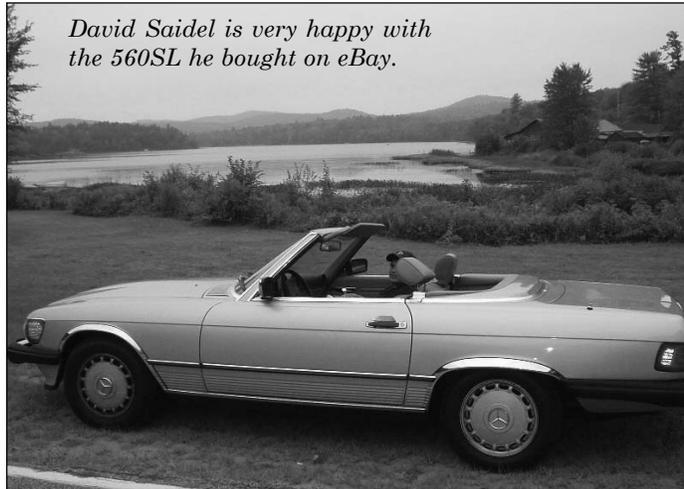
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Buying a Car on eBay

I bought both of my Mercedes on eBay. In August of 2002, I purchased my 1988 560SL with 65,000 miles on it. I bought it from a retired new car dealer who had moved to Florida, became bored, and started to buy a few select cars at auction and sell them on eBay.

At the time, I had priced 560SLs in the Washington, D.C. area, and they were fetching \$22K to \$25K for cars with higher mileage than the one I bought. The seller posted about 40 detailed pictures of the car, and we spoke by telephone several times during the bidding process. I also ran a Carfax check and found no abnormalities in the ownership chain. I was to be the third owner of the Benz. I won the bid at \$19,600 plus \$700 to ship it to Maryland from Florida. The car was in great shape and needed only a set of front disc brake pads and a emergency brake release knob to pass Maryland inspection. The 560SL now has a little over 70,000 miles on the odometer, and I have been upgrading many of the components over the last couple of years. Mainly, I had the front suspension overhauled, new AC compressor, new bumpers and rubber. The car drives great and is a perfect top-down ride.

My second purchase on eBay came in the summer of 2003 when I fell in love with a 1994 E320 Cabriolet that was being sold on eBay. The seller had the same background as the gentleman who sold me the 560SL. This red beauty was also in Florida and there were 91,000 miles on the clock. Once again I checked out the local used car dealers in the area and they were asking in the high 20s for E320 Cabs with comparable mileage. The seller had a "Buy-It-Now" price of \$21,400 that included shipping from Florida to Maryland. I convinced myself that I would buy the car, drive it for the summer and sell it for a hefty profit in the fall. NOT! I fell absolutely in love with this car which is now my daily driver. Since purchasing it,



David Saidel is very happy with the 560SL he bought on eBay.

the major investment has been a recent re-spray. Although the original paint was okay, there were several areas where the clear coat was peeling or missing (shown on the pictures from the seller). I could have lived with this condition, but decided to bring the car up to show quality. The German Service Center in Landover did a magnificent job painting the car and also maintaining it for me since it arrived in Maryland.

Both my eBay buying experiences were very satisfactory. I must admit there was a knot in my stomach waiting for the truck to arrive in the parking lot with my 560SL aboard, but all went well with both transactions. My suggestions are that you do your "due diligence" by checking the local dealers for price comparisons, and get as many detailed pictures as possible, especially regarding areas that need attention. Also, it is advisable to speak to the seller "live" if not, at least, by email. Carfax is a must as well to see that the title work is clear and that there have been no insurance claims or flood damage. Of course, it is always better to see the car and kick the tires, but this is not always possible.

— David Saidel

Just in Case You're in the Market . . .

Luxury Institute Survey Finds Maybach, Rolls Royce and Bentley Earn Top Ratings from Multi-millionaires

NEW YORK—(BUSINESS WIRE)—Relative newcomer Maybach earned top honors as the most highly regarded ultra-luxury automobile maker by Penta-Millionaires and Ultra High Net Worths (households with a total net worth of \$5 million to \$25 plus million) who recently rated and ranked America's top ultra-luxury automobiles.

The study, "The Luxury Automotive Brand Status Index" (LBSI), produced by New York City-based research and publishing firm, The Luxury Institute, rated 10 brands (alphabetical order) including: Aston Martin, Bentley, BMW, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, Maybach, Mercedes, Porsche, and Rolls Royce.

"Maybach's ability to earn first or second place on all of the four pillars of a luxury brand allowed it to break through despite its relatively low awareness and newness," said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the Luxury Institute. "It is clearly an impressive win for Mercedes Benz, which launched the automobile in the hopes of capturing a solid share of the ultra luxury car segment. Still, the resilience of Rolls Royce and Bentley, given the onslaught of models from new competitors such as Maybach, and from traditional competitors such as Ferrari, Maserati, and Aston Martin, is a testament to their ability to adapt while maintaining their heritage and brand identity."

As the voice of the Wealthy, the Luxury Institute asked Ultra-Wealthy consumers to rate each automaker on "Four Pillars of a Luxury Brand": (1)

delivering superior quality, (2) uniqueness and exclusivity, (3) whether the brand is used by people who are admired and respected, and (4) the ability of each brand to make clients feel special throughout the entire customer experience. The survey also asked respondents to rate each brand on price worthiness and on change in status over the previous 12 months.

Oktoberfest at ASC

American Service Center in Arlington, Va. is holding their Oktoberfest on October 22 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. They will have a new R-Class car there in addition to food and other goodies.

The dealership is looking for cars to display—pre-1970 cars. Members should contact Stan Rodia at ASC if they would like to bring a car. His number is (703) 525-2100.



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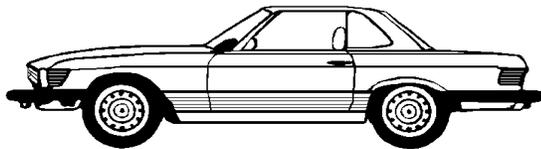
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Maryland Greater Washington Section License Tags

Maryland license tags with the section logo and the words "Mercedes-Benz Club" on them are still available. These plates will not be available through the MVA. You can purchase them only through the club, and they can only be put on a Mercedes-Benz. Please write to Ed Hainke, coordinator of the program, at 10755 Sawpit Cove Road, Lusby, MD 20657. Send him two checks: one payable to GWS-MBCA in the amount of \$10, and the second check payable to MVA in the amount of \$25. Ed will then contact you for the required MVA information.



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The Trading Post

190E 2.6, 1991: Nautical blue/gray MB tex, 135K, limited slip rear (orig rear included), 16" C280 Sport wheels, orig wheels w/ Blizzaks, MB car cover, \$5,000 obo. Also selling **autocross tires**, Toyo Proxes RA1s with 1 autocross season and 1 track day on 7X15, ET36, 8 hole wheels \$390 obo. Call Tom Heacock at (804) 453-9229.

220 fintail (his name is Ludwik), 1962: Black/red, 4-speed manual on the column. Perfect California car, brought to the East in 1999. Always garaged, never seen snow. Magnificent chrome, new shocks, drums, brake lines, radiator. Maintenance at David's Classic Car, who can provide references (call David at 410-296-6479 and ask about Peter's car). Everything works (clock only sometimes). New race car forces sale. \$10K OBO. Call Peter at (410) 464-0692 in Baltimore.

240D, 1977: Burgundy with standard shift, good clutch and Michelin tires. Leather seats with fairly new pads! Recent oil change with both fuel filters and air filter. Runs well with great mileage. Located in Alexandria. Best offer. Call Mark at (202) 513-2684 or e-mail mwagner@npr.org. Photos can be seen at www.parsifalfoto.de/240D.html.

240D, 1981: Light gray with tan leather interior. Must see and drive to appreciate. This Mercedes is in mint condition and a real "head turner." I receive constant comments. I have all maintenance records from day one (Jan. 19, 1981).



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Mercedes parts: 450SL doors, engine, hood, other parts. 240D parts, tail lights, transmission, other MB parts. Call for more details. (571) 334-2570. Leave message.

E320cdi, 2005: Silver/gray, 5,500 miles, \$48,250; or **350SD, 1991:** Rebuilt engine. New exhaust, starter, brakes, water pump, alternator. Refinished wheels and bumpers. New windshield. \$19,500. Best 350SD in the area! Call Greg at (301) 948-7354.

240D, 1982 and 300D Turbo, 1984: both for parts. Call Jerry at (410) 863-4945.

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Any GWS member may place an ad of up to six lines in length free of charge in the *Metro Tri-Star*. Include your name, membership number, address and phone number(s) with area codes on your hand-printed or typed copy. Personal ads will appear for two issues. Ads should be sent to: Metro Tri-Star, 1307 Warrington Place, Alexandria, VA 22307, (703) 765-9405; or e-mail: janetmcfarland@earthlink.net

Nonmembers may submit a single personal ad for \$45. For business ad rates, contact Janet McFarland at the same number.

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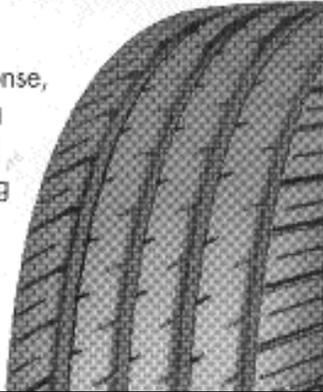
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