



METRO TRI-STAR

www.gws-mbca.org

October 2005

October: Coming Up This Month . . .

Oct. 2 — Deutsche Marque Concours.

Not sure what to do on Sunday, Oct. 2? Thinking of driving out 66 to see the leaves beginning to change color? We have another suggestion. Come out and see some great colors of a different sort—beautiful examples of German automotive engineering at Nottoway Park in Vienna, Va. The event is free and open to spectators, and it's a great family event (as long as everyone remembers the cars are to be looked at and not touched).

This event was canceled from an earlier May 1 date due to torrential rain, so all the participants (from the Mercedes-Benz, Audi, BMW and Porsche Clubs) have had a long time to clean, polish and wax their cars to perfection.

There is an awards reception at 3 p.m. There will be a \$10 fee to attend the reception.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill Hopper at (202) 363-4189 or e-mail him at WWHRestoration@att.net.

Oct. 16 — Autocross

The seventh autocross of the season will take place in Winchester, Va. After this event, there will be just one more autocross this year, Nov. 6, so if you still haven't tried it, come and join us. See page 6 for additional information.

Oct. 22 — Oktoberfest at ASC

American Service Center (ASC) in Arlington, Va. is holding their Oktoberfest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. They will have a new R-Class car in the showroom in addition to food and other goodies.

The dealership also is looking for cars to display—pre-1970 cars. Members should contact Stan Rodia at ASC (703) 525-2100 if they would like to bring one of their oldies.



Oct. 23 — GWS Annual Meeting

American Service Center in Arlington, Va. is hosting the Greater Washington Section's annual meeting. Your officers will update the membership on the status and business of the section. A special guest speaker will make a presentation on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. See page 5 for a preview of the project.

October 27 — MPT Pledge Drive

MBCA members have been asked to staff the phone lines on Thursday, Oct. 27 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Maryland Public Television Studios in Owings Mills, Md. See page 5 for additional information.

For the latest club news, go to the
GWS web site at:
<http://www.gws-mbca.org>

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Calendar of Events

Greater Washington Section Events 2005-2006

- October 2 Deutsche Marque
Nottoway Park, Vienna, VA
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- October 16 Autocross #7: Winchester, VA
Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866
- October 22 Oktoberfest at American Service Center
Arlington, VA
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- October 23 GWS Annual Meeting
American Service Center, Arlington
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- October 27 Maryland Public Television Pledge Drive
See page 5 for additional information
Contact: Bill Hopper — (202) 363-4189
- November 6 Autocross #8: Winchester, VA
Contact: Joe Wozney — (703) 437-7866
- December 4 New Members Party
More info in next edition of *Metro Tri-Star*
- January 14 Holiday Party
Belle Haven Country Club
More info in next edition of *Metro Tri-Star*

Other Scheduled Events

- October 9 2005 Colonial Polo Cup
Shirley Plantation on the James River
Charles City County, Virginia
(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 Pumpkin 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.

Postponements

Dent Wizard Demo

The local real estate market has had an adverse "impact" on our plans to visit Dent Wizard on Oct. 22. They have lost their lease, as another acre of urban land sprouts condos. Jim Adams, the Dent Wizard manager, is working to reschedule the event at a different location, on or about the first of the year. Watch this space for further "developments."

VPC Center Tour

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. Additional details and information will appear in a future edition of the *Metro Tri-Star* and on the web site.

Cancelation

Your Tech Chair has elected to not hold the event scheduled at Potomac German Auto on Nov. 12. It was to have focused on the peculiarities of the 107 chassis heating system and windows.

If members have questions about these topics, they can e-mail: gwsTech@earthlink.net.

Meanwhile, we will look for other event ideas with broader appeal that might be hosted by one of our favorite sponsors, PGA.

From the President . . .

What I Did on My Summer Vacation — Part II

In mid-July, Joe Wozney was invited on a trip to Germany with the Smithsonian as a tour study leader. Part I of his journey appeared in September's Metro Tri-Star.

Early on Friday morning, we were off to Heidelberg. As a special treat we stopped at the apothecary shop in Wiesloch where Bertha Benz bought gasoline on her historic trip to prove that the automobile was a viable people transporter. The chemist's shop is still in business!

After yet one more incredible lunch, we had a guided walking tour of the historic city and castle. Heidelberg was nearly untouched by Allied bombers in WWII and is magnificent. The squares, churches and homes are absolutely picturesque. But Heidelberg is not a home city to any car manufacturer... so, why were we there?

Early on Saturday morning, our bus made the 35-mile trip to the Auto and Technical Museum in Sinsheim. Honestly... how many of you have ever heard of this museum? You could have knocked us over with a feather! Absolutely amazing! Sinsheim boasts an eclectic and wonderful car collection (including a large display of 1950s and 1960s American iron) in two buildings. It also is home to restored WWII tanks and cannon and an airplane collection that, while not equal to the Air and Space Museum, has got to be one of the best in the world. You can climb the towers and enter an Air France Concorde SST or a Tupolev TU-144 SST. Spend a few minutes and check out their web site at <http://www.museum-sinsheim.de/>. You will not believe what they've put together!

But that's not the only reason we were in Heidelberg. All too soon we were dragged from the museum and strapped in our seats to go to the Hockenheim Ring for the German Grand Prix Formula 1 qualifying! Talk about mixed emotions! To have to leave a one-of-a-kind museum for my favorite racing was truly a toughie!

I mentioned earlier that the Porsche tour was cut

short... too short. The reason was that the German Grand Prix was rescheduled two or three times and we lost our slot at Porsche in order to meet the new race date. Porsche did a wonderful job in fitting us in at all.

The seats just to the right of Turn 1 were excellent! And, my day was made when Kimi Raikkonen took the pole for Sunday's race. My mood was dampened though when Juan Pablo Montoya crashed the other McLaren-Mercedes and was relegated to 19th on the grid. What surprised me was that so

few fans were dressed in McLaren black and silver or even BMW's colors. No, the fans were overwhelmingly in red—Ferrari red. An Italian car popular here in Germany? Maybe it was the driver... Michael something...

The next day we were back at the track early for the preliminary races—the GP2 race (open-wheeled cars with the future Formula 1 drivers) and the Porsche Supercup race. Both were lots of fun and it was great to see Scott Speed of the U.S. do so well. He finished third in the race and is currently third in the points race.

Although I'd seen F1 live at several American venues, this was my first across the pond, and I couldn't have been any more excited. At the start, Kimi jumped to a good lead. I was elated! On every lap he picked up more and more on the fading Alonso (currently the championship leader). Then it happened! On the 27th lap—right in front of us—Kimi's car began to slow. He made it around the corner and out of view at a crawl. Then the car stopped. Hydraulics problems. He was done for the day. Oh, the horror!

But to save the McLaren-Mercedes day, Montoya was on a tear. He went from 19th to 2nd! But with time running out, that was as far as he got, and Alonso (Renault) won the race and strengthened his lead in the championship race.

My hero had lost, but I'd had the time of my life. The 15 folks on our tour loved the race and the entire week. It was truly incredible. We put the final stamp on our trip with a wonderful private dinner at our hotel where we talked cars and racing. I thought... If I get up really early, can I get another few hours at Sinsheim before having to leave for the airport?

— Joe

October 2005



MPT Pledge Drive for MotorWeek

Come help Maryland Public Television (MPT) promote one of its great programs—MotorWeek.

MBCA members have been asked to man the phone lines on Thursday, Oct. 27, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Maryland Public Television studios in Owings Mills, Md.

This is a very special one-time event, as we will be filmed for the pledge drive coming up in December. John Davis and the cast and crew of MotorWeek will be with us, promoting the pledge drive, and we will be filmed doing this. So here is your chance at your 15 minutes of fame!

If you love MotorWeek, television's original automotive magazine, show your support for the show, meet the cast and crew, and help MPT all at the same time.

MPT makes volunteering for this event very easy. They provide a nice spread of food, so don't eat din-

ner before hand. The volunteer pledge-takers will be set up in a phone bank in the television studio. And MPT has a modern, up-to-date computer system that makes it easy to plug in the information from the pledge-givers.

When the real pledge drive comes out in December, this segment will be shown all across the country, and many other MBCA sections will be volunteering at that time as well—in their own local stations and towns—but they will not have the benefits we had by being in MotorWeek's home studio.

The studios are in Owings Mills, Md., just off 795 north of Baltimore. The address is 11767 Owings Mills Blvd., Owings Mills, MD 21117.

If you are interested in taking part in this worthwhile—and fun—evening, give Bill Hopper a call at (202) 363-4189, or e-mail WWHRestoration@att.net. (See page 16 for a write-up of Bill's day at the MPT studios.)

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

What do we all know about this project called the Woodrow Wilson Bridge? Well, we know to avoid that section of the Beltway like the plague even when it's not under construction. And now that it is, with lane closures and bridge closures, it sometimes makes sense to just go the other way!

This summer I was lucky enough to go on a boat



tour of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge Construction project. Driving over the old bridge now, you see the soaring arches of the new bridge, but to truly appreciate the old vs. the new, you should do it from the deck of a boat.

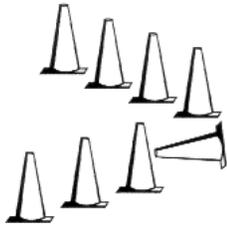
The old bridge is basically a roadway on stilts, very modern for its 1960s time, but very plain as bridges go today. When you get up to the piers of the new bridge—and what we see now is only one span of it—it is not only massive, but very attractively designed. This new bridge will offer more access to users wanting to cross the Potomac River—including a bike and pedestrian crossing.

From a passenger boat, you sail among a large number of barges and tugs that support the bridge's construction, and you clearly get to see the piers that turn into graceful arches to support the roadway

Continued on page 19

pylon alley

by
Joe Wozney



Autocross #5

Well, it finally happened. For the first time since dirt was invented, Bill Stewart finished third in his class at an autocross. Maybe it's the ride to bustling Winchester from laid-back Charlottesville. Denise Dersin walked away with the 16-valve class win and was followed by Ted Joseph and Bill at six- and seven-tenths, respectively. In addition, Denise took second place in the almost-new-to-her SLK350 and garnered yet another Ladies Fastest Time of Day.

In the AMG/SLK350 class, Ted Joseph took first and Fastest Mercedes Time of Day, while John Krahulec was third (after Denise). Both Ted and Denise made it a two-car entry. What was really amazing was the fact that only one other car—a Mercedes or non-Mercedes—was faster than Ted. The new SLK is very quick indeed!

Jim Smith bested Bill Hopper by less than three-tenths in the 190E 2.6/C-Class class. Bill is getting faster and smoother. If this improvement continues, next year will be a real contest for the championship. (Maybe it's the ride from very laid-back Williamsburg.)

Deborah Hirtes, Klaus Hirtes and Ben Weber all ran unopposed in their respective classes. Ben's time in his 21-year-old diesel was quite impressive...but I didn't say that.

Mike Wirt in his DS Audi S4 eked out a 16-thousandths of a second win over François Bru in the non-Mercedes class for a great first-place finish. François, on the other hand, had overall Fastest Time of

Day...again...in his Street Mod WRX.

Fernando Puig took third in his ESP Mustang. It can't be easy getting all that power down in a turn, but he makes it look easy! Yours truly took fourth in a Porsche and was followed by Gonzalo Puig in another WRX. If you look at the scores, you'll see that the difference between fourth and fifth place was one one-thousandths of a second. Now that's really, really close!

Pete Gochman and Bill Lear—sixth and seventh—were close, too, as their Prepared cars were just 44-thousandths of a second apart. It's very likely that the course design had much to do with the compressed scores. Less than four seconds (indexed) separated the fastest and slowest of the 17 cars in the class!

In the Ladies class, Bobbie Wozney took Fastest Ladies non-Mercedes Time of Day and a 1.3 second indexed win. Barrie Gochman was second and just one-tenth of a second quicker than "rookie" Elizabeth Krug. The Ladies class is still a toss-up for the 2005 series.

In fact, with three events to go, there are a lot of classes that are still up in the air. Don't forget that the best five finishes are counted for each individual's total score...so you can't afford to miss a single event! Oh, and trophies and door prizes require that you attend a minimum of five events!

If you have been reading and hearing about autocrossing but still have not tried it, come out to the next two events, which are held at Milbrook High School in Winchester, Va. (Directions are on the GWS web site at www.gws-mbca.org.)

Onsite registration is \$25 for GWS members and \$30 for non-members. Plan to be there between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. to get the feel for the course. You'll wonder why it took you so long to get the "bug."

Autocross Schedule

Autocross #7.....October 16

Autocross #8.....November 6

2005 Autocross #5 Results

| DRIVER | CAR | BEST TIME | POINTS |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Denise Dersin* | 86 190E16V | 35.165 | 10 |
| Ted Joseph | 86 190E16V | 35.790 | 9 |
| Bill Stewart | 86 190E16V | 35.864 | 8 |
| Jim Smith | 92 190E 2.6 | 37.196 | 10 |
| Bill Hopper | 97 C280 | 37.459 | 9 |
| Deborah Hirtes | 67 230 SL | 38.225 | 10 |
| Klaus Hirtes | 67 230 SL | 36.251 | 10 |
| John Robinson | 88 560 SL | 36.907 | 10 |
| Ted Joseph** | 05 SLK 350 | 34.042 | 10 |
| Denise Dersin | 05 SLK 350 | 35.055 | 9 |
| John Krahulec | 04 E55 AMG | 35.216 | 8 |
| Bruce Roth | 02 SLK32 AMG | 35.814 | 7 |
| Larry Paulick | 04 SL55 AMG | 38.908 | 6 |
| Ben Weber | 81 240D | 39.922 | 10 |

| | |
|------|---|
| * | 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 |

OTHER MARQUES:

| DRIVER | CAR | BEST TIME | CLASS | INDEX | INDEX TIME | POINTS |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------|-------|------------|--------|
| Bobbie Wozney*** | 85 Porsche 911 | 36.662 | SL | 0.821 | 30.099 | 10 |
| Barrie Gochma | 04 Subaru WRX | 39.231 | LSTX | 0.802 | 31.463 | 9 |
| Elizabeth Krug | 02 VW Jetta | 40.218 | GSL | 0.782 | 31.559 | 8 |
| Sharon Payne | 99 Saab Viggen | 41.586 | GSL | 0.782 | 32.520 | 7 |
| Mike Wirt | 00 Audi S4 | 35.258 | DS | 0.796 | 28.065 | 10 |
| François Bru**** | 02 Subaru WRX | 33.351 | SM | 0.842 | 28.081 | 9 |
| Fernando Puig | 99 Mustang GT | 34.627 | ESP | 0.829 | 28.705 | 8 |
| Joe Wozney | 85 Porsche 911 | 35.117 | BS | 0.821 | 28.831 | 7 |
| Gonzalo Puig | 02 Subaru WRX | 34.243 | SM | 0.842 | 28.832 | 6 |
| Pete Gochman | 03 Honda S2000 | 34.454 | BSP | 0.839 | 28.906 | 5 |
| Bill Lear | 92 Integra GSR | 35.220 | DSP | 0.822 | 28.950 | 4 |
| Bob Robinson | 87 Corvette | 35.094 | AS | 0.828 | 29.057 | 3 |
| John Jens | 02 VW GTI 337 | 36.571 | STS | 0.799 | 29.220 | 2 |
| Jeremy Jens | 04 VW R32 | 36.484 | STX | 0.802 | 29.260 | 1 |
| Ramsey Khoury | 04 Subaru WRX | 35.469 | AS | 0.828 | 29.368 | 1 |
| Andrew Gunn | 90 Mazda Miata | 37.656 | ES | 0.806 | 30.350 | 1 |
| Mick Frankel | 01 Boxster S | 35.759 | ASP | 0.850 | 30.395 | 1 |
| Eric Stieve | 88 Toyota Celica | 36.328 | SM | 0.842 | 30.588 | 1 |
| Mark Hillyer | 92 Mazda Miata | 38.732 | ES | 0.806 | 31.217 | 1 |
| Richie Crim | 04 Pontiac GTO | 38.966 | FS | 0.805 | 31.367 | 1 |
| Ron Mummert | 93 Nissan240SX | 40.600 | GS | 0.782 | 31.749 | 1 |

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

ASC Means First Class

American Service Center (ASC) hosted a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) tech session for the Greater Washington Section on Aug. 20. As usual, Gary Little and the Service and Parts Departments rolled out the red carpet for us . . . then they treated us to a really great time!

Shop Foreman David Bloom had his crew there at the crack of dawn and opened the bay doors for us half an hour early. Those who arrived expecting a long line of cars (typical of previous years) found they were ushered right onto a lift. First-class service at ASC: that's no surprise!

While everyone's idea of a good time may be different, at an ASC DIY session there are a few fairly common favorites. For example, there is the Stan (just one more fluid to change) Groenig idea of a good time. Change the oil, change the brake fluid, change the differential fluid, change the antifreeze, change the . . . Stan made the most of the opportunity to have his 500E up on a lift. The accountants in the group who observed Stan at work coined a new acronym in his honor, FILO (first in, last out). At the end of the day, there was Stan, last out, grinning from ear to ear. DIY regular Hendrik Bakker used the more conventional FIFO (first in, first out) approach. Hendrik had his oil changed and was back on the road in no time flat.

Richard Henry had as much fun as Stan and Hendrik, but in an entirely different way. Richard brought in his 230SL and sought advice on adjusting the neutral safety switch. If you needed advice on a 40-year-old Mercedes, to whom would you turn? Henry turned to Super Technician Willi Grabowski. Willi, who was working at ASC when 230SLs were the latest thing, was on hand to help us, and Richard was elated.

Chuck Gainor had his own style of fun. Chuck, who has had a very vexing problem with the window in the driver's door of his car, spent the day taking the door completely apart and putting it back together. Tech Allan Fields spent much of his day carefully guiding Chuck through the process. Anyone who has ventured deep into uncharted territory knows the value of an experienced guide. It's the difference between success and disaster, and Allan kept

Chuck right on "track." (See Chuck's take on his adventure on page 9.) Along the same lines, Tony Ki helped Robert Urdal refresh the brakes and the sun visors in Robert's otherwise perfect 107 chassis SL.

In an unfortunate break with tradition, the "Largest Fluid Spill Award" will not be presented this year. Although a substantial cash prize was ready to be awarded, this year's DIYers set a new record for neatness. (The most notable year-to-year improvement was that of Mark Duval. His spic-n-span workspace was quite a contrast to that of last time.) As an alternative, your Tech Chair would like to present Dave Thompson with the award for "Least Discreet Use of a Hammer." Dave, whose failed muffler was firmly attached to the rest of his exhaust system, was finally rescued by Andre delaHoussaye with an air chisel. There's nothing quite like the right tool in expert hands. In other categories, honorable mention goes to Scott Singer as the first club member to arrive. The "Super-Supportive-Spouse" award goes to Betty Hainke who watched husband Ed give his W116 the once over. Special thanks to Deborah Hirtes, our on-scene registrar, and to Bill and Debbie Repass, who lent their helping hands.

On behalf of all the participants, I'd like to thank all the ASC technicians, parts personnel and the breakfast/lunch crew who spent so much of their time helping us. It was First Class fun!

— Steve Walters



Brian Armstead checks his brakes.

Chuck's Excellent Tech Adventure . . .

A broken door check on my 1995 S420 damaged the window channel located in the door and dinged the door's outer shell. Because this model's window channel is welded into the door, two Mercedes-Benz body shops told me the entire door would have to be replaced. But after some searching, the ending was less expensive and happier.

I had noticed the door check had excess play, and the window would only go back into the door about 6 inches. The door check is a metal strap attached to the frame by a pin and to the car door by two bolts in the front face of the door and a third bolt on the inside of the door located under the inner door panel. The door check limits the distance the door opens.

I had gone to an adult education class given by the Fairfax County Public System on automotive repair. There the instructor removed the inner door panel and noticed a piece of the rubber and felt window run was torn out of the window channel. I thought this was the problem that prevented the window from retracting completely into the door. I did not realize the torn window run was related to the broken door check.

A few weeks later, Aug. 20, I went to the GWS Do-It-Yourself (DIY) event at American Service Center (ASC). I was prepared to replace a light bulb behind the instrument cluster, change the engine air filters and replace the broken door check and torn window run on the driver's door. Working under the guidance of Allan Fields, a skilled ASC technician, I completed these projects and also learned to replace the cabin air filter, but repairing the damage done by the broken door check was another story.

I visited ASC prior to the DIY, ordered the parts I thought I would need to fix the window and door. I just could not wait to get to the DIY and try to fix these problems under the watchful eyes of ASC's staff (who would not let you leave without seeing that repairs you started were finished).

With the inner door panel removed, Allen pointed out that the bolt on the inside of the door holding the door check had pulled through the door. After using an air hammer to remove the pin holding the door check to the frame (a punch and hammer did not

remove the pin), the door check fell partially back inside the door. The door check should have been held tightly against the inside of the door by the two bolts in the front face of the door. But the door check was so damaged, the two bolts were only in the door and not attached to the door check. In fact, Allan reached into the door and removed broken parts of the check to show me.

The technician told me that when the door check breaks, the part inside the door, now moving freely, damages the metal window channel. I tried to realign the channel with needle-nose pliers but was not successful. The ASC shop foreman looked at the outside, painted surface of the door and pointed out two dings caused by the broken door check hitting the outer door shell from inside the door. He said when you hear a clicking sound when opening and closing the door, the door check is failing, and it must be fixed immediately.

I was hoping that repairing the window channel would be a small job, but two MB body shops I spoke with told me they do not repair damaged window channels in the 1995 S420. Each shop said the solution was to replace the entire door. This would be an expensive replacement. I was heartbroken.

Steve Walters, our club's technical director, suggested removing the inner door panel and visiting a body shop. In this way, a shop could look at the damaged window channel without taking the time to remove the inner door panel and the speakers.

I went to WagonworkCollision Center II in Alexandria, Va., which the GWS had toured last year. There I met Donald Hughes, a Master Collision Repair Technician. I showed him the damaged window channel, and he said he would try to correctly align it. He spent three hours reshaping the window channel and installing the rubber window run, all for a moderate cost. Now, I have my original door and window channel and a working window.

Remember, if you hear the infamous clicking sound as you open and close your door, have it "checked" without delay.

— Charles Gainor

High Gear

There are two 300SLs in Moscow. I saw them both recently. One is a gullwing, the other is a roadster. You see, I was in the Russian capital in connection with delivering a lecture at Moscow University. It's always a hoot to visit the largest country on the planet. It stretches across 12 time zones, you know. Furthermore, the Russian Federation is the most exotic travel destination where you can still drink the water.

It's a car culture out there in what used to be the "evil empire." The Russian people are very passionate about their automobiles, and there are probably more amateur mechanics per capita in Russia than in any other country. The new capitalist class is totally enamored of four-wheeled excess, a.k.a. Ferraris and Maybachs; while the average Russian spends an appreciable amount of time tinkering under the hood of his Lada or Volga.

My visit to Russia just happened to coincide with the Moscow International Automobile Show. The show has three components. There is a lavish display of new cars presented by manufacturers from around the world. There is also an enormous exhibit of spare parts and tuning upgrades for the aftermarket. In addition this year, for the first time, there was a classic car show. At the new car introduction, I enjoyed the opportunity to look at marques and models which are not sold in the States. Peugeot and Citroën had some very attractive Gallic designs with rather innovative, sporting mechanicals. It was fun to examine the "1 series" (sic) BMWs with their diminutive dimensions. The contemporary Russian cars are intriguing and appear to present good value for the money. You can purchase a Volga for under US\$10,000. This is a four-door sedan about the size of an E class Mercedes with a 2.5 liter engine. The engineering is rudimentary, but the Volgas seem to hold up pretty well on the poor quality roads from Vitebsk to Khabarovsk.

Of course the classic car show was the highlight for me. That's where I saw the two 300SLs. There are still some WWII trophy Mercedes, BMW, Adler, DKW and Horch autos in Russia. The examples of these vehicles at the Moscow show were restored to varying

degrees of authenticity. A 1937 Mercedes 380 was presented in very fine condition. Mechanical and trim items were obviously restored to near original specification. On the other hand, there was a '38 DKW that had been reupholstered in beige suede and was riding on modern wheels with low profile tires.

The old Soviet cars were local crowd pleasers. The Packard-based ZIL limousines, which had been used by high level aparatchiks, are great take-offs on their American cousins. A Pobeda cabriolet from 1954, which now belongs to the Russian movie star Leonid Yarmolnik, was the center of attention at the show. It had just completed a year-long restoration and appeared to have been prepared to a near Pebble Beach standard of perfection. And that got me thinking...

Well, the Moscow Auto Show opened just a fortnight after I had gotten back from this year's Pebble Beach weekend. From Quail Lodge to the Historic Races at Laguna Seca; from the Christie's Auction to the Concorso Italiano; the 72-hour extravaganza on California's Monterey peninsula had been the ultimate car junkie high, as usual. On the lawn at Pebble, Hermann Goering's 540K was displayed for the first time. The historic association with that World War I flying ace, who ended up a convicted war criminal after World War II, made this Mercedes a center of attention. A couple of weeks later in Moscow, a concept began to jell in my mind.

Every year some new classic car class is featured on the green at Pebble Beach. In 2004, there was a class for 300SLs in honor of the 50th anniversary of the gullwing. This year, there was a class for '50s hot rods (that raised some eyebrows!). So now I'm thinking, why not a class for the vintage cars from the other side of the Iron Curtain at the next Pebble Beach Concours d' Elegance? I can see it now: sleek, dark, enigmatic vehicles with provenance from the likes of Derzhinsky, Beria, Kaganovich, Kamenev and Trotsky.

On the other hand perhaps we should purge that idea.

— **John Kuhn Bleimaier**

Emissions Standards for Gray Market Vehicles

I drive a gray market 1982 Mercedes 200, a W123 model with the 2-liter M102 engine with a Stromberg carburetor. When it was time for the dreaded emissions inspection in August, the emissions testing facility informed me that there was a Virginia law stating that gray market vehicles do not need to undergo the emissions test (*Section 46.2-1177 sub-paragraph 3 of the Air Pollution Control Law of Virginia, link below*) because of an exemption for any “vehicle which, at the time of its manufacture, was not designed to meet emissions standards set or approved by the federal government.” That was good news.

I called the emissions officer on duty at the Northern Virginia Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Control at (703) 583-3800, and he explained that he either needed to see the EPA import documentation or check the car himself at his office in Woodbridge, Va. So I made the drive down over lunch and met with a very nice representative of the

office who took down my VIN number and visually inspected the car while I explained some of the history of my 200 to him.

The next day he called me and confirmed that I did not need to undergo the emissions test and that he would send me a memo to take to the DMV for the registration renewal. At the DMV, I needed the assistance of a supervisor to finalize the registration, but things went fast and smooth overall.

My research seems to indicate that this law has probably been in effect since at least 1995, and I would not have had to take the test in 2003 (the original owner always underwent the test as well), but I was only aware of the waiver for cars older than 25 model years. This experience serves as a reminder that there is no perfect information no matter how much we think we know about a subject.

— Eric Wagner

Link to the Air Pollution Control Law on the DEQ website: www.deq.state.va.us/regulations/pdf/air-law2003.pdf.

Getting Involved in Your Newsletter

The *Metro Tri-Star* is a 100 percent volunteer effort, and the more people we have involved, the more interesting our newsletter will be. How can you get involved? Here are a few ideas.

■ Reporter — As a reporter, you would be asked to report on section events or write articles on car topics that interest you.

■ Photographer — Take pictures at section events and write short captions that include members' names and car types, if appropriate

■ Contributing reporter — Have you had a fun experience with your Benz or have you overcome a technical problem that you would like to share? Write about it! Some past examples include Paul Vandenberg's article on picking up his Benz in Germany, buying a Benz on eBay and this month's article by Chuck Gainor on his broken door check.

■ Letters to the Editor — We welcome opinion pieces related to the marque or the section.

So, are you interested? Please contact Janet McFarland at (703) 765-9405 or e-mail her at JanetMcFarland@earthlink.net to let her know how you would like to get involved.

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The End of the Dog Days of Summer

The Aug. 21 Mid-Atlantic Regional MBCA Concours and Picnic marked the end of one of the Washington region's hottest Augusts on record. After days of heat and humidity, the weather let up a few degrees for us to hold our annual picnic at the Newby estate in Potomac Md.

The event itself was quite cool, in a very hot way, as many attendees made good use of the lovely shade trees, the inviting pool, and the beverage area where the cold drinks were served.

The Greater Washington Section board and officers organized and worked the event so that the membership could enjoy a day of Mercedes-Benz glow and good food, Maryland-German Style.

Each year, Tom and Mary Kestel find us some of the best Bratwursts and buns in Maryland. And they, along with Klaus and Deborah Hirtes man the grills and set out the food, which this year included a delicious carrot cake!

More than 150 MBCA members enjoyed the festivities. Hazel Calabro brought her humans (Greg and Brenda) from the north, and folks must have thought Bob Platz was nuts going down the road in his SL, which was decked out for the ski slopes, complete with skis and poles. From the south, Greg Magnus and Robby Ackerman helped out on the concours field and at tending bar. A cast and crew of MBCA members made up the judges. Bruce Roth and Greg Calabro worked on the Sedans. Ted Joseph, Tim Brischler and Denise Dersin judged the show cars, while Bob Platz, Frank Spellman and Robby Ackerman worked on the street SLs.

Steve Walters was the official corral master with the help of Evie, his faithful pup! Joe Wozney got to be well known at the ice store with several trips to bring back buckets of the most wanted stuff.

Bobbie Wozney made sure the Silent Auction ran smoothly, with funds going to benefit Children's Hospital. There were many interesting goodies available. To each and every person who donated items, your generosity is much appreciated.

The crowning glory was the awards for the Mid-Atlantic Concours d' Elegance. Best of Show went to Bob Platz's 1970 blue SL, 2nd place went to Howard

Byron's very interesting 1955 300 SL, and Steven Rigoli's 1985 380SL gave them all a good run to come in third in show. In the street class, there were two categories: sedans and SLs. Greg Harrison's 1991 350CD tied with Ted Joseph's '86 190 16-valve, but due to Harrison's higher mileage, the CD took first place, and the 16-valve took 2nd. David Van Duzer's ivory '67 250 SE placed third in street sedan class. In the street SL class, Charles Taylor's '84 280 SL took first place, Arnold Weisshaar's 1985 380 SL came in 2nd and Bob Urdal's '84 380 SL was third.

In memory of Hank Harris, who died last spring, the annual Hank Harris Award was not given out.

The annual Mid-Atlantic Picnic and Concours is one that seems to attract a wide variety of MBCA members, folks that you may see at only one event or another, and some we never see. But as with all events the club holds, new friends were made, and old friendships rekindled

— Bill Hopper

Anniversary Pins Awarded

The August picnic was the second event this year at which anniversary pins were given to those section members who celebrated five-year multiple (5, 10, 20, etc.) anniversaries of membership in the Mercedes-Benz Club.

Some club members who were present at the holiday party in January already received theirs, but at this event, membership co-chairs Klaus and Deborah Hirtes awarded a five-year pin to Tom Brischler, a 10-year pin to Ken Harmon, two 15-year pins to Ed Hainke and Phillip Hammond, respectively, and a 20-year pin to Michael Teems.

Also present at the picnic was Tom Sheppard, who has been a club member for 40 years and received his pin. Not only has Tom been a member of the GWS section, he has been an extremely active one; much of what the section has become today is due to the hard work by Tom and many of the early members.

It was a bittersweet time for Tom, as well, as he looked back on his years with the club with his wife,

Continued on page 19

Tri-O-Rama 2005

Two Accounts of the Same Event

by Paul Vandenberg

Tri-O-Rama 2003 got me hooked on Virginia International Raceway (VIR), so when Tri-O-Rama 2005 rolled around, the decision to register was easy. This time I did things a little differently. For one thing, it was the first Tri-O-Rama with our 2004 E500 (yes, the one from the European Delivery series). For another, I decided to enter the concours d'élegance (more about that decision later). Finally, I got my son involved and registered him for all the driving events as well.

After experiencing my first (and probably last) concours d'élegance, I can safely say the competition is fierce. I can also say that of the cars entered in the concours, only three were spotted on the track (a fourth participated in the autocross). Oh, and watching the judging is about as exciting as watching paint dry. Were it not for Darrell Sigmon on the Segway, and an impromptu "driveway luge" event using a mechanic's creeper, the day would have been deeply boring. It wasn't a total loss, though—the lunch in the Mansion Clubhouse was good, and the chance to meet and talk with club members from other sections was a bonus.

Sunday dawned, and the first driving events beckoned. Even though it was mid-September, it was hot, humid, and there was lots of sun—never a great combination for events held on large flat, treeless asphalt surfaces. Nevertheless, my son, who had never driven the new car, and who had never participated in any track events, got his feet wet in a big way. Starting with the defensive driving class led by Frank and Mary Alice Cozza (with help from Walt Anderson and another instructor), then to the autocross (with an assist from Chuck Landenberger), he had a blast, and beat my best autocross time by about 3 seconds. By the end of the day, we were both tired, but it was clear he was having a great time.

Monday meant the Performance Driving School at VIR. We started the day by helping Jim Smith with

Continued on page 17

by Eric Wagner

Over the second weekend in September, I finally managed to participate in one of the great multi-day events hosted by our section: Tri-O-Rama 2005 in Danville, Va.

Since I had to take my daughter to the German School in Washington on Saturday morning, I arrived at the track in the late afternoon, just in time for the members' reception. I still got to see most of the cars and even found the younger cousin of my 1982 200, John Ball's (International Stars section) European 1986 W124 260E! Inside the building, I met a lot of people from other sections. I was reminded how much of a driving club the GWS really is since I finally got to match names from autocross results to actual faces; alas, my name memory was overloaded after a while.

After the reception, we reconvened at our lovely hotel where we registered (thank you Bobbie and Joe Wozney for the smooth operation) and had a couple of beers while discussing our favorite topic. Klaus Hirtes graciously allowed me to stay in his room for the night, and after breakfast we drove down to the track. Joe and Bill Hopper and their team of devoted volunteers set up the course at the local airport where I took my defensive driving class. Frank and Mary Alice Cozza explained how appropriate reaction to sudden obstacles can save your car and your life, and Frank took me through the course. My 200 performed well, and after a couple of tries, I felt much more confident with the car. Defensive driving was all I had registered for, but since I had already done the walkthrough of the autocross course, I asked whether I could still enroll.

I had absolutely no idea what I was about to get into. On the first practice round, I got lost on the track (name of the instructor withheld to protect the innocent). On the second and third practice runs, Ted Gottfried from Western Reserve (best wishes for a speedy recovery from his bypass surgery!) coached me, and I got the hang of the course. I consistently improved my time, and I am certain that I broke the

Continued on page 21

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A Day on the Set of Maryland Public Television's MotorWeek

GWS Vice President Bill Hopper had the chance to spend a mid-summer's day on the set of television's original automotive magazine MotorWeek as a guest of its producer and star, John Davis. The following is a report of that visit.

This visit started out quietly, meeting John in the lobby of the MPT studios in Owings Mill, Md. John is very much like we see him on TV—friendly, outgoing and very interested in cars.

After giving me a tour of the MPT studios—showing me the various studios and sets where they film other shows, as well as the technical areas where all the mixing and video feeds from other PBS stations come in—he took me to the MotorWeek suite of offices, located in the lower level of the building and filled with everything automotive, from banners and signs to plenty of die-cast car models of just about every description.

It is always interesting to see a real working set on TV and compare it to what you actually see on TV. How real it looks on TV defies how “set” like it is in real life. These sets have trap doors through which the photographers shoot, then close and shoot from the other direction so that you never know there is a camera present. For MotorWeek, there really is no set. They show off the cars outside, often on the back lawn of the station or in front of various local historic Maryland venues. This day's shooting would take place out the back door of the offices in front of a hedgerow near one of the towers.

Part of the fun was getting to meet the MotorWeek staff. What a great group of guys! Brian, Pat (actually a couple of Pats work there), Lynn, Dave, Reggie, Ray (Thunder, who just bought a classic SL—so he got some club info from me) and several others, including a couple guys who used to work at MPT and just stopped in for a visit.

John started the day getting made up to shoot some opening and closing segments as well as some promos. John is naturally tan, but when Lynn, the make-up artist, was finished, he looked as if he had just stepped off the beach. The word “make-up artist” is appropriate for Lynn as she made John's mature hairline a little more youthful. Then Lynn followed him around all day, patting and re-applying make-up, always telling him he either got taller, or she shrank, so he would have to bend down for her to work her

magic.

Before any shots were done, the cars had to be set into position. The first shots of the day were with a Lincoln Mark LT pick-up, finishing up an episode they had done earlier in the week. Then they moved in a Saab 97X and a Subaru Forrester. Other automotive hopefuls lined the side of the building, potentially to be used in the day's shooting. A '05 Mercedes-Benz E-55, a '53 Bentley, a Mitsubishi Galant and an Eclipse, long-term test cars, and several others. A number of them never got into the segments, including the Mercedes-Benz E-55, which I kept offering to drive for them.

During the shooting of the Blackwood, the restorer for the Bentley offered to show one of the videographers how to start it. But he could not take the time away from his careful watch of what went to tape, so he asked me to go and find out. This meant that for the day, I got to be the Bentley valet, since I was the only one who knew how to start it. A couple of switches and the press of a button starts the engine purring like a kitten, then a release of the hand brake, and a push on the gearshift button to move it into a forward gear got it going. It was kind of interesting to drive this rolling piece of history with its wooden frame and feel of a horse-drawn carriage. So I got to place it and then move it whenever and wherever it needed to be.

Another job I got was to time segments with a digital stopwatch until the heat of the day made the LCD timer show all eights. The camera crew was using a brand new camera boom that came in without any directions, so they were learning on the fly. Between an unexpected movement here and some background noise there, a few extra takes were done for each segment than would normally have been done. It was interesting to see that it requires six takes (which lasts about an hour) to get one good 20-second on-air shot. There were no bloopers that day. John would occasionally not follow the script and leave out an important fact or line, or the new boom would work too well and the camera would float too far off the shot; then they would have to do a re-take.

It was great to see everyone on the crew pitch in

Continued on next page

MPT — *Continued from previous page*

and do just about everything. There were, of course, defined jobs. The camera man never left the camera, and the sound man never left his side, and John was always in front of the camera. But everyone else ended up holding cue cards, making sure the light reflectors were at the proper angle, getting each other water and ice, moving and cleaning cars. Whatever it took, this crew worked together to make it happen. There were no “it’s not my job,” or “I’m too important to do that.” These guys worked as a team. Even the summer intern did just about everything except stand in front of the camera.

They kept talking about VO. At first I thought, whiskey, but I quickly learned that the term meant Voice Over, and they often have to do a VO once the film is edited. In between shots, while things were getting set up, John would come over and watch the takes on a small video monitor. You knew when he said “I love it” that everybody would smile and relax and move on to the next shot.

John took me out to lunch and let me drive the 2006 Mitsubishi Eclipse. He then asked me my thoughts on it. Well, it sure was no Mercedes-Benz, but it was not bad for a well-priced sporty looking car. My thoughts always were that Mitsubishi sold financing, and tossed in a car with it, but this cute little sportster is not bad, built on the same frame as the Galant but with a hotter engine. Over lunch we discussed a wide variety of topics, always getting back to cars. The conversation ranged from wine and restaurants, car clubs, travel, MotorWeek’s past and its future, and much more.

By the time we got back to the studio, most of the automotive hopefuls had been picked up, which included the E-55. John wanted to drive the Bentley, so I showed him how to start it, and we motored over to a rusty outbuilding set in a woodsy corner, which is where the Goss’s Garage segment is filmed. It’s a small space, especially when there is a car in it. The two walls are decorated with Stanley tool products (a major sponsor), and when the lights go on, the space comes alive.

What a great day for a car nut like me! It went all too quickly, but being on the set of one of my long-time favorite shows was a dream come true. The opportunity came because of winning an MPT auction this spring. The next time MPT offers a day with John Davis on its auction, I would suggest other fans

do as I did, bid on it to win! It was truly a great once-in-a-lifetime experience.

And because of this day, the Mercedes-Benz Club has been asked to participate in an upcoming filming of MotorWeek for this winter’s PBS Pledge Week. See page 5 for additional information on this event.

— **Bill Hopper**

Paul Vandenberg on VIR

Continued from page 14

grid tech (checking torque on all those lug bolts is hard work, folks). Next came the drivers’ meeting led by Paul Winter, who provided a good overview of the track, explained the layout, flags, passing zones and track etiquette. Then it was into the grid for the day’s first run group. Throughout the day, four run groups were allowed on the track (with instructors for the early runs). Most of the folks gradually got comfortable with the track and earned solo drive stickers. After the last set of practice laps, Joe Wozney and helpers set up timing gear for the acceleration runs. With assistance from Jim Smith, Walt Anderson, Klaus Hirtes and a host of others, most folks got their three timed runs in before the VIR crew shut the track down for the day.

Tuesday morning was a bit of a scramble as Joe and the crew had to set up timing gear again for the folks who had not finished their three timed acceleration runs the previous day. With that out of the way, it was time for some more practice laps, followed by the first group to go out and do their warmup laps and get in their three timed laps for the time trials event. That pretty much wrapped up the morning. After lunch, it was back onto the track for other groups to do warmup and time trial laps, with a couple breaks in between to let the instructors go out on the track for some fun of their own. The highlight for my son was getting a ride in one instructor’s Corvette—a really fast ride that he thoroughly enjoyed (thanks, Tom). By 5:00 p.m., all the time trial laps had been run, and it was time for the instructors to have a little more fun. All in all, a terrific day, and another fine job by both the GWS staff and volunteers as well as the very professional staff at VIR who made things run smoothly both days.

To sum it up, Tri-O-Rama 2005 was a blast. My son and I both came back energized and ready to do some more events like this. I sure hope we don’t have to wait two years for another Tri-O-Rama.

Review of the LiquiVac System

After messily changing the oil on our ML-320 a few times, I wondered if there was a better, cleaner way to do this. The messy part was not the oil filter, since that is accessible from the top; it was getting to the drain plug, through the hoses and rods that are below it, and then getting the used oil to flow into the drainage bucket without getting it on those parts and having it splash and drip just about anywhere gravity would take it.

Then, when GWS held its under-hood tech session last summer, I asked an ASC technician how to cleanly drain the oil. He said, "Oh, we don't drain it any more, we vacuum it out." And he showed me the large 55-gallon drum hooked up to the compressed air system and the connection that made an airtight connection to the dipstick tube. And it worked perfectly well and very cleanly.

That reminded me that I had seen a pump/vacuum product that was similar, though smaller, in tool catalogs. The write-ups promised, "Easy as 1, 2, 3!" First, pump to depressurize the holding tank, creating suction that will pull the oil into the LiquiVac tank. Then, insert the clear plastic hose down into the dipstick tube. Finally, release the hose clamp. Vacuum action draws old oil into the LiquiVac's 8-qt. capacity tank.

The LiquiVac is a self-contained system that suctions oil directly from the dipstick into the holding tank without using any electricity. No drain plugs. No stripped threads. No leaky bolts or seals. No crawling under vehicles. It removes more sludge from sumps than draining through the drain plug. No spills or mess. And it's even recommended in current Mercedes-Benz maintenance literature.

So I ordered one. After reading the instructions, I went to work—still laying down a plastic tarp to catch any drips, and putting on latex gloves so as not to absorb the petro-chemicals and engine byproducts of used oil—not to mention keeping my hands clean.

The LiquiVac worked just as it was advertised. After securely putting together the hoses and clamps and then pumping the pump 50 times (because the 320 engine holds a full 8 quarts of oil), I put the hose into the dipstick tube and released the hose clamp.

The used oil started flowing. I then removed and replaced the oil filter and O-rings. By that time the oil had drained out. There were a few things that I did notice.

Because the unit is plastic and the hoses are also plastic, do not have the engine HOT. Instead, run the engine for at most four minutes just to get the oil warmed up and flowing. Then turn the engine off before draining the oil.

Do spread a drop cloth down to catch any drips from the oil filter or if you overzealously pour in the new oil and make a mess, as I have been known to do.

Make sure that you are parked on a level surface so the oil does not pool in one end or other of the pan and is not reached by the LiquiVac hose.

Do not place the LiquiVac tank on the engine or other unstable place; the ground works well. The last thing you want to do is have it tip or drop while it is full of used oil.

Because the oil is warm, it will make the hose very pliable. Make sure that the LiquiVac hose does not have any kinks in it that might impede the flow of used oil into the tank.

Once the LiquiVac has sucked out all the oil, you will hear a gurgling sound from inside the engine. Give it about 10 minutes while additional oil continues to drip from higher in the engine. You will never be able to get all the oil out of the engine, but the additional time will allow most of it to drain.

When placing the LiquiVac tank and hose away, make sure that you cap the end of the collection hose or you will get a little pool of oil as it drains from the end of the hose—most likely where you do not want it.

Never run the engine without oil or with the LiquiVac hose in the dipstick tube.

Always take used oil to a designated collection-recycling site.

As for price of this unit: The lowest I could find was an eBay auction for \$34.99 plus \$9.40 for shipping. The product looked the same as the LiquiVac item, although the logo was removed and the seller used the name of LiquidVac. The Air Power America

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Anniversary Pins

Continued from page 13

Roberta, who died in 2003.

"It is a pleasure to receive this 40-year pin," Tom told those assembled. "The award would be more appropriate if my partner in club activities for most of those 40 years could be here. Roberta was a whole-hearted supporter of our club activities from the beginning and made our participation meaningful and fun."

He noted that over the years, Roberta was, among other things, newsletter editor, section secretary, vice president, and was awarded "member of the year" and "officer of the year" several times. She helped prepare their car for concours where they won the Daimler-Benz overall trophy twice, and she was the registrar at the first Tri-O-Rama run by GWS. "Together we ran numerous section and national driving events, and together we developed a large group of friends across the U.S.," he continued. "She shares this 40-year pin."

Tom also spoke about GWS events being geared toward family fun and encouraged spouses and children to be a part of the many activities offered throughout the year.

The third and last opportunity this year to receive an anniversary pin will be at the annual meeting Oct. 23 at American Service Center.

LiquiVac System

Continued from page 18

Company, which offers the product on the LiquiVac.com website, charges \$49.95 + \$5.95 shipping. The lowest non-auction web price was \$39.99 plus shipping from right-tool.com. The MBCA member price is \$44.95 plus shipping of \$7.95. I chose to patronize our National Club Store, with sales benefiting every MBCA member.

I would say that this is a very good product. It is made in the USA and works just as described in the advertising. It really does make the process faster and easier, and is a clean way to remove used oil from your Mercedes-Benz or other engine. And it sure beats getting under the Benz to drain out the oil!

— **Bill Hopper**

October 2005

Woodrow Wilson Project

Continued from page 5

above. Though this bridge is higher, it is not so high as to eliminate the need for a drawbridge. The new drawbridge will open 75 percent less than the current one.

The new bridge also will use more than 140 million pounds of steel. That is more than the weight of all new cars sold in Maryland and Virginia each year. And the concrete used for the 7.5 mile stretch from Telegraph Road in Virginia to the 210 interchange in Maryland is 14 percent of the total concrete used in the Beltway as a whole.

GWS members will get a first-hand report on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project at the GWS annual Meeting Oct. 23, so come hear about one of the largest construction projects in the area and see the beauty of this bridge and learn about the technology behind it.

— **Bill Hopper**



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On Monday, Sept. 5, 2005, Deborah and I took our trusted 1987 300SDL to drive from Arlington, Va. to Toronto, Canada to attend our younger daughter's wedding the next day, with the return trip on Wednesday—two days later.

The trip took us north to Frederick on I-270, then I-70 to Hancock. From there, it was north to Breezewood, west along the Pennsylvania Turnpike for a while, and then almost due north through the beautiful Allegheny mountains toward Buffalo. The last leg of the journey was on the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) along the shores of Lake Ontario to Toronto. It took us just under 10 hours to reach our destination, a journey we had made several times in the past.

During the drive, I observed several things I'd like to share.

First and foremost was the fact that gas, as well as diesel fuel prices, seemed to be higher in the D.C. area than anywhere else, including Canada. I'm not really quite sure what to make of it, but may I suggest that one of the reasons is that Washington area residents are unwilling to explore alternative transportation to show their disapproval of the unreasonably high fuel prices.

On previous trips, I had found a filling station-truck stop near the intersection of Rt. 219 and Rt. 86 near Limestone, N.Y. On our way to Toronto, the price of diesel fuel was \$2.99 (more than \$3.35 in the D.C. area). On the way back, just two days later, the price had dropped to \$2.79. When I inquired with the service attendant (this is a full service station—they even do windows on trucks), he told me that most of their business comes from truckers who buy hundreds of gallons of fuel each time they stop. Truckers have become unhappy with the ever higher fuel prices and let it be known that they were either retiring their rigs or boycotting high-priced fuel stations. Hence the drop of 20 cents within two days! Seems as if most station owners are jumping on the price-increase bandwagon to have their slice of the profit pie while the taking is good.

Next came the revelation that within a 100-mile radius of D.C., there is no effort being made to conserve fuel. Hummers, Expeditions, Escalades, etc.

whizzed by us at incredible speeds. Around the Beltway, posted speed limits seemed to be the minimum, to be exceeded as often as possible. Drivers adhering to the posted speed limit, or exceeding them by 5 to 10 mph, are rolling chicanes and are to be treated as rudely as possible. Too bad that visitors to the nation's capital might get the wrong idea.

On the rest of the roads we traveled to Toronto, we found that a vast majority of drivers observed posted speed limits, exceeding them by no more than maybe 10 percent. Could this be because the price of fuel has taken too large a bite out of peoples' pocket books (driving fast requires more fuel), or is it that these folks have more respect for the law? We did not want to speculate, but found it refreshing as we enjoyed our drive through the Allegheny National Forest, with leaves just beginning to turn into their autumn colors.

In Canada, we observed the same. The QEW is always a busy highway, connecting Buffalo with Canadian cities like Hamilton, an important steel and shipbuilding town of ½ million inhabitants, and Toronto, one of the most important cities on Lake Ontario. Very few cars were traveling at much higher than posted speed limits, and we observed fewer big SUVs. The trend there seems toward smaller, more fuel-efficient cars.

Once in Toronto, we were surprised to read in the newspapers how engaged Canadians were regarding the New Orleans disaster, and calls for help to their southern U.S. neighbors were numerous. The local TV stations equally posted phone numbers for the Canadian Red Cross and several other organizations that had already sent help to the devastated Gulf Coast. As we understand it, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (without their steeds) were some of the earliest folks to arrive at the disaster sites with offers of help. Let's hear it for Canada and our Canadian neighbors!

Next month, I'll resume my almost monthly flights to Germany. Maybe I'll observe some interesting items to write about. Stay tuned.

— **Klaus Hirtes**

**. . . On the
Road With
Klaus . . .**

Eric Wagner on VIR

Continued from page 14

60-second barrier. Unfortunately, the timing equipment malfunctioned on that run! Considering that I did not anticipate competing in the autocross and had not adjusted my tire pressure, I felt pretty good about finishing second in my class on my first outing—with a time of 60.152 seconds.

As I experienced again this weekend, one of the many great things about the club is the unique compilation of technical and historical knowledge about Mercedes. After hearing grinding noises from the running engine, Klaus, Steve Walters and Darrell Sigmon (Tarheel Section) diagnosed a problem with my compressor clutch, with the bearing of my alternator as well as a leaking lid of the power steering pump (especially frustrating since a shop just worked on it). There is always something to do on an old car!

Unfortunately, I had to leave early Sunday afternoon. On the way home I was reminded of what I would be missing on Monday and Tuesday by the many Porsches I passed (O.K., so they were on trailers) who returned from the weekend at VIR. This may have been my first big event, but it certainly will not be my last one.

Look for that classic-white European 200 at a future club event. Many thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen!



Eric Wagner's 1982 200 (right) sits next to John Ball's 1986 260E in front of the mansion at VIR just before the members' reception on Saturday evening.

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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.



WANTED

Metro Tri-Star Coordinator

How would you like to be part of the team that puts together the *Metro Tri-Star*? We are looking for someone to be the point person for the paid advertisers and the Trading Post Section.

The position requires touching base with the paid advertisers at least once a year and answering any questions they may have. Don't worry: we will help you! As for the Trading Post Section, all you will need to do is forward the appropriate ads to the newsletter editors and answer any questions that GWS members may have about placing an ad. Being in charge of the Trading Post is a great way to be the very first person to see who is selling what!

If you are interested, please contact Janet McFarland at

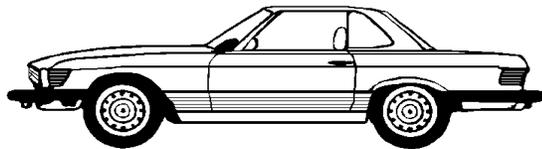
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New Members

The Greater Washington Section welcomes all its new members. We hope that you will join us soon at one of our upcoming events. Please feel free to call any officer for information on our activities and what you can do to get involved.

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**For the latest club news, go to the GWS web site at:
<http://www.gws-mbca.org>**

Mid-Atlantic Concours and Picnic

Sunday, August 21



Thanks to Bill Hopper for these photos taken at the Mid-Atlantic Concours and Picnic, held Aug. 21 at the Potomac estate of GWS member Steve Newby. There was lots of good food, relief from the heat under a tree or in the pool, and beautiful examples of the Mercedes-Benz marque.



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E300 Diesel, 1996: Brilliant silver/ash (gray) leather. 148,000 highway miles. 6CD. Hands-free factory phone. 30+ mpg, bio-diesel compatible. Recent brake service and glow plugs. New OEM alloys. Tires 80%. 4 sets of carpet mats incl. winter and trunk liner. Synthetic oil. All service records. Performance chip. Well maintained and garaged. Asking \$13,300. Call Chris at (301) 379-9996 or e-mail teutonik63@aol.com.

560SL, 1989: White/tan. Hard top and hard top cradle. Brown soft top. CD. 65K miles. Exceptional overall. Best '89 in DC area according to my MB mechanic. Asking \$18,000. Contact Judd at (703) 296-5956 or e-mail: juddsquitier@yahoo.com.

560SL, 1988: Red/beige leather. 92K miles, auto. Burl wood trim with burl shift knob. New Kenwood CD with Sirius satellite radio and new rear speakers. Chrome alloy wheels, car cover, 2 tops with top cart, driver's side air bag, anti-lock brakes, A/C, cruise control, power door locks, power mirrors, power windows, power steering, alarm system. Australian 1" sheepskin seat covers. All manuals, garage kept. Excellent condition. Asking \$17,500. Call Bruce at (410) 913-8739 or e-mail brobtsen@hotmail.com.

500SL Euro, 1985: Silver/blue. Excellent condition. Arguably, best of 107s. Many items replaced, i.e., conv. top, interior leather, converted A/C, much more. 136,000 miles. Asking \$12,500. Price includes upgraded 16" MB wheels with new Michelins (\$11,000 with stock wheels and tires). Car is in Maryland and comes with MVA emis-



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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 one issue. Ads should be sent to: *Metro Tri-Star*, 1307 Warrington Place, Alexandria, VA 22307; telephone (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.

We will print a photograph (from color or black and white original or from high-resolution digital image) with your ad for \$20. If you would like the photo returned, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. All checks should be made payable to: GWS-MBCA. Advertising copy must be received by the 15th of the month preceding publication or the ad will appear in the following issue. The editor of the *Metro Tri-Star* shall have sole discretion in determining ad acceptability.

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