



METRO TRI-STAR

Happy New Year!

The Greater Washington Section (GWS) of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America has many events planned for the new year.

We realize our membership has a diverse set of interests—whether they be social, technical, driving improvement or performance driving—so our aim is to provide a little bit of everything.

With that in mind, we hope you find something you will enjoy and that you will come out and meet your fellow club members. You can keep up on the latest events being offered by the club by checking our Web site at www.gws-mbca.org.



sea bass, grilled filet mignon or vegetarian lasagna, as well as wine and a choice of desserts.

The holiday party is the first of three occasions in 2007 at which we will award five-year anniversary pins. That means that if you joined the club in a year that ends in 2 or 7, you're due for a pin.

In order to determine how many people we can expect, and to guarantee your choice of an entrée, **please complete the registration form** (on page 13 in this issue of the *Metro Tri-Star* or also available as a download on our Web site), and send it to Jim Glenn as soon as possible.

Normandie Farm Restaurant is located at 10710

January's Holiday Party

The first event of 2007 is our annual holiday party. This year, the festivities are taking place on Saturday, Jan. 13 at Normandie Farm Restaurant in Potomac, Md.

It promises to be an evening of fun, delicious food and drink and good friends. A DJ will be spinning some tunes, so put on your dancing shoes. Additionally, some great door prizes will be given away, thanks to the support of our many GWS sponsors.

Cocktails will begin at 6:30 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres and free drinks (up to two per person) and will be followed at 7 p.m. by dinner. You may select from a choice of blackened filet of Chilean

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Calendar of Events

Greater Washington Section Events 2007

- Jan. 13 Holiday Party
Normandie Farm, Potomac, Md.
Contact: Jim Glenn at (703) 360-1669
please fill out the registration form on p. 13
- Jan. 25 GWS Board Meeting
Place to be announced
- Feb. 24 Collectors Car Corral/Maguire's Demo
Owings Mills, Md.
1-4 p.m.
Contact: Jim Glenn at (703) 360-1669
please fill out the registration form on p. 13
- March Autocross Social
Time and place to be announced
- April Start of the autocross season
- May 6 Deutsche Marque Concours
Time and place to be announced
- May 15-16 MBCA National Board Committee Mtgs.
Reston, Va.
- May 17 MBCA National Board Meeting
Reston, Va.
- May 18-21 StarTech 2007
Reston, Va.
Contact: Bill Hopper at (202) 363-4189

- May 21 Summit Point Spring Track Day
(and demo day for StarTech 2007)
- June 3 Rain date for Deutsche Marque
- June 14-15 Driving School at Virginia International
Raceway (with BMW and Audi Clubs)
Danville, Va.
- July 14-15 Drivers' School, Summit Point, W.Va.
- Aug. 11 DIY Tech Session and Track Inspection
Place and time to be announced
- Aug. 19 Mid-Atlantic Picnic and Concours
d'Elegance (tentative date)
- Sept. 14-18 Tri-O-Rama
Summit Point, W.Va.
- Oct. 21 GWS Annual Meeting
- Dec. 2 New Members' Reception

There are many more events planned and more exact dates and times to be announced. Be sure to check the Web site (www.gws-mbca.org) for more information along with the latest updates and additions.

Regional and National Events

- Mar. 17-21 Southern Treffen 2007
Lakeland, Fla.
Contact Scott Suits at (727) 460-5739
or e-mail suits@ij.net

Southern Treffen 2007

March 17-21

MBCA's first national event of 2007 will be Southern Treffen, hosted by the Tampa Bay Section in Lakeland, Fla. There will be time trials on the road course at U.S.A. International Speedway and acceleration runs at Lakeland Drag Strip as well as an autocross, defensive driving, concours d'élegance, rally, banquets, tours to local attractions, and more. The location is near Disney World, Epcot Center, MGM Studios, Universal Studios and Sea World. For more information, contact Scott Suits at (727) 460-5739 or e-mail him at suits@ij.net.

Holiday Party — *Cont'd from page 1*

Falls Road, Potomac, MD 20854. Their phone number is (301) 983-8838. (See our Web site at www.gws-mbca.org for directions to the restaurant.)

In the GWS tradition, members are asked to bring some non-perishable food items with them for donation to local shelters. This is a good way to continue giving after the holiday season has officially ended. No matter the time of year, there is always someone in need.

From the President . . .

Something that makes me proud as a GWS-MBCA member is when a club member or GWS sponsor shows up on the Web or in the news.

This fall, Steve Walters and Janet McFarland's adventure in the famed La Carrera Panamericana race through Mexico was noticed by one of our active driving enthusiasts. A photo in a blog showed Steve in his GWS Autocross jacket and the #315 car. Then an e-mail went around asking, "Is this our Steve, I think I remember him saying he was doing a race?" So for about two weeks in November, all eyes were on the Web, watching our very own club members in their 1965 220 SEb, and hoping that it popped up in pictures or articles about the race. Which it did!

The most important part is that they completed the race in 21st place (which is incredible for first-timers) and made it home without any incidents or damage. Congrats go out to Steve and Janet for trying something like this . . . and finishing. This shows how much fun being a Mercedes-Benz enthusiast can be!

On the news front, one of our sponsors, Tire Van, made the business section of *The Washington Post* this fall, talking about how their business was conceived and how this business model they came up with is thriving. One of the reasons for their success, they stated, is because it is you—the GWS-MBCA member—who is one of their best customers.

There is nothing that makes me happier than when I talk to one of our sponsors, advertisers or supporters and listen to them tell me what great customers our club members are. So please, as you are doing your car maintenance or purchasing products, call one of our sponsors, advertisers or supporters first. Support these folks who support you! And they do support you, not only in their advertising but also in their participation in our GWS events.

And while you are thinking about the club, and pondering your new year's resolutions, make the decision to become more active in 2007. This is a

great time to volunteer to be a part of the Greater Washington Section. Come out and personally become a part of your car club by serving on a committee, helping with StarTech 2007 or assisting with any of the many other activities we hold each year. You will get the most out of this club when you give a little bit of yourself to every other club member. You will find it is not as much work as it is FUN.

So for 2007, make a new year's resolution to come out and have more FUN with the Greater Washington Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club—your club!



From the National Business Office of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America

www.mbca.org

The National Business Office (NBO) welcomes Enrique (Ricky) Montoya as the new MBCA Club Store Manager.

And speaking of the Club Store—it is closing out all of the 50th anniversary merchandise. Order your items now while there are still some in stock. The store also is offering close-out pricing on a number of other items. Remember to check their Web site (www.mbca.org) for descriptions of all items available.

GWS members may not realize that they are able to become members of other MBCA sections for an additional cost of \$15 per year. A number of New Jersey and Pennsylvania section members already have become members of the GWS just to be able to attend the wide variety of events we hold. This second section membership also is a great idea for those heading south for the winter, who might want to receive the newsletters from their temporary locations and participate in local events there.

Tour of the Collectors Car Corral

Saturday, February 24, 2007 - 1 - 4 p.m.

Owings Mills, MD

If you would like to learn more about facilities in the area to pamper your car, join the Greater Washington Section on Saturday, Feb. 25 in Owings Mills, Md. from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. We have made arrangements with Randy Moss, CEO of Collectors Car Corral, to tour his facility.

The Corral was created and designed to provide an environment in which automotive and motorcycle enthusiasts have a safe and secure facility for their expensive new or classic vehicle or cycle.

Located in Owings Mills, Md., it is a 30,000 square foot state-of-the-art, climate controlled and totally secure automotive and motorcycle storage facility. But storage is not its only service. The Corral also offers storage maintenance, detailing and an automotive-themed lounge. There is a board room containing an extensive library of automotive books, technical manuals and up-to-date subscriptions to 25 different car magazines. Additionally, there is a game room with racing simulators available for personal racing, competition against other members, internet racing, or league play—driving on the world's best tracks. Also on the premises are laundry facilities, private bath and locker room facilities and use of a guest office with computer, e-mail access, printing and copying capabilities. With all this, you might even decide to sell your home and move in here!!

Children are discouraged from attending this event because of the high value of the vehicles in the facility.

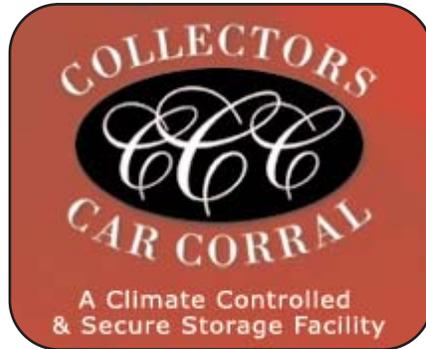
Some light refreshments will be served, and we hope to have a representative from Maguires present, who will put on a demonstration on how to properly

detail a car.

The cost of this event is \$15. *Please fill out the reservation form on page 13 in this issue of the Metro Tri-Star.*

Directions:

From the D.C. area—Take I-495/I-95 north toward Baltimore. Merge onto I-695 North on the left (Baltimore Inner Loop via exit 49B) toward I-70/I-83/Towson. After 10 miles, merge onto I-795 North via exit 19 toward Owings Mills/Reisterstown Rd. After 3.6 miles, take the Owings Mills Blvd, north exit (exit 4) toward MD-140/Reisterstown Rd. After .8 miles, turn slight right onto Owings Mills Blvd. After .3 miles, take the Reisterstown Rd./MD-140 ramp. Turn right onto Reisterstown Rd./MD-140 for .2 miles. Turn slight right onto Painters Mill Rd. for .2 miles. Turn left onto Music Fair Road. Proceed to 12 Music Fair Road. We'll see you there!



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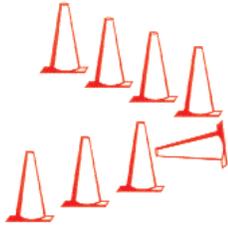
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Autocross #8

The last autocross of the year was held under “cool” weather conditions, but the heated competition warmed up the day. Denise Dersin started things off and took yet one more LFTD in the SLK class, besting Ted Joseph by nearly 3-tenths of a second.

The 190E/C-Class group has been hotly contested all year, and this event was no different. In the end, Jim Smith drove like a man possessed and spanked season nemesis Ben Weber by more than 3-tenths of a second. Bill Hopper was another half second behind. Paul T. and Paul Vandenberg were more than a full second behind Bill, but both are closing the gap a little at each event. It’s worth noting that Al Angulo ran his last autocross with us. In December, Al and Jeanne are moving to Texas (of all places) where they hope to find some fellow drivers in the local section.

In the V8 group, Bill Repass took Julian Reeves by 90-hundredths of a second. It was a great run in a car down more than a hundred horsepower.

Deborah and Klaus Hirtes ran unopposed in the men’s and women’s classic group, as their competition—Hans and Greta O’Malley—were on their way to Mexico for the Panamericana race.

Barrie Gochman took the non-Mercedes LFTD, but Sharon Payne won the women’s class by 7-tenths with a great index time. François finally brought Valerie for her first event of the year. She did quite well in the WRX.

Speaking of François... He drove his WRX STI fast, then faster, then faster still, beating friend and rival, Pete Gochman, by exactly a half second and nearly a tenth in the indexed time. John Brubaker’s

index time was just 4-tenths slower in his DS Golf R32. Mike Wirt was 2 clicks back for fourth. John Jens was fifth in his GTI and Andrew Gunn sixth in his Miata.

After the day’s driving, a large group of folks made it to the Picadilly Grill in Winchester for our season wrap dinner and beer tasting. It was a great end to a fantastic season!

Season Results

Let’s start with the 16-Valve Class... Denise Dersin missed the first event of the year but made up for it by winning five of the next six events. Her perfect season was marred by just one third-place finish. Bill Stewart took two firsts and three seconds for second place in class.

In the large 190E/C-Class group, Ben Weber had four firsts and a second for 49 points and Jim Smith had three firsts and two seconds for 48 points. Ben started off the season winning every event he attended, but Jim came on strong in the season’s second half, taking the last three. Bill Hopper was third with 44 points and Al Angulo was fourth with 38. Paul Vandenberg finished in fifth place.

Deborah Hirtes made it her umpteenth season win in a row, taking all seven of the events she competed in. Greta O’Malley was second with 46 points.

Neither Klaus Hirtes nor Hans O’Malley had enough events to trophy and, strangely, never went head-to-head all season long. But both had amazing drives in cars that are older than more than a third of

Continued on page 11



Photo by Ritchie Crim

Deborah Hirtes....or is that Klaus (?)—driving the oldest car in the autocross series—navigates one of the courses during 2006.

2006 Autocross #8 Results

DRIVER	CAR	BEST TIME	POINTS
Deborah Hirtes	67 230SL	34.580	10
Klaus Hirtes	67 230SL	32.580	10
Bill Repass	93 400E	33.070	10
Julian Reeves	03 SL500	33.160	9
Jim Smith	92 190E 2.6	31.600	10
Ben Weber	86 190E 2.3	31.930	9
Bill Hopper	97 C280	32.460	8
Paul T Vandenberg	90 190E 2.6	33.850	7
Paul D. Vandenberg	90 190E 2.6	33.880	6
Al Angulo	89 190E 2.6	36.380	5
Denise Dersin*	05 SLK350	29.690	10
Ted Joseph**	05 SLK350	29.960	9

* LFTD = Ladies Fastest Time of Day
 ** MB-FTD Gentlemen's Fastest Time of Day in a Mercedes
 *** OM-LFTD Ladies Fastest Time of Day in a non-Mercedes
 **** FTD = Fastest Time of Day

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

Other Marques

DRIVER	CAR	BEST TIME	CLASS	INDEX	INDEX TIME	POINTS
Sharon Payne, Sharon	99 Saab Viggen	33.340	GSL	0.794	26.472	10
Barrie Gochman***	99 Mazda Miata	32.450	CSPL	0.838	27.193	9
Valerie Dachary-Bru	05 Subaru WRX STi	34.56	BSPL	0.843	29.13	8
François Bru****	05 Subaru WRX STi	28.300	BSP	0.843	23.857	10
Pete Gochman	05 Honda S2000	28.800	AS	0.831	23.933	9
John Brubaker	04 VW Golf R32	30.500	DS	0.798	24.339	8
Mike Wirt	00 Audi S4	30.760	DS	0.798	24.546	7
Andrew Gunn	90 Mazda Miata	30.980	ES	0.806	24.970	5
Bob Robinson	03 Corvette Z06	30.130	SS	0.840	25.309	4
Bill Lear	92 Integra GSR	30.670	DSP	0.829	25.425	3
Brett Hack	90 Mazda Miata	32.500	STS	0.802	26.065	2
Matthew Zint	00 Audi S4	31.940	STU	0.820	26.191	1
Ritchie Crim	04 Pontiac GTO	32.750	FS	0.805	26.364	1
Ryan Hoover	91 BMW 318is	31.360	SM	0.845	26.484	1
Chris Higgins	95 BMW 318i	33.240	STS	0.829	27.556	1
Ron Mummert	93 Nissan 240SX	33.630	GS	0.794	26.702	1
Matthew Lofton	04 Audi TT Quattro	33.580	DS	0.798	26.797	1
David Ortiz	02 Honda S2000	32.250	AS	0.831	26.800	1
Chris Redding	00 VW Jetta	33.800	STS	0.797	26.939	1
Joe Gaudette	90 Mazda Miata	34.020	ES	0.806	27.420	1
Aksh Sehgal	97 BMW 318i	35.080	DS	0.798	27.994	1
Allan Brown,	01 VW New Beetle	36.120	HS	0.780	28.174	1
Paul Rochelle	03 Honda Civic	36.300	HS	0.780	28.314	1
Khalid Al-Mufti	90 Toyota Supra	35.010	SM	0.845	29.583	1

New Members' Reception

More than 40 GWS members attended the afternoon reception for new members on a gloriously sunny, but somewhat chilly Sunday, Dec. 3, at Mercedes-Benz of Tyson's Corner (HBL).

All the section's officers were present to greet the members, who then were able to wander around the showroom (to pick out their next car?). They also were treated to a light buffet lunch and tour of the renovated and spotlessly clean facilities, led by Rich Mitchell, HBL's shop foreman. Rich pointed out the more than 60 bays specifically dedicated for work on Mercedes-Benz vehicles. (There also are three lifts for Aston Martins, one for the SLR—which is bolted onto the lift—and one for the Maybach.)

He talked about the training for technicians and showed off the state-of-the-art equipment the shop uses, including the Hunter tire balancing machine.

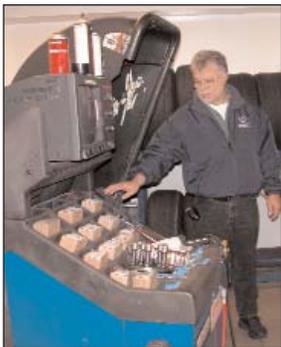
Steve Walters and Janet McFarland showed up with the 220 SEb they recently drove in La Carrera Panamericana road race in Mexico, and everybody crowded around the car to get a closer look.

A couple awards were given out for winning entries in the summer's Mid-Atlantic Concours d'Elegance. GWS President Bill Hopper and Vice President Eric Wagner presented engraved plaques to John McWilliams (2nd place in his 1985 380SE) and Ted Joseph and Denise Dersin (best of show for their 1986 190E 2.3-16.)

The section also collected many toys, which will be donated to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Thanks to all who participated.

We hope to see our newer members join us at the many events we've planned for 2007. It promises to be an exciting year!

Thanks also to Rich Mitchell and HBL for hosting a great afternoon.



HBL Shop Foreman Rich Mitchell shows the tire balancing machine.



GWS members are given a tour of the facilities at HBL in Tyson's Corner.



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High Gear . . .

Perception is reality, an obvious truism. We are unable to divorce ourselves from our subjective selves and thus how we see the world is the real world for us. But, what of dreams? Sometimes a dream can be absolutely tangible. I don't only mean the nightmares or reveries of deep sleep. The conjured dreams of the conscious intellect can also be as vivid as the keyboard before me as I write. Furthermore, dreams can come true.

Long have I dreamed of the snaking switchbacks ascending from the tropical plain of Veracruz to the highland majesty of Jalapa. I have virtually felt the responsive suspension of a classic Mercedes as it hugged the treacherous "S" curves of La Buffa, high above the fairytale city of Zacatecas. In the private moments of contemplation, I have often seen myself as a dashing competitor in La Carrera Panamericana Mexican road race, piloting a fleet silver arrow to glory.

Yes, dreams actually can come true. Not only in the distracted fantasy world of the opium eater, or in the sense in which perception is reality. In the real world of touch and feel, in the dimension of objective reality, dreams can come true. However, when a dream is actually realized, there is always an incongruity or shortfall from the anticipated ideal.

In November, I did find myself accelerating up the steep defiles of the Sierra Madre. I was compelled to execute delicate downshifts while keeping four wheels on an illusive ribbon of tarmac with the prospects of death and beauty conjoined around each curve. I knew the aromatic smell of pine forest and blossoming poinsettias as it added yet another sensual dimension to an unparalleled experience. I heard the siren song of exotic birds harmonizing with the roar of purposeful internal combustion. I felt the tug of "g" forces pulling me toward the abyss and the answering application of power to the contact patches of four tortured radial tires.

The Carrera Panamericana. I had the dream. Now I have come back from the mountain. I have known the objective reality. And, as always, there is a twist.

I ran the entire route of the Carrera Panamericana from Veracruz to Monterrey, not in a classic starship with competition numeration on its flanks, but in my Jeep Liberty with four-inch letters spelling out

"PRENSA" emblazoned on its side and press credentials dangling from my neck. Each day of the seven-day event, I ran the stages in advance of the competitors, before the roads were closed by the "Federales." No one kept track of my time except my trusty navigator/photographer, Marina Pushkareva, with her mechanical stopwatch. There were no medals or trophies awaiting me at the end of the day. My only reward was the experience of a lifetime... But, who could ask for anything more from a dream?

Three Mercedes-Benz automobiles competed in this year's Carrera Panamericana. All three finished the event faultlessly. Two of them won their respective classes. Kudos to the engineers of Sindelfingen's class of 1955 who designed these great starships. Kudos to the contemporary pilots and copilots who successfully took on the legendary Mexican road race behind the wheels of these fabulous historic Mercedes.

Now I am back from my Mexican adventure. The dream and the reality are being transformed into memories. Memories of skittering tires fighting for traction on loose pavement above yawning chasms. Memories of devil-may-care drivers parting late into the night. Memories of Mexican villages with cheering children and enthusiastic adults. Memories of steaming carnitas and good company.

Most of all, I'll always remember three gallant Mercedes-Benz automobiles... and a Jeep.

— John Kuhn Bleimaier

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The Marque of Reliability

As Seen at La Carrera Panamericana

This year, three Mercedes-Benz automobiles entered and completed all the stages of the seven-day, 2,000 mile Mexican road race, La Carrera Panamericana! Of the three MBs, two finished first in their class with few, if any, mechanical problems—a true testimony to the endurance and reliability of both driver and car!

The drivers and cars were as follows: Richard Morrison and Joe Harding from Kansas drove a 1958 220 Coupe; Thomas Hanna and Joerg Mueller from Munich, Germany, ran the race in a 1958 190 Ponton; and our very own husband-and-wife team of Steve Walters and Janet McFarland from Virginia completed the race in their 1965 220 SEb.

As was mentioned in the October issue of the *Metro Tri-Star* (page 15), La Carrera Panamericana (sometimes called the Great Mexican Road Race) is one of the last great vintage car road races. Originally run in the early 1950s, it was brought back to life in the '80s. In addition to the three Benzes at this year's event was a diverse selection of other cars from the '50s and '60s including Studebakers, a Hudson, Mustangs, Porsche 911s, Oldsmobiles, Lincolns, Chevys, SAABs and Volvos. Some of the cars were original under the hood while others were significantly modified. The cars and drivers came from all over the world—Argentina, Mexico, U.S.A., Switzerland, France, Germany and Sweden, among other places.

Each of the three MBs has a history, as one might expect from a 40-plus-year-old car! Perhaps the Ponton is the most “worldly” of the three cars. It originally was



Photo by Jim Austhof

Day 5—GWS members Steve Walters and Janet McFarland cross the finish line at Aguascalientes.

delivered to Mozambique, Africa and later served as a taxi in Lisbon, Portugal. Eventually it was brought to Munich, where Thomas Hanna purchased the car with the La Carrera Panamericana in mind. As a result, the car has been driven in three continents and has participated in three Carrera Panamericanas: 1999, 2002 and 2006.

This year, the sturdy Ponton finished first in the “Historic A” class (1956-1965 4-cylinder) and fifth out of 40 cars that ran in the Historic Classes. The only

Continued on page 18

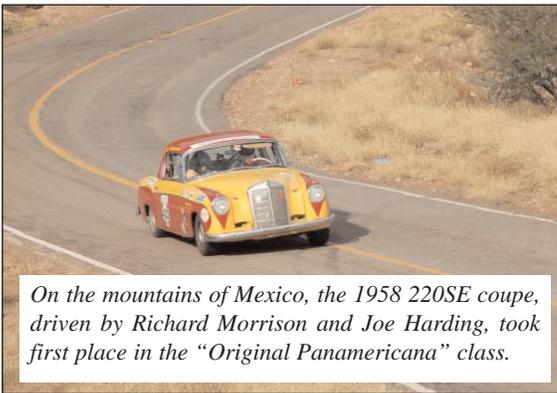


Photo by Marina Pushkareva

On the mountains of Mexico, the 1958 220SE coupe, driven by Richard Morrison and Joe Harding, took first place in the “Original Panamericana” class.



Photo by Janet McFarland

Joerg Mueller and Thomas Hanna, who took first place in the “Historic A” class, celebrate after seven days of driving!

Autocross Season Results

Continued from page 6

our drivers!

John Robinson walked away with the V8 Class, taking all five events he attended for a perfect season. Julian Reeves attended all eight events and garnered a strong second place finish in class. Bill Repass had two class wins but not enough events to trophy.

Denise Dersin (there's that name again) drove to five class wins and a second to take the SLK Class. Ted Joseph had two wins and four seconds and finished second in class.

Let's get back to Denise... Denise had six LFTDs in the SLK and one in the 16-Valve in her seven events! That's quite a record. She easily qualifies as the Fastest Woman!

Ted Joseph won only two events but was Mercedes-Benz Fastest Men's Time of Day seven times. He's no Denise (hehe) but that's a very impressive season.

Barrie Gochman had four firsts in the family Miata and one in the STI to total 50 points. She also had two seconds in the Miata. Sharon Payne had three firsts and two seconds for 48 points and a close second place finish.

Barrie ended the season with seven non-Mercedes Ladies Fastest Time of Day finishes in seven events. Very impressive!

Mike Wirt ended up with three overall wins and 48 points taking first place in the men's non-Mercedes class. Pete Gochman had one win (and three men's FTDs) and a total of 45 points for a strong second place. Right behind was John Brubaker with three seconds and two thirds (43 points). John Jens was fourth, scoring no less than four points in the five events he ran.

There should be a special award for Bill Lear—other than fifth place. Bill was handicapped driving an Acura. Well, it wasn't really the Acura's fault. The driver broke almost as many rear axles as there were events!

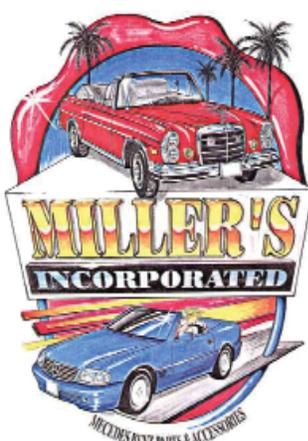
Bob Robinson, Harry Newman, and Matthew Zint filled sixth through eighth place.

Also... Tom Newman had 35 points and two over-all wins in just four events—he had at least fourth place wrapped up, had he just gotten out of bed one more time! The same goes for François who had 31 points and a win in 4 events.

Notes for 2007... Watch out for John Robinson! He's learned how to handle all that new horsepower and will be a menace. Look for the return of Bill Lear. He's just won his class in time trials at Summit Point and seems to have gotten the axle problem fixed. Let's hope that Tom and François find their alarm clocks all year—"I coulda been a contender!" If Bob Williams can make our schedule we're all in trouble—that Porsche is hell on wheels.

Look for the 2007 Autocross Social in the newsletter, and remember... April is just four months away!

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Meal choices:

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Blackened filet of Chilean sea bass with
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Vegetarian lasagna with portobello mushrooms

Dessert choices:

Poached pears with vanilla ice cream and raspberry coulis

Homemade cheesecake

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Enclose your check for \$ 50 per person made payable to GWS-MBCA.

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MBCA Goes to Germany - II

by Joe Wozney

Editor's note: As part of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of MBCA, the club, in cooperation with DaimlerChrysler AG, scheduled a series of tours to Germany and the facilities of Mercedes-Benz. The following is the second part of Joe Wozney's report of his trip, which will be continued in future editions of the Metro Tri-Star.



This sedan was for sale at the Classic Center but the year and amount were not listed

On Monday, we decided to get a cab and to go into downtown Stuttgart to walk around the parks and the stores on and near Königstrasse—a walking mall on a long closed street. Outside the hotel, we met MBCA members Harry and Beverly Frantz from Pennsylvania and agreed to share the cab ride to town. Since we had different places to go to, we agreed to meet in the late afternoon for the ride back.

We were surprised to see a few American branded stores mixed in with the shops and chains of Germany and Europe. Of course, I knew I'd found heaven when there appeared in front of us... a Starbucks! It was in a great spot for a coffee break and a nearby ATM visit. Strangely, none of the Starbucks in Germany (we found one in Heidelberg too) accepted the Starbucks card but all accepted credit cards. Be aware if you go! Quite a few restaurants and some shops did not take credit cards. I made way too many trips to the ATM.

As much as Königstrasse reminded me of 5th Avenue (without cars), the park area, which is shaped like a horseshoe around the city, reminded me of the Mall and the great buildings of the District. There's the New Palace (Neues Schloss), now occupied by the Ministries of Education and Finance, with three wings built round a courtyard (1746-1807; rebuilt 1959-62); the Old Palace (Altes Schloss), now a museum with an extensive medieval collection (1553-78; rebuilt 1948-69); the gorgeous old Staatstheater for opera, concerts, and dance; and wonderful churches and courtyards. Nearby is the Staatsgalerie—a wonderful old museum with a well-integrated and very contemporary new wing. We planned to come back to the Staatsgalerie on Saturday. Make a note! All these public buildings are closed on Mondays.

We opened the club tour at the hotel on Monday night with the Welcome Banquet. National President Jim O'Sullivan was our tour guide and began the evening's greetings. Jim introduced Ambrose Kluyskens, our liaison, from the Mercedes Car Group. Ambrose and Jim had planned the itinerary and made all arrangements. They deserve a constant round of applause for their efforts. Next up was our hard-working Executive Director, David Cummings—a good friend of ours. Then each of the 30 participants introduced themselves, their cars, and their sections. We were certainly a diverse group—from Vancouver to Florida to Virginia. Three folks were picking up cars on the trip!

On Tuesday morning, the bus met us at the hotel for our trip to the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center. I opted to pay a \$5 insurance fee and skip the bus. For that small amount, I got the chance to drive the Smart fortwo with Ambrose as my navigator. I loved every second of my all too short drive and would own one in a minute! We arrived within seconds of the bus—I wanted another ride around the block.

Not everything on display in the showroom was a car. There was an early Mercedes-Benz bicycle with

Continued on page 16

Joe Wozney's Trip to Germany – Continued from page 15

the most intricate and beautiful headlight I've seen on a bike. It also had a web around the rear wheel to protect a lady's skirt. In tough times, Mercedes also made typewriters. Frank Barrett and David Cummings each have one.

I found the cars for sale to be very expensive. One of the W113 chassis cars was more than \$100,000. There might have been a special history connected to make it worth that much but it wasn't listed. Also for sale were two 300SL Roadsters, a very nice dark green 190 SL and a pair of very classy 1950s sedans.

In the shop, we were fortunate to see a variety of cars being worked on—some factory owned, some customer cars. The earliest was a 1904 Mercedes five-passenger convertible with wooden wheels—the car is still used in antique car rallies. One of the newest was a truly magnificent 600 Limo. On a lift, where it was very difficult to photograph, was a sleek, late 1930s sedan purportedly owned by the King of Spain.

The biggest surprise of all was to be found in a small, side room. Inside were four men with decidedly English accents working on one of Kimi Räikkönen's Formula 1 cars. The car is much smaller than I would have thought but still larger than life. I was awestruck with the car's construction and detail.

Too soon we had to move on. By the way, bring lots of money. Even if you're not in the market for a classic car, the model cars and books are incredible.

We left the Classic Center and made our way to the very remote AMG works in Affalterbach. One minute you're in farm country... the next you're in heaven. AMG occupies a series of relatively small buildings. Outside the main office building we saw a few AMG cars but one truly stood out. We had a first look at the SLK55 Black Series—carbon fiber top, special interior, and an extra 40 horsepower. On the floor were two AMG CLK DTM street cabriolets—one silver with black interior and one all black... including the wheels. Absolutely intimidating and near impossible to photograph.

We then walked over to the engine assembly building where all the current AMG engines are assembled. The display inside included one of every

A 1904 Mercedes, still used in antique car rallies, gets the once-over from the mechanic assigned to work on it



major AMG

engine going all the way back to the M100. The assembly process is fascinating and all done by one man per engine. You've seen the engines with the assemblers' signatures. There's a large plaque there with a smaller sample plaque of each of the technicians selected by AMG to build these engines.

As we walked over to the custom installation shop, we passed a fenced parking area. Inside were the medical and safety cars used in the DTM and Formula 1 series. Regrettably, it was locked. The custom shop had three of the CLK DTM cars being finalized. In the back was the replica of the very first car—a sedan—built by AMG. We also were able to see another Black Series car being constructed and a few non-AMG cars in for interior, electronic and sound upgrades.

From there we walked to the PS Restaurant (PS = horsepower). It's owned by Hans Werner Aufrecht—the "A" in AMG. It's on the upper level of an impeccably maintained, indoor horse ring. On the way to lunch, a few of us made one more stop. In another building there was a showroom with a street-legal older DTM car, an AMG SLC race car, a C-Class DTM car, a street-legal Sauber-Mercedes race car (probably a C9 or C11), and a couple of street race cars of unknown background.

There is much more to Joe's article—as well as many photographs—which will be continued in future editions of the Metro Tri-Star.

Mercedes-Benz GL-Class Voted "SUV of the Year 2007"

STUTT GART/LOS ANGELES—November 13, 2006: *Motor Trend* magazine has voted the Mercedes-Benz GL 450 the best SUV of the year 2007. The GL came out on top, beating a field of 22 competitors. This praise is all the more impressive as this is the first time Mercedes-Benz has been represented in this market segment, dominated largely by its American rivals. The editorial team looked at all the new models launched over the past 12 months. This accolade is testimony to the compelling concept of the seven-seater premium off-roader, which unlike many of its U.S. rivals manages to combine solid off-road performance with superior on-road properties and outstanding ride comfort.

Motor Trend Editor-in-Chief Angus MacKenzie sums up the GL-Class: "The first full-size sport/utility from Mercedes has astonishing technology . . . and it will be available in a version that runs on the

new low-sulphur diesel fuel for greater gas mileage." A package that should enable the GL to build on its leading position in the full-size SUV segment in future. The GL-Class not only beat off its U.S. rivals but also forced Japanese, Korean and German products down the rankings.

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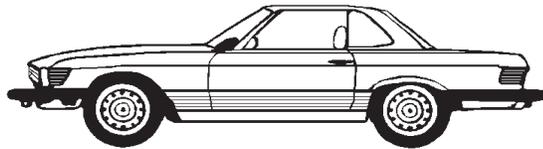
The *Metro Tri-Star* is a 100 percent volunteer effort, and the more people we have involved, the more interesting our newsletter will be. If you would like to consider helping out—as a reporter, photographer, writing a letter to the editor, or just sending us an interesting article to share with the GWS membership, contact Janet McFarland at (703) 765-9405 or e-mail her at:

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La Carrera Panamericana

Continued from page 10

problem the Ponton experienced was a minor exhaust leak that was handily fixed in the evening. Thomas owns a garage in Munich, Pontonmanufaktur, that does all things related to the Ponton models, including the famous wheel arch liners of LOKARI. Running his Ponton was a natural way to show Pontonmanufaktur's performance skills along with both Thomas and Joerg Mueller's driving skills.

The 1958 220 Coupe owned by Richard Morrison has a long history in the Panamericana. The car, itself, has been driven in seven Panamericanas (four times by the previous owner and three times by Richard, an MBCA member from the Kansas City Section). Of those seven, the car was rolled three times. Richard and Joe had the privilege of rolling it once in 2003. Keeping everything in perspective, Richard has a "This Side Up" sticker for his car. This year, the only glitch was a broken bracket on the clutch linkage, which made engaging the clutch a little challenging but obviously did not deter Richard and Joe. Perhaps it is just a coincidence that

Richard and Joe finished first in their class, "Original Panamericana," and eighth in the overall Historic Classes after being serviced at Thomas Hanna's garage in 2003.

Greater Washington Section members Steve Walters and Janet McFarland ran a 1965 220 SEb, which is a fuel-injected six-cylinder with four-speed on the floor, sometimes affectionately referred to as a Finback. This was originally a California car and was purchased by Steve in 2005 with the Panamericana in mind. The car had no mechanical issues during the race and on its 7,100-mile odyssey from Alexandria, Va. to Veracruz, Mexico and back, it only experienced two blown bulbs, a headlight and a tail light (although there is a pesky oil leak that Steve is already strategizing how to fix).

Steve and Janet placed 21 out of 40 cars that ran in the Historic Classes—an incredibly respectable showing for a first time run at the race. Steve is already planning his return to the Panamericana. He has promised to provide some personal insights into this year's race in a future *Metro Tri-Star* and will talk about preparing a vintage car for the Panamericana at StarTech 2007 this spring.

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 send the form below to Ed Hainke, coordinator of the program, with 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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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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Car Color Preferences

The more expensive the car and the higher the value, the less colorful it is, according to Sandra Krueger, an auto colors specialist in Germany for U.S.-based chemicals company DuPont, a major auto paint supplier.

With that thought in mind, silver has remained the most popular color for luxury cars (in Europe and the U.S.A.), followed by white, black, blue and light brown. Neutral colors remain the first stop for those buyers who are worried about resale value and for corporate fleets that buy millions of autos each year for use as company cars or rentals because they retain better value.

As far as sport and compact cars go, the preferences are silver, gray, blue, black and white, although brighter colors are gaining acceptance, and new

effects that make the color of cars seem to change depending on how light hits them also are the rage.

"There are exceptions such as Ferrari that is classically red, but you are not usually going to see expensive cars that are orange or bright green," Krueger said. "Taste in autos is very conservative."

During the 1990s, green was the "in" color, with names like teal, petrol, mint and blue-green. Today, the green hue barely stays in the top 10 preferred colors.

Popular paint choices are often launched by prestige brands and then picked up by less expensive marques.

Mercedes dealers pay close attention to public color trends, as unpopular colors spell slow inventory and more discounting.

The Trading Post

E320 Wagon, 2001: Desert Silver. 88,200 miles, excellent condition inside and out, well maintained. 3rd seat, heated seats, 6-CD. MB OEM bike rack. \$17,500. Viewable on www.cars.com. Call Glen Hoffing at (609) 268-4785 or e-mail ghoffing@comcast.net.

C230 Kompressor, 2000: Desert Silver, 74,400 miles. Recent "b" service. Looks and runs great, very clean, CD changer, Trac Cont, new tires. \$13,000 obo. Contact David at (301) 665-9577, or e-mail dnl90blkcivic@msn.com.

560SL, 1989: Red with tan interior. CD, premium wheels, always garaged, nonsmoker, 126K miles, new mats, seat cover and deluxe car cover. \$13,000. Call (410) 476-5274.

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240D, 1981: Silver on black. 30 mpg. New shocks, new battery, new water pump, new tires, 134AC conversion, 4-speed manual. Well known by club. Needs paint. Nice car for young adult. Asking \$1,800. Contact Ben at (540) 662-0852, or e-mail ben@mastermediagroup.com.

280SE 3.5 Coupe, 1971: Black on black, 95,000 original miles, excellent condition. Everything works. \$38,000. Call Jack at (410) 666-0264 or (410) 628-8061.

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

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280S, 1970: Sedan for parts or restoration. Standard transmission, good dark blue vinyl interior. Early '80s alloy wheels, front fender rocker rust, ignition module has failed. \$200. Contact Len at (410) 822-6061.

219 Ponton, 1959: Black/black. AKA roundbody, turtle-back. Good daily driver. All functions work: switches, gauges, speedo/odo, lights, horns, directionals, lighter, electro clock, wipers, heater fan. Heater boxes in good condition. Windows: good glass, regulators. Brake system overhauled, stops well. No rust in structure, underneath, floors. Recent door and window seals Original 6-cylinder engine rebuilt, powerful. Starts, idles, accelerates smoothly. No fluid leaks. Two new tires, battery. Owner's manual. \$6,400. Contact Douglas at (703) 534-5954 or (202) 712-0947.

Wheels and Tires: Michelin Pilot Sport A/S 225/55/16, less than 1,000 miles on Ronal r-28 wheels in good condition, perfect fit for r-129 sl 500. May fit other models as well. Reason selling: I upgraded to 18" tire/wheels--therefore, my loss is your gain. Asking \$700. I can email pics if you wish. Contact Luis at (703) 426-0497, or e-mail eljaiek@cox.net.

Alloy Wheels: Near perfect 17 inch 1999 SL 500 wheels. The tires that were mounted on them were 245/45 X 17. Wheels have only a few thousand miles on them before being removed from car. \$575 for the set of four. Call Harry at (540) 869-4274, or email harry.newman@adelphia.net.

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