



# METRO TRI-STAR

## 2007 Gets Off to a Good Start

It might not have seemed cold enough outside for a holiday party, but the big stone fireplace was glowing at Normandie Farm Restaurant in Potomac, Md. as nearly 80 members and their guests celebrated the beginning of a new year on Saturday, Jan. 13. Thanks to the hard work and excellent organizational skills of Jim Glenn, the event was a rousing success.

After a social hour of hors d'oeuvres, drinks and mingling, the guests selected door prizes (everything from caps, golf towels, clocks, t-shirts, pens, desk blotters, vests, cleaning kits, key chains, umbrellas, drinking cups, paperweights and more), courtesy of our many Mercedes-Benz dealerships and sponsors (including American Service Center of Arlington and Alexandria, HBL of Tyson's

Corner, EuroMotorcars of Bethesda and Germantown, Meguiars, Frontguard and TireVan) . We then were treated to our choice of sea bass, filet mignon or vegetarian lasagna, followed by cheese

*Continued on page 5*

### Upcoming February Event

Don't forget to sign up for our tour of the Collectors Car Corral on Saturday, Feb. 24 in Owings Mills, Md. from 1 - 4 p.m.

We have made arrangements with Randy Moss, CEO of Collectors Car Corral, to tour his facility, which 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.

*Continued on page 17*



Membership Co-Chair Klaus Hirtes (right) presents Bill Holman with a 45-year anniversary pin.

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# Calendar of Events

## Greater Washington Section Events 2007

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Feb. 24 Collectors Car Corral/Maguire's Demo<br/>Owings Mills, Md., 1-4 p.m.<br/>Contact: Jim Glenn at (703) 360-1669<br/><i>please fill out the registration form on p. 13</i></p> <p>March 18 Autocross Social<br/>Il Lupo Restaurant, Fairfax City, 1-3 p.m.<br/><i>Pre-register: JoeWozney@aol.com</i></p> <p>April 15 Autocross #1 (tentative date)</p> <p>April 29 Autocross (MB-only &amp; defensive driving)</p> <p>May 6 Deutsche Marque Concours D'Elegance<br/>Turner Farm Park, Great Falls, Va.</p> <p>May 15-16 MBCA National Board Committee Mtgs.<br/>Reston, Va.</p> <p>May 17 MBCA National Board Meeting<br/>Reston, Va.</p> <p>May 18-21 StarTech 2007<br/>Reston, Va.<br/>Contact: Bill Hopper at (202) 363-4189</p> <p>May 27 Autocross #2 (tentative date)</p> <p>May 21 Summit Point Spring Track Day<br/>(and demo day for StarTech 2007)</p> <p>June 3 Rain date for Deutsche Marque Concours</p> <p>June 14-15 Driving School at Virginia International<br/>Raceway (with BMW and Audi Clubs)<br/>Danville, Va.</p> <p>June 24 Autocross #3 (tentative date)</p> | <p>July 8 Autocross #4 (tentative date)</p> <p>Aug. 4-5 Drivers' School, Summit Point, W.Va.</p> <p>Aug. 11 DIY Tech Session and Track Inspection<br/>Place and time to be announced</p> <p>Aug. 12 Autocross #5 (tentative date)</p> <p>Aug. 19 Mid-Atlantic Picnic and Concours<br/>d'Elegance (tentative date)</p> <p>Sept. 9 Autocross #6 (tentative date)</p> <p>Sept. 14-18 Tri-O-Rama<br/>Summit Point, W.Va.</p> <p>Oct. 7 Autocross #7 (tentative date)</p> <p>Oct. 21 GWS Annual Meeting</p> <p>Nov. 4 Autocross #8 (tentative date)</p> <p>Dec. 2 New Members' Reception</p> |
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*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](http://www.gws-mbca.org)) for more information along with the latest updates and additions.*

### Regional, National and Other Events

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Mar. 9-11 Southern Treffen 2007<br/>Lakeland, Fla.<br/>Contact: Scott Suits at (727) 460-5739<br/>or e-mail suits@ij.net</p> <p>April 22 British and European Car Show<br/>Williamsburg Winery<br/>Williamsburg, VA<br/>Contact: Doug Wilson at (757) 565-4668<br/><i>(See additional information on page 11)</i></p> <p>May 18-21 StarTech 2007<br/>Reston, Va.<br/>Contact: Bill Hopper at (202) 363-4189</p> | <p>Mar. 9-11 Havasupai Rallye<br/>Desert Stars Section (Arizona)<br/>Contact: Don Burton at (480) 832-1504<br/><i>(See additional information on page 11)</i></p> |
|--|---|

### 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'élégance, 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.

# From the President . . .

I recently saw an R-Class. For some reason, seeing this unique vehicle made me think about how cars represent a specific period of time. And that got me to thinking back over the last 50 years about how each of those decades was reflected by a very different Mercedes-Benz model.

2007: the R-Class fits the needs of today by moving people and their stuff as efficiently, safely and in as much comfort as possible. Today's drivers talk about fuel efficiency or hybrids or alternate fuel vehicles. They also talk about performance, safety and luxury—all in one vehicle. The R-Class with the diesel engine fills that bill. It's large enough to carry people and cargo and, with the diesel engine, gets high mileage with all the safety and luxury features Mercedes-Benz owners have come to appreciate. Even the least expensive cars today have amazing safety features and are appointed with standard features we thought of as luxury options just a few years ago. Ten years ago, the thought of a Mercedes-Benz made somewhere other than Germany was something that raised eyebrows. But like the ML, the R is made here in the U.S., showing that times are really changing.

Ten years ago, in 1997, the Mercedes-Benz C-Class was all the rage. It was advertised to successful up-and-coming young professionals, with ads showing them that they had made it if they were driving a Mercedes-Benz. Interestingly enough, that was when we became Mercedes-Benz owners, with our '97 C-Class! It did not take long to realize that it was a great value. Little did we know that 10 years later, that same car would still feel like it did when we bought it.

In the mid 1980s, Japanese cars were the rage, while European cars were only to be aspired to. The Mercedes-Benz, an expensive automobile, was so coveted that gray-marketers were bringing them in, and Americans were raving about how one could get a great deal on a Mercedes-Benz by buying it this way. In 1987, for me, driving a Mercedes-Benz was not what a 30-year-old thought about, though had I known at the time about the "banker's hot rod," the 16-valve, I may not have been driving a Saab Turbo!

In the 1970s, it was a whole different generation of cars. In 1977, you could buy this great new car called the Honda Accord for \$7,995. It had everything anyone

(in 1977) could want. The only problem was that you had to pay a premium to get one.

That was the year I was longing for this used blue 107 on the lot of a Mercedes-Benz dealership in Devon, Pa. WOW, I thought, a Mercedes-Benz for only \$9,900! But being a college student, an \$800 Fiat Spider was my speed. But I do remember the Mercedes-Benz sedans of the time because one of our neighbors, a European businessman who always got his Mercedes-Benzes through the European delivery program, had a 240D and then a 300D. And I longed to drive them.

1967 was the first time I was up close to a Mercedes-Benz. One sunny spring afternoon, a well-dressed man knocked on our door and asked us if he could call for a tow as his car was stuck in the mud. We lived on a farm, and my mother drove a '66 Jeep Wagoneer, so the sight of a German car was not one we saw often. He and three friends, musicians with the Philadelphia Orchestra, were out for a Sunday drive in the country. They stayed for dinner while our neighbor pulled the cream-colored fantail out of the deep mud with his tractor. Our guests from the city had driven their Mercedes-Benz down a farm road that no one in the country would travel on, even on horseback.

So that brings us to 1957, the year our section was organized, and a year when Mercedes-Benz vehicles were still a rarity in this country. Actually, this is the reason MBCA was founded in 1956—to be a support group for Mercedes-Benz owners. At that time, drivers of the 300 and 190 SLs were in the spotlight, and the Pontons and 300 sedans almost were never seen outside of urban areas. As we all know, in the late '50s, American Iron was king, and auto enthusiasts who drove European vehicles, or any foreign car for that matter, were thought of as a bit eccentric.

Now driving a European car is not even noticed. Actually, you're more noticed if you are not driving one. So it makes one reflect about how much change there is in each decade in the automotive world.

The next time you come out to a GWS concours, look at one car from each of those decades and really think about them and the time when they represented the "latest and greatest" of their eras.

—Bill Hopper



# Holiday Party

*Continued from page 1*

cake or poached pears. From comments overheard, the food was outstanding!

And then the fun began!

The holiday party is one of three events during the year in which five-year anniversary pins are given out (the other two are the summer picnic and the annual meeting in the fall). Klaus and Deborah Hirtes, the section's membership co-chairs, made the presentations.

This year was especially exciting as Bill Holman received a pin for 45 years of continued membership in the Greater Washington Section of the MBCA. Bill actually has been a Mercedes-Benz owner since 1956, when he purchased a 1950 170V in Germany (where he was stationed as a member of the U.S. military). He was accompanied to the party by his lovely bride, Betty.

Three five-year pins were awarded to Eric Wagner (GWS vice president), Andre McBride and Katherine Warner; two 10-year pins to Jim Smith and Paul Vandenburg (GWS treasurer); and two 20-year pins to Bill Carpenter and John Williamson.

Regional Director Greg Magnus addressed the guests, stating that the GWS is the largest Mercedes-Benz Club of America sections in the country—and one of the most active. He noted that all the members are volunteers and that one of the club's aims is to give back to the community. "If we can give back to



*Deborah Hirtes is congratulated by President Bill Hopper (left) and Vice President Eric Wagner for winning the "Member of the Year" award.*



*Regional Director Greg Magnus (standing right) presented the club with a banner recognizing the GWS for winning the MBCA's Public Service Award for 2005. With him are (from the left) Vice President Eric Wagner, President Bill Hopper, former President Joe Wozney and Social Chair Jim Glenn.*

the community," he stated, "it's a win-win situation."

Greg presented the club with a banner recognizing the Greater Washington Section for winning the MBCA's prestigious Public Service Award for 2005, which had previously been announced at the national StarFest event (Oct.1-5, 2006 in Las Vegas).

Jim Glenn, the section's former treasurer—and now the social chairman—was acknowledged with an engraved plaque, thanking him for his hard work and dedication to the club.

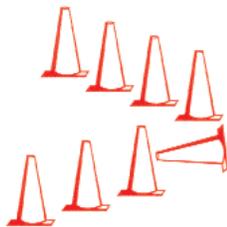
Each section of the MBCA selects one member who has done the most for the club in a given year. This year, Deborah Hirtes was selected, her third time receiving that honor in more than 20 years in the section. She is membership co-chair, newsletter co-chair, and all-around helper. Deborah was presented with a small plaque, which she gets to keep, a larger award (a mounted MB grill that includes the names of all the members of the year), which she will keep for one year and which then will go to next year's winner.

The large plaque is known as the Hank Sloane award, named for a former GWS member who died 15 years ago and left a considerable sum of money to the section. "Thanks so much," she said, "it is truly an honor to be recognized in this way."

*Continued on page 18*

# pylon alley

by  
Joe Wozney



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## Autocross Social

On Sunday, March 18, all autocrossers and would-be autocrossers are invited to our annual social event and to help us celebrate the very successful 2006 series. This is the one time each year when lying and cheating are expected, permitted, and even encouraged. However, we know the truth!

If you've wondered what autocrossing is all about and are considering trying this strange parking lot driving with our motley group this year, please join us. Some folks are actually knowledgeable enough to get you started!

Come hear Tom Newman explain why he spent so many Sunday mornings in bed and made so few events this year. Listen to a tech talk from Bill Lear on quick changing axles on Honda products.... over and over again. Jim Smith will gladly talk to anyone who will listen on setting up a 2.6 to beat a 2.3. And finally, Ted Joseph will chair a discussion group of one on the importance of toilets in schoolyards.

The special awards for 2005 also will be given out. One hundred and one elves have worked for more than a year to get them done!

Here's the best part! There is no charge! For those of you not driving Mercedes cars, that means "free!" Snacks are on the club. You will be responsible for your own beverage charges! The event is from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**However, you must pre-register! Send Joe Wozney an e-mail ([JoeWozney@aol.com](mailto:JoeWozney@aol.com)) to let us know you are coming.**

Il Lupo is on Route 123 in Fairfax City, three blocks south of the intersection with Route 236. It's on the left side (if you are traveling south) across from the Fairfax County Government Center and Courts.

We truly hope you will join us— you will love this sport!

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## 2007 Autocross and Driving Events

Although the dates have yet to approved by the school board, we finally have the 2007 Autocross Series schedule for Millbrook High School. **Remember, they are tentative!**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. April 15                               | 4. July 8    |
| April 29—MB-only<br>and Defensive Driving | 5. August 12 |
| 2. May 27                                 | 6. Sept. 9   |
| 3. June 24                                | 7. Oc. 7     |
|   | 8. Nov. 4    |

We do have firm dates for all of the year's track events. On Monday, May 21, the club will hold a driver education school, along with a product demonstration day, at Summit Point Raceway. This will be an open event in conjunction with StarTech 2007 and will be run on the Summit circuit. Watch the next issue of the *Tri-Star* and the Web site for registration information.

On Thursday and Friday, June 14-15, we will again join the Audi and BMW clubs for a driver education/performance driving school—Marque Madness 3—at Virginia International Raceway. The event will be held on the full course. VIR has to be one of the most beautiful tracks anywhere and is sure to fill fast! Watch the newsletter and Web site for registration and cost information.

On Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 4-5, we'll be going back to Summit Point and run on the Shenandoah circuit. This will be the club's second time on this three-year-old course.

Finally, on Sept. 17 and 18, we're back at the Summit circuit for the last two days of Tri-O-Rama 2007. This national event opens with a concours on Saturday, Sept. 15; an autocross and defensive driving school on Sunday; and the track school, time trials and acceleration runs on Monday and Tuesday. Since it is a national event, members are only permitted to drive their Mercedes-Benz cars.

Important note! If you want to receive the latest information about changes to, additions to, or problems with any of the above dates, I will need your e-mail address(es). We will not use previous addresses since so many have changed over the last year—bounced e-mails are the clue. You **must** send me an e-mail at [JoeWozney@aol.com](mailto:JoeWozney@aol.com) if you want to be included on the new list.



## TECH-TIP:

### Auto Mechanics Course

Charles Gainor, a GWS member from Potomac, Md., thought that Section members who are home mechanics at heart would be interested in knowing about a unique opportunity to take advanced automobile repair classes through the Fairfax County Public School's Adult and Community Education program.

Chuck has taken several of these courses over the past five years and has been able to maintain his '95 S420 as well as his two Ford-manufactured cars as a result. The courses teach participants how to solve mechanical problems and how to tackle the repairs on their own. Participants are expected to bring their own tools, but some tools, including compressed air tools and lifts, are provided.

Last June at the GWS Do-It-Yourself Tech Session, Chuck diagnosed (with help from an American Service technician) that his oil pan and one motor mount were in need of repair. Chuck wasted no time and while taking the Fairfax course that summer, was able to change the oil pan and a motor mount (by assisting the instructor). All work needs to be completed during the allotted classroom time. The motor mounts and oil pan took a little longer than three hours. But, because Chuck was taking the course during the summer, he was able to leave his car in the school's auto repair classroom between classes, something that would not have been possible during the regular school year.

The Advanced Auto Mechanics Course is offered at Marshall High School in the school's auto repair shop on Route 7 just inside the Washington Beltway. There are between five and eight students in each class. The classes start at 7:00 p.m. and end at 10:00 p.m. A highly skilled automotive technician who assists students with their auto maintenance projects oversees each session. The instructor at the last course Chuck attended was the shop foreman at a local Chevrolet dealership.

This winter's courses start the third week in February and consist of eight sessions. The cost of the Advanced Auto Mechanics Course is \$257 with a discount for Fairfax County residents over 62. For more information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OACE/classesetc.html>. Then click on "Automotive" under the "Trade and Industry/Cosmetology" category—or call the Adult and Community Education department at (703) 658-2782. Not only will you learn to repair your car. You also will also learn about diagnostics and tools and gain the added confidence needed to tackle some of the tougher jobs. If you would like to talk to Chuck about his experiences, you may give him a call at home at (301) 299-6533.

Thanks, Chuck, for the great tip! If you have a TECH-TIP, please share it with our Technical Chairman, Dave Thompson, or the editors of the *Metro Tri-Star* so that other Section members can share in your knowledge!



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# High Gear . . .

Have you ever been asked to tell a bedtime story? This is a pretty tall order if you haven't had any practice. Like with any story, if you're going to make it interesting, you'd better talk about something you know. Well, here goes. "Once upon a time..."

Two of my cars are stepchildren. No, they are not second-class citizens in my barn. In fact, I am exceedingly fond of them both. But the two cars to which I refer were not popular with their "parents..." their manufacturers, that is. Interestingly, just like Cinderella, they were both too good for their respective niches in life. Let me explain.

I own a 1973 Porsche 914. That is the mid-engined model which was designed by Porsche but assembled by Karmann with components from various parts bins. The production run was from 1970 to the end of 1975. Owners liked these light-weight, stripped-down sports cars. They were inexpensive, probably the cheapest Porsches ever built. And that's why the manufacturer started having second thoughts about the 914s from day one. You see, the 914s actually didn't make the upscale Porsche 911s look good. The smaller, mid-engined cars had a lower polar moment of inertia and, consequently, better handling than the rear engined 911s. In fact, with ambitious tweaking, the 914s could out-perform some of the vastly more expensive 911s. Cinderella's sisters were jealous. The stepmother in Zuffenhausen never had much affection for the 914s, and their potential was never developed by the Porsche firm.

My other stepchild is my C230K sports coupe. Imported by Mercedes-Benz USA from 2002 until 2005, the sports coupe was, in my opinion, one of the most exciting vehicles to come from the south side of Stuttgart. However, it was perceived as a marketer's nightmare. It cost some \$15,000 less than the contemporary CLK320, yet the C230K beat out its up-market sibling in every specification except trunk capacity. It's a truism that in the automotive industry, the more expensive cars have the larger profit margins. Therefore, even if a dealer could move a large number of C230K sports coupes, he might be better off moving CLK320s in steady, though more modest, quantities. Thus the C230K sports coupe languished

in Mercedes' product line-up.

When the sports coupe was submitted to AMG, all hell broke loose. It is rumored that when Mercedes' specialty tuners started to play with this C230K before you could say "Gottlieb Daimler," they had a car which out-performed all the other AMG models, bar none! The basic design of the sports coupe was just that good, light-weight and balanced. Once again an embarrassment. If the sports coupe would be the top performer in the AMG line, how could one justify its place at the bottom of the price structure?

We all know that the folks at Affalterbach are pretty smart. Well, they figured out how to build an AMG sports coupe which would be a star performer yet not overshadow the up-scale super stars already in production. They built an AMG sports coupe which is Diesel (sic) powered! Alas, this model was never available in North America. But in Europe, the AMG sports coupe, oil-burner turned out to be a blisteringly fast vehicle, but just a hare's breath slower than the other AMGs. Problem solved!

In any event, just as Porsche phased out the sparkling 914s and let the concept of a mid-engined, entry-level sports car wither on the vine, so MBUSA ceased importation of the wonderful C230K sports coupe.

But this story has a happy ending for my two Cinderellas. They both found a prince who loves them dearly!

—John Kuhn Bleimaier

We are pleased to welcome

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as a new advertiser in the

*Metro Tri-Star* (page 8).

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and the *Metro Tri-Star* newsletter.

# Need Collision Repair? Check Out Auto Collision Specialists, Inc.

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From the moment you enter Chuck Scilipote's office, you know he is hooked on the Mercedes-Benz marque. On the walls of his collision repair shop, surrounding his desk, are Mercedes-Benz collectables, including framed antique advertisements and articles from older publications. He will gladly explain the story about any or all of his valued collection. But what is primarily on his mind now is that his company, Auto Collision Specialists (ACS), was approved by Mercedes as Baltimore's first Mercedes-Benz certified collision facility.

It was not an easy process, taking one-and-a-half years of persistence to qualify as an independent certified collision repair facility. Scilipote has developed a good working relationship with Mercedes-Benz of Hunt Valley, Md. and R&H Motor Cars of Owings Mills, Md., both sponsoring dealers.

It is no secret that ACS is doing top-quality repair work with the most up-to-date technology. They have always believed in having the latest and most technologically advanced equipment.

According to Scilipote, "We were almost in compliance for certification standards on our own. We've been in business 26 years—some of our key people went to Mercedes-Benz training school back in the '90s."

With 17 employees, ACS repairs some 60-90 cars a month, half of which are Mercedes. "We replace parts rather than repair them in most all instances," says Scilipote. "We do the repair by the book, exactly as the manufacturer requires."

In order for ACS to maintain Mercedes certification, the company has to pass bi-annual on-site inspections by Mercedes-Benz. There are 10 major categories on the workshop checklist with conditions that have to be met. These include:

- **Customer Relations**—all contacts must be respectful, courteous and patient.
- **Business Requirements**—permits and licenses must be displayed; a financial audit is required.
- **Facility**—large enough with adequate shop

flow, including a clean and dedicated workspace. A dedicated aluminum repair area and specific Mercedes tools and equipment are required. Use of genuine parts from a sponsoring Mercedes-Benz dealer is requested. Rental vehicles or a shuttle is required for customers.

■ **Computer Systems**—estimating, management programs and workshop programs must be available. The shop also must have access to StarTek—the Mercedes Web site with repair procedures information on all models.

■ **Training for staff technicians** in collision, paint, welding, management and computer specialties.

■ **Adherence to all Mercedes guidelines** for paint, parts, fasteners, fittings and adhesive materials.

■ **Tools/Equipment**—down-draft paint/bake booth, alignment rack, Celette bench, category K tools, etc...

■ **Various Services**—glass, chip, soft-top, upholstery, towing, detailing and assisting with insurance claims.

■ **Warranty**—one that is consistent with the Mercedes-Benz parts replacement warranty of 12 months and unlimited mileage (we offer a limited lifetime warranty). The agreed repair time must be honored; all vehicles are checked with a road test and function test prior to returning vehicle to customer.

■ **Return of Vehicle**—vehicles can be returned to the customer at the dealer by a knowledgeable adviser who previews the repairs completed.

This checklist offers a valuable opportunity to ensure satisfaction of the Mercedes-Benz customers by providing consistent customer and vehicle care.

As Chuck Scilipote knows, the most successful managers in the repair business surround themselves with a winning team. "We have a staff of experts and experienced technicians who will ensure that we do our very best to uphold the Mercedes-Benz tradition

*Continued on page 11*

## Havasupai '07: Spring in the Desert

The Desert Stars Section (Arizona) is inviting all Mercedes-Benz Club members to take part in a fun weekend in March (9-11), including a rally, lunch, banquet dinner and tours of either the Pima Air and Space Museum or the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

The rallymasters, Don and Brynn Burton (perpetual second-place finishers of the previous two years' Havasupai), will take the drivers on the road to experience views of the Saguaro National Park and other spectacular sights—with stops along the way for lunch and landmarks.

This exciting weekend package includes all the supplies needed for the rally, lunch and banquet dinner on Saturday, and entry fees to Sunday's tours. You will need to reserve lodging for Friday and Saturday nights yourself.

The cost for the event is \$240 per couple. If you have any questions, or wish to find out about lodging suggestions, please call Don or Brynn Burton at (480) 832-1504 or e-mail Brynn Burton at [secretary@desertstars.org](mailto:secretary@desertstars.org).

## ACS — Continued from page 10

of world-class quality," he stated. "No one embraces our Mercedes-Benz goals more than my wife/partner, Carey." She's the "right fit," and so are their three sons: Charles, Daniel and Andrew, who are very involved in their disciplined approach to being an outstanding collision facility certified by the world's finest car manufacturer, Mercedes-Benz. ACS's ultimate goal is to be the best dealer-sponsored certified collision facility authorized by Mercedes.

So, if you're in need of certified MB collision repair, check out Auto Collision Specialists, Inc. on their Web site at [www.acs-md.com](http://www.acs-md.com)

Auto Collision Specialists, Inc.  
P.O. Box 27  
12918 Gores Mill Road  
Reisterstown, MD 21136

—Robert Beach

## British and European Car Show



Williamsburg, Va.

April 22, 2007

Make a plan to drive down to the Williamsburg Winery in Williamsburg, Va. on Sunday, April 22 for the British and European Car Show.

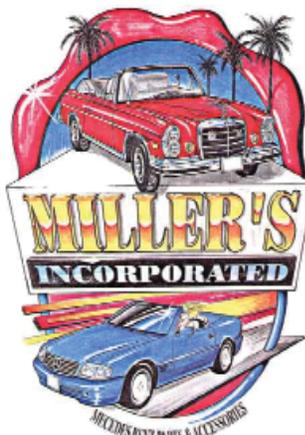
It promises to be a fun day with great cars, interesting people and good food and wine.

Tours of the winery will be free for show participants.

Contact Doug Wilson for additional information about this event. You may reach him at (757) 565-4668, or e-mail him at [dew311@cox.net](mailto:dew311@cox.net).

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# Mercedes-Benz Rings in the New Year with Record Sales

## MBUSA Achieves All-Time Sales Record with Sales of 248,080 for 2006

**M**ONTVALE, N.J. – December sales of 28,115 boosted Mercedes-Benz USA (MBUSA) to its 13<sup>th</sup> year of sales increases and the highest annual volume in its history. MBUSA sold 248,080 vehicles in 2006, a 10.5 percent increase over the 224,421 units sold in 2005.

The company introduced six new SUV models in 2006, including the highly acclaimed GL-Class—the first European seven-passenger SUV which was recently voted *Motor Trend's* SUV of the Year—and diesel versions of its M-Class, R-Class and GL-Class, offering higher gas mileage to luxury SUV buyers. The Mercedes-Benz SUVs were so well received that the company saw a 67.7 percent jump in sales of its light trucks as a group (M-, R-, G-, and GL-Classes) compared to 2005 (69,163 vs. 41,252).

Sales at the high-end were equally impressive. As a group, the S-, SL- and CL-Classes rose by 48.2 percent compared to last year (40,660 vs. 27,436), boosted by the introduction of the flagship S-Class in February. Sales of the S-Class model line nearly dou-

bled in 2006 with a 92.6 percent increase.

Sales of vehicles in the Mercedes-Benz diesel portfolio—both CDI and BLUETEC models—grew from 4,299 units in 2005 to 6,941 units in 2006, posting a 61.5 percent increase. Known for being a leader in diesel innovation and engineering, Mercedes-Benz expanded its diesel offerings in the fourth quarter of 2006 to include SUVs (M-Class CDI, R-Class CDI, and GL-Class CDI), and also introduced the cleanest diesel technology available in a passenger car through the E320 BLUETEC. The company plans to expand its BLUETEC range to bring 50-state diesels to the U.S. market in 2008.

### **December Sales**

MBUSA sold 28,115 vehicles in December 2006, marking the second-highest sales month in MBUSA history—second only to December 2005, the best MBUSA sales month ever.

The top-of-the-line vehicles—the S-Class sedan and CL-Class coupe—each recorded impressive

*Continued on page 17*

## Tour of the Collectors Car Corral

*Saturday, February 24, 2007 — Owings Mills, Md., 1-4 p.m.*

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ amount enclosed (at \$15 per person) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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# How Eric Caught the Mercedes Bug

by Eric Wagner

When I woke up at home in Germany on the morning of Monday, July 2, 1979, I was very excited. My parents and I would make a trip to Stuttgart-Sindelfingen to pick up our first Mercedes-Benz!

At that point, my automotive world consisted of my mom driving her 1968 Fiat 500 and my dad driving a 1969 Ford Capri, followed by a 1975 Ford Granada. I really loved the Fiat and the Capri and still long for the Capri today, which was a very fast car for its time. Nobody in my family ever really liked the Granada. It was a canary yellow two-door sedan with the same 2.3 liter V6 engine my dad had loved in the Capri. However, in the Granada, it was a disaster: Too thirsty, too slow and too many thermal problems. The thermal issues were particularly annoying during our vacation trips to Spain where we would sometimes get into traffic jams that sent the thermostat into the red zone and require unscheduled stops. After the first two trips to Spain where the poor fuel quality caused constant ping, my dad started looking at brochures for Mercedes diesel cars.

What a shock! There were two huge differences between buying a Ford and a Mercedes: First, Fords could be bought by going to the dealer and literally just pointing at a car in the showroom and taking it with you—which is how we bought the Capri and the Granada. In contrast, Mercedes-Benz automobiles were allotted, and prospective purchasers had to wait patiently for their turn before they could enjoy their new 240D, 280SE or 350SL.

After several weeks of calculations to determine the economic feasibility of the switch to a Mercedes, the sales consultant, Herr Spengler, visited us at home to go over some ordering details, and he confirmed what we had heard about long delivery times. The order that my parents signed in early December 1976 would not be filled until early 1980!

The second big difference was the startling price difference between the Granada and the Mercedes diesel my dad priced out. Ford had a factory in my state and offered special conditions for public ser-



*Eric Wagner, as an 11-year-old boy, helped keep his family's first Mercedes sparkling clean.*

vants, which made the purchase more appealing. While the Granada cost about 14,000 deutschmark, the Mercedes was about 50 percent more expensive, and that gap widened once the proper extras were checked such as manual sunroof, velour upholstery and arm rest.

All that was somewhat of a shock, and the prospect of having to endure the Granada's inferior driving qualities until the projected delivery time was just too much for my dad. However, a solution to this dilemma was to purchase someone else's contract for earlier delivery and delay our own contract until we were ready to purchase another Mercedes or until we would find a willing buyer for our contract. Unfortunately, production capacity at the Sindelfingen plant increased in the early 1980s to match demand, and by the time we were ready to sell the contract, there was no market left anymore. But that is another story and it involves a red W201...

All this was prologue to the events of that fateful Monday when we took an early train from Saarbrücken to Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof from where we took a bus to the factory. At the factory we ate in the cafeteria (the prices seemed quite high to me) and after watching a film about the safety features in

*Continued on page 16*

## How Eric Caught the MB Bug – *Continued from page 15*

every Mercedes-Benz, we went on a guided tour through the factory. The most lasting impression from that tour was experiencing one of the last W100 600s being built right before our eyes. After the tour, my parents allowed me to pick a souvenir in the gift shop, and the posters of historic Daimler-Benz cars adorned my bedroom walls for years.

Finally, our car was ready. I remember my parents commenting on the fact that there was literally no diesel in the tank and that the prices at the factory filling station were quite high. But those observations could not diminish the joy and excitement that we all felt by sitting in our first very own Mercedes, a 240D. We had chosen classic-white paint inspired by a chart in one of the brochures that indicated that it was the “safest” color. The anthracite velour upholstery, almost as expensive as the leather option, was my mother’s choice. To this day, she still does not like leather seats. We finally had a sunroof, and my dad had an armrest. As a rear-seat passenger, I was especially impressed by the three-point automatic seat belts in the outboard seats and a lap belt in the middle—and I was intent on using them.

A couple of weeks later, our family went to Spain for summer vacation. The trip was fun for my sister and me because we could finally get in and out of the car by ourselves and had more room in the back seat as well. Although the car was not as fast as the Granada, we did not have to stop as much due to the better fuel economy and improved comfort. While driving around our vacation destination, my mother remarked that the Mercedes’ lights were not as bright as the Ford’s, which almost seemed like heresy to me. But it turned out that she was very perceptive and the poor lighting was an indicator of a serious problem we would encounter on our way home.

While heading home on the French autoroute, our wipers started flapping suddenly, and there was a little plume of smoke coming out of the middle console. What was that?!? We stopped at the next rest area and checked the car for damage. There was none visible but the engine would not start. Somehow my dad got it to work and we decided that we would go to the nearest Mercedes-Benz dealer listed in the manual. At the dealer in Valence, we relied on a Swiss W108 driver for some translation assistance while the serv-

ice department tried to figure out what the issue was. It turned out that the alternator was bad and was not charging the battery. That explained the weak light and the trouble starting the car. Because the diesel did not need the battery to keep going, the garage sent us on our way, advising us to keep the engine running. Eventually, we made it home and, after the dealer at home replaced the alternator, the car served without failure for another 110,000 miles and many trips to Spain.

Unfortunately, we sold the car just before I received my driver’s license. But I’ll never forget how safe I felt in that car. Many years later, a friend of mine from work mentioned that her dad wanted to sell his old Mercedes. I became very excited and it turned out to be a 200 in classic-white with a black cloth interior. Because her dad had worked for the World Bank, he was able to purchase a European version with the small M102 engine that was never available for U.S. spec cars. I helped my friend’s dad purchase a new German car and bought the Mercedes from him. My parents visited shortly after I bought the car and they enjoyed the memories the car brought back to them. Over four years and about 44,000 miles later, I continue to thoroughly enjoy every trip I take with this car, be it to work in D.C., to Mercedes events, driving around with my wife and two kids, or the annual trip up to Maine. I am taking good care of my 200, and the 200 is taking good care of me.

This is my story of how I caught the Mercedes bug. Who knows what automotive memories will influence my children later in life. I am doing my part by making sure they have a lot of them to choose from.

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## MB Record Sales

*Continued from page 13*

gains in sales volume for the month. Sales of the ninth generation S-Class rose 56.2 percent (2,987 vs. 1,912 units) and the CL-Class jumped 77 percent (347 vs. 196 units).

The sales volume leader for the month, the E-Class model line, gained 12.3 percent with 7,116 units sold compared to December 2005's 6,334 units.

### **Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-owned Sales**

Separately, through the Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned (MBCPO) program, MBUSA sold 4,374 vehicles in December, an increase of 19.9 percent over last December and marking the program's best sales month this year. This boosted the MBCPO year-end total to 47,737 units, an 8.3 percent increase over 2005.

## Collectors Car Corral

*Continued from page 1*

The 30,000 square foot state-of-the-art, climate controlled and totally secure automotive and motorcycle storage facility offers not only storage maintenance, but also detailing and an automotive-themed lounge and game room, among other facilities.

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.

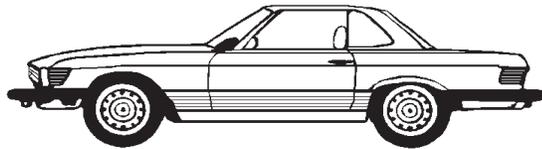
The cost of this event is \$15. *Please fill out the reservation form on page 13 in this issue of the Metro Tri-Star.*

Also: Take a few minutes to look through this issue to see some of the other events we have planned—everything from the autocross series, to car shows, social events, Do-It-Yourself tech sessions and driving at the track—a little something for everyone.

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**Holiday Party — Continued from page 5**

Vice President Eric Wagner, who organized last summer's concours d'élégance at the summer picnic, presented a 1<sup>st</sup> place award in the SL category to Chuck Taylor for his beautifully prepared 280 SL.

Two of our generous sponsors were present at the dinner—Morgan Richey from TireVan (mobile tire installation) and Neil Nelson from Frontguard (a film paint-protection system). Barrie and Pete Gochman were the lucky recipients of a \$250 gift certificate for TireVan tires or services, and Bobbie and Joe Wozney won the Frontguard gift certificate worth \$600. Additionally, Dave Thompson (our Webmeister and technical chair) won a gift certificate for an automotive detailing at EuroMotorcars of Germantown. We encourage members to patronize our sponsors and, when you go, be sure to thank them for their generosity to the club.

A DJ was on hand, spinning some favorite tunes as the evening wore on. Ben Poinsett and Goldie Pavay really kept him busy, dancing to just about everything he played.

Many thanks, once again, to Jim Glenn and all those who helped in organizing this event.



*Right: Ben Poinsett and Goldie Pavay danced the night away.*

## “Duel in the Desert”—The Chihuahua Express Open-road Race, Mexico – April 20-22, 2007

Where else in the world can you open up your performance car on a public highway for 500 miles under the protection of the highway patrol? Viva Mexico!

On April 20, 2007, modern and vintage high performance cars will line up in Chihuahua to rip across the Mexican countryside on closed highways at speeds upwards of 200 mph. It's the first annual “Chihuahua Express”—three days of open-road racing just

220 miles south of El Paso and 140 miles west of Presidio, Texas in Chihuahua City, Mexico. The landscape is arid, with rolling hills and canyons. There are good roads and few towns to slow the cars down.

Entries will be divided into several classes (based on displacement, induction and modifications) for competitive purposes. Any street legal car, with a 6-point cage, racing seat belts, fire extinguisher, triangles, etc., is legal. Helmets

and racing suits are also mandatory.

The event will run under performance rally rules. In a performance rally, the cars are started every 30 seconds on a safe, closed highway with your navigator directing you from a route book prepared by the organizer. You will run as fast as you want and fly across the finish line.

The event cost is \$1,300 for 3 nights of luxury hotel lodging and 3 days of racing. For more information from the U.S.A. coordinator, please contact Jerry Churchill at [jerrychurchill@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrychurchill@hotmail.com) or (313) 819-1159.

## 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.



### Maryland Greater Washington Section Tags

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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.

Khalid Almufti  
Sterling, VA

William A. Earner Jr.  
Crownsville, MD

Stephen Piscitelli  
Crofton, MD

Duane A. Ambush  
Laurel, MD

Douglas Forsgren  
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Oliva Rodriguez  
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Cliff Gates  
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Ted Goldman  
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Robert P. Zaepfel  
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William Olin Bryan  
Trappe, MD

William Grossman  
Washington, DC

Lee M. Cassidy  
Arlington, VA

David Hwang  
Potomac, MD



## Newsletter Committee Forming



Deborah Hirtes and Janet McFarland, the co-editors of the *Metro Tri-Star*, are looking for volunteers for the newsletter committee. Our first committee meeting will be Sunday, March 4 at GWS President Bill Hopper's house (5455 Broad Branch Rd., N.W., Washington, DC—at the intersection of Branch Road and Livingston Street). Experience is not required—but a disposition toward having fun is!

Some of the goals of the committee for this year will be to review the current format of our newsletter and offer and implement potential content and format changes. Due to upcoming changes in postal regulations, our beloved 8.5" x 7" newsletter format may need to be changed to a more standard size.

As a committee, Deborah and Janet look at this as an opportunity for change, and they would like the help, advice and input of other club members on this endeavor! So, if you would like to offer your thoughts, ideas and a little elbow grease, here is your opportunity. The editors would love to have you join them!

Please contact Janet McFarland if you are interested (703) 765-9405, or e-mail [jmcfarland@retrospectpublishing.com](mailto:jmcfarland@retrospectpublishing.com). She will also be able to tell you what time the meeting is to be held.

# The Trading Post

**C240, 2002:** Capri blue with java leather interior. 52K miles. Dealer maintained. Excellent condition. No accidents. Garage kept. Non-smoker. Auto, sunroof, rain sensor wipers, split fold-down rear seats. \$17,900. Call Bob at (703) 467-9658, or e-mail rtelwell@cox.net.

**E320 Wagon, 2001:** Desert Silver. 88,200 miles, excellent condition inside and out, well maintained. 3<sup>rd</sup> seat, heated seats, 6-CD. MB OEM bike rack. \$17,500. Viewable on [www.cars.com](http://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 dn190blkcivic@msn.com.

**600SL, 1998:** Black with black/grayhand stitched leather interior. 29K miles. Panoramic roof, AMG wheels. Always garaged and covered. A beautiful V-12 example. Asking \$29,500. Call Richard if you want a true touring convertible. His number is (410) 827-3200.

**ML320, 1998:** White with gray interior. 3<sup>rd</sup> row seats, 143K miles, no accidents. Non-smoker, original owner. 145,000 service done, MD inspected. Front brake rotors done at 142K miles; 4-wheel alignment done at 137K along with new Michelin tires. New battery, serpentine belt and tensioner done at 136K miles. Serviced at Herb Gordon, garage kept, well maintained. Asking \$7,900. Call Don at (443) 831-9741, or e-mail dunecrest@comcast.net.

**560SL, 1988:** Red with tan interior. 31K miles, ALL CALIFORNIA driven, just transported to D.C. Always garaged. Premium wheels. Red hard and black soft top. Car cover. Excellent condition. \$21,000. Car located at Watergate Condo garage in D.C. Call Bill at (301) 320-5681, or e-mail bill.edwards@gmail.com.

**300D Turbodiesel, 1982:** Please see photos and details at <http://photos.alfabase.com/300D>. It's been in the family 21 years. We "downgraded" to a new C240 and this car is ready to move on. 131K miles, always garaged, absolutely mint interior, excellent exterior and mechanicals. Just inspected. Asking \$6,000 or rea-

## Trading Post Advertising Information

Any GWS member may place an ad of up to six lines in length free of charge in the *Metro Tri-Star*. Include your name, membership number, address and phone number(s) with area codes on your hand-printed or typed copy. Personal ads will appear for two issues. Ads should be sent to: *Metro Tri-Star*, 1307 Warrington Place, Alexandria, VA 22307; 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

sonable offer. Call Brewster at (202) 434-2227, or e-mail BrewThack@aol.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.

**Steel Wheels:** Four steel wheels for snow tires, MB# 126 400 2802, 7JX15H2, \$150. Wheel covers and bolts included. Call Valentine at (301) 229-2478.

## VOLUNTEER WANT ADS

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**Position:** GWS Concours Chair

**Qualifications:** Be able to manage 2 to 3 events a year, attend evening meeting 3-4 times a year and be able to work with other car clubs. Diplomatic skills are a plus.

**L**ooking for fun opportunities and a chance to meet new and interesting people? Come out and volunteer to help set up, run and manage a wide variety of GWS events! Do a little bit or a lot—you will have great fun and . . . be most appreciated! Submit inquiries to GWS President Bill Hopper at (202) 363-4189.

# Section Officers, Board Members

---

## Officers

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Bill Hopper  
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Reston, VA 20190-3823  
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Janet McFarland (703) 765-9405

## Regional Director

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E-mail: greg@eoecho.com

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E-mail: kdhirtes@comcast.net

FAX: (703) 521-0819

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Comparisons are between Michelin touring tires.

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