

# StarTracks 2011



Volume 7, Issue 1

January-February 2011

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## Our Festive Holiday Party at the German American Club

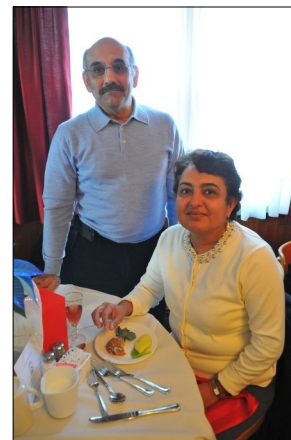
The Northern New Jersey Section started what may very well be a new tradition by having its Winter Party at the German - American Club in Clark, New Jersey, on December 5, 2010. The Deutcher Club, as it is called, established in 1935, has long been a hub for cultural and entertainment events for the German-American community, and our Section originally participated in Mercedes-Benz Night in its shady Biergarten on the hottest evening in July 2010. We enjoyed that July night so much, we decided to have our winter holiday party (indoors of course), in their excellent facility. As is our Section's long tradition, members brought Toys for Tots, which were placed under the Club's Christmas tree.

Seventy members of our own and neighboring chapters enjoyed a buffet lunch of sturdy fare starting out with herring or smoked salmon, salad, and continuing to various sausages, sauerbraten, chicken, and loin of pork, accompanied by sauerkraut and potatoes. A delicious choice of desserts followed.

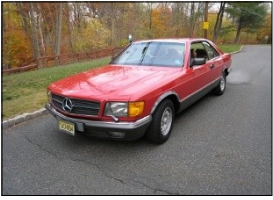
After lunch came the Section's various awards. Few members have attended Club functions as long and as loyally as Bob Donnelly, who received a pin in recognition. (It was also his 56th wedding anniversary!) The executive board of our Section received engraved "sun catchers," as did our contributing dealers and advertisers (either personally delivered by a member or mailed). All members received a red box containing four handmade glass Christmas ornaments from Mercedes-

Benz. And the Member of the Year was...Loni Spingarn, Ken Spingarn's wife--someone who's always ready to show her red 450SL or Ken's olive-green 240D at Section functions.

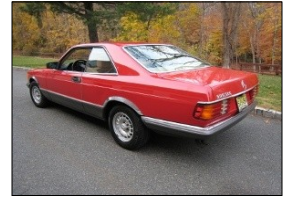
At the conclusion of festivities, attending members voted to hold the 2011 Holiday Party again at the German American Club. More photo on page 8 and 9.



**FOR SALE: 1985 Mercedes Benz 300 TD Diesel station wagon.** Navy blue exterior, saddle M.B. Tex. interior. With the optional third seat , manual sunroof, am/fm cassette Air Cond. Power windows, luggage rack, Drives great and looks good. too! 229,000 miles owned for the last 8 years and driven locally only in nice weather. A real classic wagon! \$4875. Seller details below



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**FOR SALE: 1995 SL500.** Garaged and in excellent condition. 61,200 miles. VIN #WDBFA67E5SF124534. Includes four snow tires on rims. \$14,000. Jim Schuftan 2 Rainbow Ridge Drive, Livingston, NJ 07039 Call: 973-992-7597



**FOR SALE: 1987 560SL Convertible.** Arctic White with Navy leather interior. Two tops (white hard top and navy soft top). Hard top comes with wheeled caddy for storage. Pirelli P4000 Super Touring tires. Alpine 6 CD and cassette player with AM/FM radio. Always covered and garaged. 102K miles. Maintained by a Mercedes mechanic. Excellent condition. Driven only on weekends and in good weather. Asking \$14,500. Call Rick 973-464-5845



**FOR SALE: 2002 SLK 230** Pristine condition. Single owner, garage kept. All scheduled services made. Complete records and carfax report available. Automatic with tiptronic gearbox. 6 CD changer and machined aluminum trim. Like new. You won't find this car in better condition. 74,000 miles. \$11,500 Firm. Includes extra set of 4 Bridgestone Blizzak Winter Tires with 1 season of wear. Contact: [aimeejrdeblasis@gmail.com](mailto:aimeejrdeblasis@gmail.com) or (201) 779-7226



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### **Reminder:**

Did you know that **For Sale** ad submissions are free for members? Just email your ad to the editor by the 21st of the month prior to publication. You may include one or more digital photos with your ad. Send to [khs@openix.com](mailto:khs@openix.com)

### **Notice:**

The next deadline for submission of all written and graphic material to the editor is March 21, 2011 Please email your submissions to Ken Spingarn [khs@openix.com](mailto:khs@openix.com)



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# Welcome New Members

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**Douglas Cochrane**

**Anthony Crupi**

**William Ethem**

**Paul Felsen**

**Jose Fragoso**

**John Gallo**

**Joseph Giunta**

**William Hopf**

**Peter and Patricia Jansen**

**Tom Kressly**

**Dr. Robert Leon**

**Vincent McDonald Sr.**

**James Mcilvaine**

**Federico Mora and Helen Cho**

**Homer Mosley**

**Thomas Nichilo**

**Jeffery Palmer**

**Charles E. Ratliff**

**Marvin Rodriquez**

**Andrew Schroter**

**Stephen Simon**

**Zenop Tuncer**

**James Vinci**

**Randy Weinerman**

**Len Wesling**

**James Wong**



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## "Tire Kicking" Saturday, February 26, 2011 - 10 AM

Felipe from Precision Auto Center has invited us once again for a Tech Session.

Arrive at 9:30 for bagels and coffee. Session starts at 10 AM. We will have the opportunity to "inspect" YOUR vehicle on the lift ! VERY(!) limited space available, so please register early and indicate if you would like your vehicle to be inspected (Mercedes Benz only). An effort will be made to accommodate everybody who signs up for the inspection, but we may have to randomly select vehicle's depending on participation. (Note: There is a Diner right across the street in case you arrive early or want to have lunch after the event) We will also have a raffle for two \$100 MBCA-NNJS gift certificates redeemable at **Precision Auto Center**. 115 Rt 46 West Rockaway, NJ 07866 **973-625-7600** [www.carserviceautorepair.com](http://www.carserviceautorepair.com) Please contact Lucille Chabala for Registration: **973-731-9133** or [LuLu-Chab@aol.com](mailto:LuLu-Chab@aol.com)

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# High Gear

John Kuhn Bleimaier



When the snow is on the pavement our attention just naturally turns to the driving wheels. Operating a motor vehicle under slippery conditions exaggerates the effect of our driver inputs. On ice our vehicle will begin to slide at just a fraction of the speed and "g" forces which would provoke a skid on dry pavement. Nevertheless, the basic handling characteristics of our automobiles are the same regardless of road surface. If a particular vehicular design will under steer in the wet it will under steer in the dry, just at a different break away velocity. For this reason taking driving lessons on a wet skid pad is a great way to learn your car's handling and to refine your own driving technique. That's really one of the best reasons to participate in the track and autocross events sponsored by our Mercedes-Benz Club of America. Of course driving in the winter here in New Jersey provides us all with some pretty intense experience behind the wheel as well.

When wing shooters get together they discuss the relative merits of side-by-side versus over/under shotguns. When fishermen gather they dispute the pros and cons of dry fly versus bob & sinker. Automobile aficionados tend to debate the benefits of rear wheel drive as opposed to front wheel drive. It's an ongoing argument.

I am a proponent of rear wheel drive. Motorcars propelled by the rear wheels are more sensitive to driver input; typically have better weight distribution; and provide more alternatives for setting up in order to obtain optimal cornering. I recognize that front wheel drive cars place engine weight over the driving wheels providing greater traction in mud or deep snow. However, the price which is paid for this advantage is under steer aplenty. From my perspective the key to optimum traction for rear wheel drive cars is the use of four aggressive snow tires and possibly carrying a couple of hundred pounds of sand ballast in the trunk under snowy conditions.

Mercedes-Benz passenger cars are by and large rear wheel driven. That is because our cars are designed by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. You simply cannot enjoy the sport of driving on the twisty back roads to the maximum extent unless your rear wheels are pushing you down the road. Provoking a little over steer in a sweeper is virtually impossible in a front wheel drive car. Engine braking is particularly gratifying when it is undertaken from the rear.

For those who are compelled to spend a great deal of time behind the wheel in mud or deep snow, Mercedes offers its all wheel drive system called 4matic. As I understand it, 4matic is engineered to provide the closest possible driving experience to rear wheel drive with the added assistance of power application to the front wheels under slippery conditions. It's a good compromise for those who feel that they really need that extra little bit of traction. As with every compromise a sacrifice is indicated. All wheel drive vehicles weigh more; get lower fuel economy; and have somewhat less lively dynamics than their rear wheel driven siblings.



Personally I am not inclined to give up the maximum of driving pleasure for an extra measure of practicality. My ideal is a rear wheel driven starship. Once you've become accustomed to the level of performance that such a Mercedes has to offer it is difficult to settle for anything less for your conveyance of choice. I would thus advocate owning a rear wheel drive enthusiast vehicle for most of your driving and retaining a real SUV for those occasions when we find ourselves up to the hubs in mud or snow. By the way, Mercedes-Benz makes just the right sort of sports utility vehicles to fill that particular niche in your garage and in your life.



## AACA Car Show at Automatic Switch Co.

The first Sunday in May is the date reserved for the AACA Car Show in Florham Park, NJ. This year it is **Sunday, May 1st**. If you've never been there, it's definitely worth checking out. It's a big show and there is always such a diverse collection of Antiques and Classics in attendance.

For the last couple of years, the Mercedes Club NNJS has had our own section right at the entrance to the show. We'll be there again this year, so if you want to be there with us just let us know and we'll save you a spot! More details in our next issue.



# Annual Toys for Tots Drive

Thanks to our members for the  
 Overwhelming  
 Yuletide  
 Surprises and gifts  
 For the children of  
 Other families who are  
 Really struggling at this  
 Time  
 Of the year  
 The  
 Support was greatly appreciated



At the annual Holiday Party the NNJS members and their guests once again showed their overwhelming support of this wonderful endeavor that our section has contributed toward for many, many years. The gifts filled the entire back of our 1995 E320 wagon (back seats folded down in order to accommodate the gifts). We dropped the gifts off at a local police station and the officers on duty were astounded at the amount and quality of the gifts that were being donated. The generosity of our section never ceases to amaze me. *Valerie Cristiano*



All Photos by Carl Ian Schwartz



# Holiday Party Celebration at the Deutcher Club





## Tech session at Becker AutoSound Saturday, February 12th

**C**ome at 9:30 for coffee and bagels. Presentation starts at 10 AM We will be awarding two \$100.00 gift certificates to member attendees.

We would like to give a presentation regarding Mercedes-Benz radio systems evolution from mid-50's to current day. We will also touch base regarding the original speaker systems and what is currently available (original and upgrade).

We will also show some of our magical things like incorporating iPod / AUX Audio Input cables to just about any radio, including older tube classics. We will also touch on the subject of radio replacements, where customers want to replace an older cassette version radio with a current CD generation (and some even offer Bluetooth). We also want to show what we do with older and current Hirschmann antenna rebuild and sales In general, we are looking to have a nice relaxed chat session and pick the brains of the club members regarding what it is they are looking for and how we may be able to assist them with their own Mercedes vehicles.

**Becker AutoSound, LLC** Attn: Ed Ebel in Service 170 North Fifth Street Saddle Brook, NJ 07663 201-773-0976



### Deutsche Classic - Fleetwood, PA

will be held on Saturday July 11, 2011. The event offers a full day of entertainment for the German auto enthusiast with events including a judged car show (German marques only) expecting about 400 vehicles.

A parts swap meet, car corral and other special events round out the day. The \$15 dollar admission fee includes lunch. Wow, what a great deal and a nice event. This event is suitable for the whole family and is held at a municipal park. The drive time is less than 2 hours a great way to spend a summer Saturday. More info in our next issue.

Their website is: <http://www.deutscheclassic.com/>

### Vice President's Message.....Nick Ford



Happy New Year Everyone!

It's been a rough January. I've hardly been able to take out my Mercedes at all since the holidays. I'm guessing all you ML, GL(K), and G owners are loving this weather.

2010 was a good year for the NNJS, with all the events that we had. Many were new ones for the club. Thanks to all who ran and assisted the events in 2010. We've got a lot of new events planned for 2011, as well as some of our regular events (June Jamboree, Falkenhorst Picnic). Last year was our first year at the German American Club in Clark. We had a tremendous turnout and so much fun we're doing it again this year! So check out our latest list of events, and if you haven't been to one lately, come out and join us.



## From the President ..... Joe Grattan



As we take the hard turn into 2011 I want to share my rear view mirror as well as a look thru the windscreen.

**IN THE REARVIEW – 2010** We directly sponsored or recommended or supported 23 events in 2010. A total of about 1,200 members & their guests enjoyed these car shows, driving events, luncheons, tech sessions, dinners and parties. But it wasn't all beer and skittles

### REGRETS OF 2010:

- We did not get a lot of teenagers out to our events. Where are them kids? Being a grandfather of a 13 and 14 year old I understand they are too cool. Lean on them to humor you. They might realize you really DO know what you are talking about. Clearly, they anticipate a car, or at least a license, is in their near future. They might benefit from your support. Allow them to text if they need to.
- The Driver Education program with AAA fell flat. This would have provided useful information as well as a reduction in car insurance to participants. Absolutely no interest. We will not schedule this again.
- The annual picnic in Hopewell did not draw the usual crowd. It was a Sunday. We will not schedule a Sunday any more. Saturday is a better day. The more folks that show the more fun we have.
- The Kart racing got rained out. We will re-schedule in 2011.

There are a lot of car shows we did not take part in. That will always be the case. We are asked to be part of events that just do not fit into the schedule.

### THRU THE WINDSCREEN – 2011

As you have seen in the recent email, we have planned, so far, 20 events for 2011. Tech sessions at MB of Freehold, Becker Auto Sound, Precision Auto Center, Judges Seminar, MB Collision Center.

The **June Jamboree at Mercedes Headquarters** in Montvale is our premier event and has been for almost 50 years. **MB Day in Summit, German Marque in Fleetwood, AACA in Florham Park, MB night at the Deutcher Club, Fairfield Concours and the Alpine Classic** are some of the car shows we will take part in.

We had a great time at the Auto XX at Giants Stadium last Fall. We will do this twice this year. Karting is planned again. We have never been to the quarter mile straight-a-way near Hackettstown. Seems like fun. Let's give it a try. The Covered Bridge Tour was a great time 6 years ago. We will do it again this Fall.

### Let's talk about emails for a minute. *Do we have an email address for you?*

If you have an email address but have not shared it with us you might want to ask yourself why. We have 550 members in our Section. I have emails for only 475. If you are one of the 75 that have not given us your email address you need to focus on information accessibility.

Perhaps you are concerned you will lose control of your personal information. **We do not share your email.** Let's face it all you are sending me an email address – nothing more.

Perhaps you are concerned you will get a lot of emails you do not want. We send out **one email per event**, about a week before the event takes place. You can always opt out at any time. There is a link in each email to do that quickly and easily. Your email is safe with us BUT not safe from them folks from Nigeria that have bonds / precious metals / whatever to sell. Have you received any of those lately?

It happened twice last year that events were suddenly planned or suddenly rescheduled. The only way to contact everyone is email. There is talk about establishing our own Facebook page or a Twitter account. Other Sections have done it. MBUSA has theirs.

2010 was a great year for us. 2011 will be the same. See you there.



## Steinway Society of Greater Princeton

### Piano Recital with Mariam Nazarian

### 3:00 PM Sunday, March 13, 2011



**Mariam Nazarian** made her Carnegie Hall debut at the age of sixteen as the youngest pianist in Carnegie's history to have performed J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations BWV 988. She has appeared with the Boston Pops, the Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, the St. Petersburg Symphony, the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra, and the Princeton Symphony, among others, and has toured in solo capacity throughout Europe and the US. The musicale will include works by Bach and Chopin.

The musicale will be held at the **Lawrenceville Recital Hall of Jacobs Music, 2540 Brunswick Pike on Route 1, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648 at 3:00pm**. A social hour, with a buffet of delicious hors d'oeuvres and illuminating conversation with the artist, follows the musicale.

Open to the public, admission is \$18 (\$10 for full-time students). Considerable savings may be gained by becoming a member which includes admission to all six musicales. Memberships are \$50 individuals and \$85 family.

*There is a historic relationship between Mercedes-Benz and Steinway. Prior to the First World War the Steinway Piano Company of Long Island City, New York assembled Mercedes automobiles under license for the North American market. A surviving Steinway Mercedes is today in the possession of Mercedes-Benz USA. In commemoration of this mighty, transatlantic collaboration of yore, the members of NNJS-MBCA are invited to attend a musicale presented by the Steinway Society in Lawrenceville, New Jersey on March 13th at 3:00pm. Those wishing to attend are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes early as tickets are only sold at the door and seating is limited. A Steinway piano and a Mercedes automobile, two classic instruments!*

### Looking Ahead To New Memberships

#### By Dave Hall, Membership Chair

In case you haven't noticed the "Welcome New Members" section of this newsletter on page 4, we have something to be happy about - a very large number of new members, indeed! We need to look forward when it comes to new club members! I can't do it all alone; every member, new and old, needs to be on the lookout for recruiting new blood!

The easiest way I can think of (other than shouting from the rooftops) is by using the Internet. 430 of our 550 local members have supplied us with their email addresses, which means they can access the internet. And speaking of the Internet, if you haven't looked at our "snail mail" newsletters (crafted by Ken Spingarn) online, you are really missing out! First of all, when the newsletters are viewed on a computer screen, they're in full color, and secondly, you can zoom up on any of the pictures and see much more detail than is possible in the mailed, printed version - but I digress

One avenue of Internet access that has not been explored is social media, which includes websites such as Facebook.com and Twitter.com. I am planning to start a Facebook Fan Page for our local group. There is currently an international Mercedes Benz fan page on Facebook (with a lot of foreign language comments), but nothing local.

I assume that we don't currently have too many club members using Facebook, but it IS very popular, growing day by day, and it's an easy-peasy way to attract new people. I know Joe Grattan has joined, but don't know of any other members. If you ARE on Facebook and are reading this, "friend" me at [www.facebook.com/davideo.net](http://www.facebook.com/davideo.net). Another social media outlet that is popular is Twitter. I would be glad to "tweet" about upcoming events. My Twitter handle is @davideo\_hall - and feel free to "follow" me on Twitter.

If you have **ANY** suggestions, please drop me an email at [Davideo@comcast.net](mailto:Davideo@comcast.net)



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# Anything + Everything Mercedes-Benz

by Andreas Molde — Roadside Assistance Enhancement

**A**s of Jan. 1, 2011, the Roadside Assistance Program of Mercedes-Benz (still considered the best program in the business) has undergone some changes. In the past, ANY Mercedes Benz was eligible to receive "Roadside", regardless of age of the vehicle, in/out of warranty or if you were the original owner or not. "Roadside" would provide a jump start, install your spare if you had a flat tire and even provide 2-3 gallons of fuel if you ran out SIGN&DRIVE, FREE OF CHARGE!

You are still able to receive Roadside Assistance if YOUR VEHICLE IS ELIGIBLE, with the added bonus of FREE TOWING to the nearest Dealer. Of course now you are wondering what makes you (actually your MB) "ELIGIBLE". The short version is that if your MB is still under (Factory) New, Extended or Certified Pre-Owned warranty, it's eligible.

If your MB is out of warranty, but you purchased it, new or used, prior to Jan. 4, 2011 from an MB Dealer and still own it, you are eligible. If your MB is out of warranty and you are not the original owner, but you serviced your MB at a dealership (a single transaction of at least \$100, within the last 18 month-must be service related, (buying parts or accessories over the counter does not count), you are eligible.

You can still receive Roadside Assistance, even if your MB does not fall within the "Eligible Categories, just not for free. The "SIGN&DRIVE" is available for a \$ 75 Flat Rate and "Towing" is \$135 to the nearest MB Dealer. I like to point out that it is YOUR MB, NOT YOU, that needs to be eligible, which is determined by MBUSA's Call Center at the time of the Roadside Assistance Call and VIN specific.

So, let's say you own several MB's but one of them is not eligible for free" Roadside" and you need a jump start on that particular vehicle, you would have to pay a \$75 flat rate for the Sign&Drive service, it does not matter that you own other, eligible MB's. On the other hand you receive the added bonus of free towing (within limits) on all your eligible MB's. Lastly, if you need Roadside Assistance you can use the "Wrench Button" on your Teleaid/MBRACE System (if so equipped and you are a subscriber) or call: **1-800-FOR-MERCedes** (1-800-367-6372)

For further info on MBUSA Roadside Assistance Enhancement go to : [www.mercedesroadside.com](http://www.mercedesroadside.com)

## Financial Accounting for calendar / fiscal 2010

Opening balance Jan 1, 2010	\$20,166
All income	\$21,439
Sub total	\$41,605
All expenses	\$17,582
Balance December 31, 2010	\$24,022

Smile baby, we're in the black





## NEW and Exclusive Benefit for Northern New Jersey Section Mercedes-Benz Club of America Members:

# No-cost Membership in XCEL Federal Credit Union!

## Special offers for Northern New Jersey Section members only:

### VEHICLE LOANS

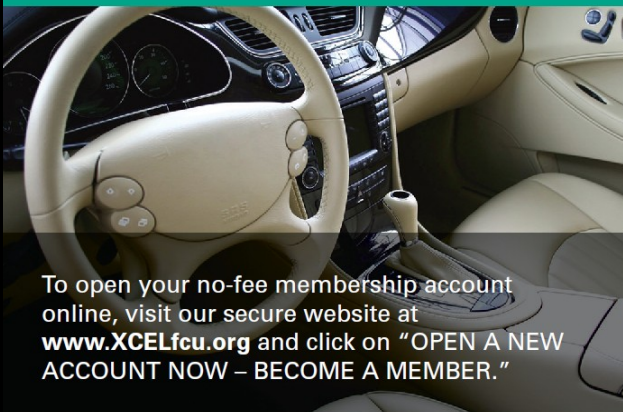
- New and pre-owned vehicle rates as low as **3.00% APR\*** for terms up to 36 months
- Other rates and terms available

### FEDERALLY-INSURED, 48-MONTH CERTIFICATE

- **2.40% APY\*** – \$500 minimum (Penalty for early withdrawal)
- Other rates and terms available



For more information:  
Call Ray de Quintal at **201-546-2928** or  
e-mail **raydequintal@XCELfcu.org**.



To open your no-fee membership account online, visit our secure website at **www.XCELfcu.org** and click on "OPEN A NEW ACCOUNT NOW – BECOME A MEMBER."

### WHO WE ARE...

XCEL is a New Jersey-headquartered, not-for-profit, and member-owned financial institution. We are federally insured and we have been competently serving our members since 1964.

### WHO CAN JOIN...

Northern New Jersey Section members and their immediate family members.

### WHAT WE OFFER...

Outstanding rates on vehicle and home equity loans, mortgages, credit cards, checking, savings, money markets and certificates. See our complete product and rate listings at **www.XCELfcu.org**. We are members of a network with 28,000 surcharge-free ATMs and 4,000 shared branch service centers across the U.S.

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\*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. APY = Annual Percentage Yield. Rates quoted include the special bonus and discount offers and are subject to change without notice.





## NNJS Upcoming Events

**Saturday, February 12** — Tech Session — Becker AutoSound — Saddlebrook, NJ — See page 10

**Saturday, February 26** — Tech Session — Precision Auto Center — Rockaway, NJ — See page 4

**Sunday, March 13** — Marium Nazarian Piano Recital — Steinway Society of Greater Princeton — Lawrenceville, NJ — See page 12

**Sunday, April 17** —Auto XX — Meadowlands Stadium parking lot E — Details to follow in next issue

**April 27— May 1** — StarTech and National Meeting — Wisconsin — See National Star Magazine for details.

**Sunday, May 1** — AACA Car Show — Special MB Grouping — Automatic Switch Co. — Florham Park, NJ

**Saturday, May 7** — Judging Seminar — Details to be announced.

