



STAR TRACKS 2004

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA – NORTHERN NEW JERSEY SECTION

January/February 2004

Volume 5 Number 1

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NNJS 2003 Holiday Party

The stars were glittering in the sky overhead as members of the Northern New Jersey Section drove their shining Stars into the parking lot at the Hanover Manor on Saturday, December 13, 2003 and gathered for their annual Holiday Party. Our room was festively decorated with a Christmas tree, wreaths, garland, and other glittering reminders of the season. The tables were colorfully decorated as well with fresh floral centerpieces which one lucky person at each table was able to bring home at the end of the evening. There were also beautiful enameled snowman ornaments as a favor for each couple attending the party.

assisted them in carrying the toys into their showroom to be put on display. When Alan told them that our M-B Club was responsible



2003 Member of the Year Ed Jahn receives his award from NNJS President, Valerie Cristiano. Ed has been an NNJS member since 1976.



Win and Chet Hwilka with Mr. Benz Bear II, all pose for Santa's camera at the Holiday Party in East Hanover.

The evening began with a sumptuous array of hors d'oeuvres. Everything was so delicious we had to make sure that we saved room for the dinner. After the cocktail hour we sat down to a wonderful dinner of salmon, chicken, and prime rib.

for donating all of those toys that were just brought in, they were very impressed. They shook Alan's hand and asked him to thank everyone for their generosity in helping to make the Christmas 2003 collection, the largest donation of toys they have ever received at Royal Chevrolet. One salesman said, "Boy, Mercedes-Benz people really know how to come through."

As our members entered the room, they placed donations of new, unwrapped toys under the tree for "Toys for Tots". It was very heartwarming to see the generosity of our members with the number of gifts for charity piled high around the tree. At the end of the evening, members Teri and Alan Snyder gathered up the toys and squeezed them into their Star sleigh and delivered them to Royal Chevrolet in Bound Brook. Three salesmen

There was also another charity event being held at the Holiday Party. Our section commissioned another "One-of-a-Kind" Mercedes Benz bear which was auctioned off during the course of the evening. Benz Bear II was placed on his own table where members had the opportunity to bid silently on him during the evening. At the end of the night all members were given the opportunity to bid on the

(Continued on page 6)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...



Happy and Healthy New Year! It was such a pleasure to meet so many new faces at our Holiday Party this year and I am looking forward to seeing all and of them again and others during the course of the year's activities. Our section is a very active one with at least twelve scheduled events during the year; not only do we have members from our section attending our events, but we have members of other sections attending them as well. We try to plan diverse activities to appeal to all of our members. Our section runs our events at cost, and we also subsidize many of our events in order to make them affordable to our members. Each year, our section also has two charity events in order to help those less fortunate than us. We will continue this practice in the future as we have in the past at the September picnic with our silent auction and the "One-of-a-Kind" Benz Bear which is auctioned off for charity at the annual Holiday Party.

EDITOR'S COMMENT



Happy New Year 2004 with all good wishes! This is a Leap Year, and we'll be hopping with a whole host of activities, both old favorites and new venues, to bring out the best in you and your Star Car during the next few months. The recent arctic cold snap delivered such low temperatures that car wash bucket water would freeze instantly on contact with the outdoors, and calcium chloride white splash frustratingly coated every body paint panel thwarting my efforts to keep my cars clean. We all will look forward to a break in outside temperatures so we can resume our Car Club activities with gusto. Our January meeting had quite a large turnout to discuss planning ideas and as always, volunteers and writers are welcomed. If you didn't make it last month, please join us for the Sweetheart Brunch in February where we shall share the spirit of love and Valentine's along with Mercedes-Benz!

Ellen – "190 girl" eruck@kirkland.com

STAR TRACKS 2003

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President:

Valerie Cristiano
973-377-2882
vjcristiano@msn.com

Vice President-

Operations:
Ken Spingarn
973-377-1997
khs@openix.com

Vice President-

Communications:
Frederick G. Perry
703-359-2965
amtech@webspan.net

Treasurer:

Lucille Chabala
973-731-9133
lulsmalley@msn.com

Secretary:

Pauline Longosz
973-635-2136
pmlmcas2@aol.com

Technical Advisor:

David Veith
973-731-5871
d1vbenz@aol.com

Editor:

Ellen D. Ruck
908-879-4228
eruck@kirkland.com

Mid Atlantic Regional

Director:
Robbie Ackerman
robby@ackerman.net

Ed Jahn – NNJS Member of the Year 2003

The Northern New Jersey Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America is proud to announce Ed Jahn as its Member of the Year. Ed has been a member of our section for over twenty-five years and has worked diligently to enhance our section. He has not only served as a judge for our section, but for numerous other sections as well. Ed also served as Head Judge this year for our 40th June Jamboree. He is a dedicated worker and member of NNJS and MBCA. Ed has actively involved his daughter in car show activities thus fostering and encouraging youthful members to grow up into the life-long hobby and spirit of Mercedes-Benz. He has an outstanding reputation and is truly deserving of this award.



Monica Douyan and Joe Cristiano having a great time while Joan and Bob Donnelly visit Santa

Sweetheart Brunch – February 8, 2004

It is time to ask your sweetie, your best friend, your spouse, your child and come and join us for the 7th Annual NNJS Sweetheart Brunch. We will gather at **12 noon at Chez Z in New Providence**. Our menu choices will consist of sausage and bacon; vegetable lasagna; fresh fruit salad; garden salad; Caesar salad; chicken francaise; seafood crepes; an omelet station; home fries; assorted juices; coffee; tea; and soft drinks.

The cost per person is \$25. Chez Z is at 1260 Springfield Avenue. 908.655.4000 email: info@chez-z.com

Directions:

From Short Hills Mall-Rt. 24 East: Take River Rd. Exit, go 100 feet thru 1st light, make left onto Passaic Ave. Go 2 lights, make right onto Springfield Ave. Go 2 miles, On left is Village Shopping Center, make left into parking lot, Chez-Z is on your left.

Route 78 East: Get off Exit 44, end of ramp make a left at light and go onto Glenside Ave. Go 1 mile, make left and go under highway, Glenside Rd. Go 3 lights, make right onto Springfield Ave. Go 50 feet, make right into Village Shopping Center lot, Chez-Z is on the left.

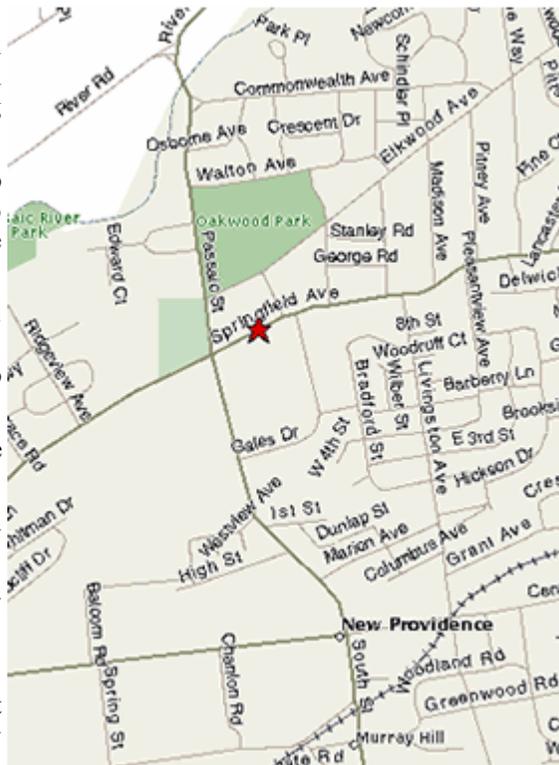
Route 78 West: Get off Exit 43 and bear right onto Diamond Hill Rd. Go 2 lights, make right onto Mountain Ave. Go 3 lights, make left onto South St. Go 2 lights make right onto Springfield Ave. Go 50 feet, make right into Village Shopping Center parking lot. Chez-Z is on the left.

Garden State Pkwy South: Exit 142 to 78 West. Follow directions for Route 78 West

Garden State Pkwy North: Exit 142 to 78 East. Take the first exit and jughandle to go 78 West. Follow directions to Route 78 West.

Route 22 West: (Watchung, NJ) Turn right at McDonalds, before Blue Star Shopping Center. Make right at end onto Diamond Hill Rd. Go 3 lights make a right onto Mountain Ave. Follow Route 78 west directions from here.

Route 22 East: (Watchung, NJ) Just after Sears, stay in right lane. Make right turn under overpass(exit Snuffy's/ Pantagais Restaurant) Follow sign for New Providence, make quick right turn and go over Rt. 22. Continue straight on Diamond Hill Rd. Go to 4th light, make a right onto Mountain Ave. Follow directions for Route 78 West from here.



Sweetheart Brunch – Sunday 8 February 2004 – Chez Z

Reply by 4 February 2004

Name(s): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

_____ persons @ \$25 per person = Total _____

Send Form and Check payable to **MBCA-NNJS to Lucille Chabala, 6 Brook Way, West Orange, NJ 07052** Phone 973-731-9133

MB DEALERSHIP TECH SESSION

Greg Calabro

On November 15, 2003, BENZEL BUSCH Motors, located in the heart of Englewood, NJ, hosted a Tech Session for approximately 40 members the Northern New Jersey Section.

After dining on the traditional donuts and apple cider, we toured the new car showroom which included many AMG models. Being the "car guy" that I am, I was impressed that there was a G55 on the floor however, the crowd favorite was the Maybach! Bill Zimmerman, general sales manager at Benzel Busch answered questions about the vehicle for at least 15 minutes. Later, while a group of members were admiring a S-Class, I was busy sitting in a rare C320 coupe that has a 6-speed manual while daydreaming about taking it out on the track.

And things only got better. We made our way to the service area where service technician, Rick Watkins, performed and demonstrated an "A" scheduled service on my 2003 SL500 while answering questions for over an hour. The questions were as low tech as how to remove the oil from the engine, and as high tech regarding computer diagnostics.

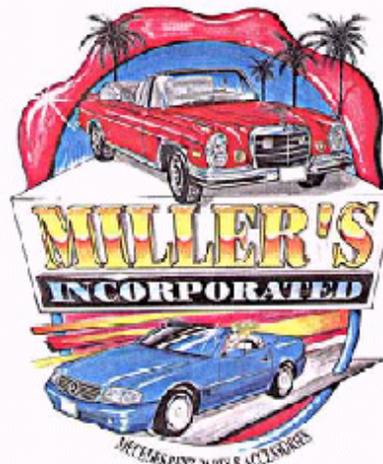
Our next stop was the pre-owned car showroom. Bill told us about the history of the cars on the floor, the quality of the vehicles, and the Starmark warranty.

Just before we left for the day, Bill handed out MB hats and key chains to all attendees. Everyone at Benzel Busch made our group feel welcome. For me, it has been that way ever since I became a customer there in April 1997.

Special thanks to our tour guide and the person responsible for setting up the tech session, Bill Zimmerman, general sales manager. Thanks also to Frank Scott, service advisor; Rick Watkins, service techni-

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cian; and finally Joseph Agresta, executive Vice President and General Manager; and the Agresta Family; owners of Benzel-Busch Motor Car Corp.

Editor's Note: This is the 3rd event that Greg Calabro sponsored in 2003! Thanks Greg for all of your efforts, helping to make 2003 a successful year for NNJS.



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In Memoriam

MBCA-NNJS mourns the loss of Debie Genabith in December, 2003, beloved wife of Richard Genabith, a dedicated member of more than 30 years in our Club. Debie is also survived by two daughters, Amanda and Erica.

Some of you may remember the fun we had together painting pumpkins and driving on Fall Halloween rallies with the Genabith Family in recent years. We offer our respectful and heartfelt prayers and deepest sympathy, and hope that Spring 2004 will bring Richard and the girls back to the Club in their Silver E-class to join us again.

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From the Editor's Mailbag...

Valerie and Ellen,

My daughter and I really enjoyed the Christmas party. Thanks to you and everyone who helped organize the evening. Very nicely done! Can't wait till next year.

Thanks,
 Shelly Kennedy

Dear Ladies!

Thanks once again for a most enjoyable night at the annual Christmas party. You gals sure do know how to make the event elegant, fun and entertaining.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season & will see you in 2004! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

Sheila Ruesch

(Continued from page 1)

bear one more time at a LIVE auction. Members bid generously and the highest bidder and the winner of the bear was Chet Hwilka. A big "Thank You" goes out to Chet and all of the other members who bid on the specially commissioned Benz Bear. Music for our listening and dancing pleasure was once again provided by Pete Limone, our swinging, singing, saxophone, drum playing DJ. Pete delighted the crowd with his music and had the whole place up on their feet and dancing.

There was a special highlight this year as strains of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" were heard by our members Santa himself walked into our party. He certainly was a jolly fellow as he handed out the prizes of frosted glass snowmen to the contest winners. Santa graciously posed for pictures with the winners as they sat on his lap to collect their prizes.



Christi Kennedy shares a laugh with St. Nick

During the course of the evening members engaged in some Christmas trivia questions and some holiday word games. The winners of the Christmas Trivia Contest were 1st – Ron and Nancy Gossow, 2nd – Chet and Win Hwilka, and 3rd – Bob and Joan Donnelly. There were also some word games and the winners of this contest were: 1st – Nick and Barbara Ford; 2nd – Emil and Sheila Reusch; and tied for 3rd were Mary and Bill Marshall, Shelly and Christi Kennedy, Chet and Win Hwilka, and Peter and Mar-





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Poznerowicz.

also



A big Smile from Teri Snyder



Ron and Nancy Gossow with Santa

There were special awards presented to the first members who registered for the Holiday Party. That honor went to Al and Ida Gambardella and Nick and Barbara Ford. There was also a prize awarded to our youngest attendee Christi Kennedy.



Emil and Sheila Ruesch

The Antiques Road Show to Italy



Photo from *Antiques Roadshow* web site

NNJS is proud to announce its 4th annual Antique Road Show will be held on **Sunday, March 28, 2004 at the Bella Italia Ristorante**, a touch of Italy in North Jersey. Bella Italia is located at 535 Central Avenue in Orange, New Jersey. The phone number is 973-678-5538.

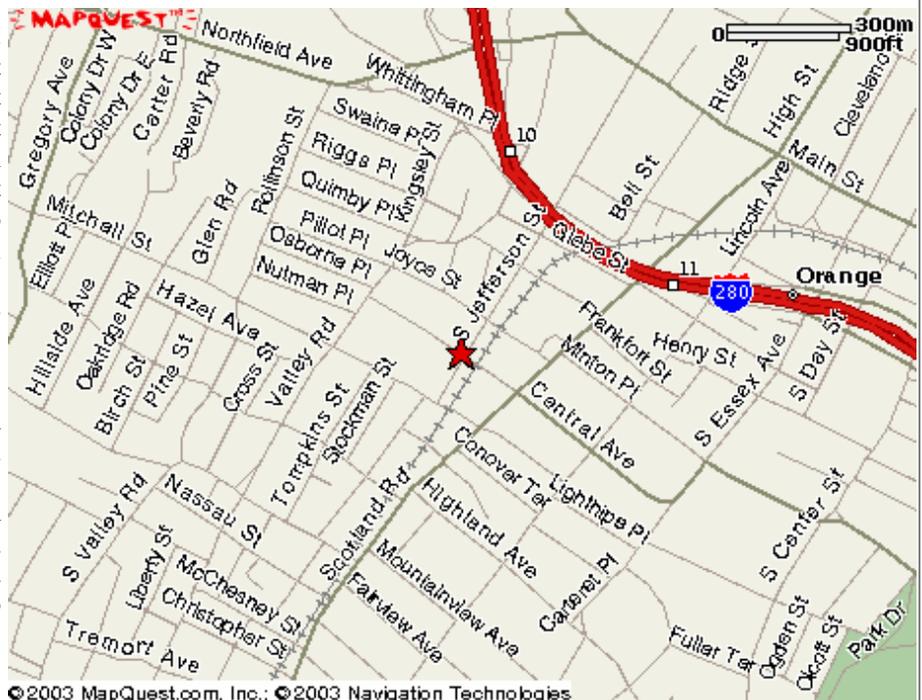
Alan Snyder, our resident antiques appraiser, will once again amaze us with his expertise in the field of antiques. He is looking forward to seeing some of your family treasures, garage sale finds, or that gift you stuck in the back of the closet ages ago because you had no clue as to what to do with it. You are encouraged to go digging for something special and/or unusual that you would like to have appraised. You may bring one, two, or three items. You may bring jewelry, small furniture, paintings, and many other things however, as in the past, Alan asks that you do not bring firearms or musical instruments.

We will gather at **12 noon** in our own private room and have a “Family Style” sit down dinner. The menu will consist of appetizers- fried calamari, mozzarella carozza, mussels marinara, cold antipasto; soup, penne with vodka sauce, veal, chicken, salmon, green beans, tossed salad, soda, coffee, tea, and ice cream for dessert. There will be a cash bar available. The cost per person will be \$25. Children under 5 are free and children 6 to 12 will be \$12.50. **Please respond to Lucille before March 22.**

Directions:

From the GSP North or South – Get off at exit 145 and follow signs to 280 West. Get off Route 280 at exit 10. There will be a light at the exit, make a right, go to second light and make a right onto Main Street. From there go to first traffic light and make a right on South Jefferson Street. From there go to first STOP sign and make a right onto Central Avenue. **Bella Italia** is on the right hand corner. There is a driveway next to the building which leads to the parking lot.

From 280 East – Get off at exit 9 and make a left at the light. Go to the second light and make a right onto Main Street. Go to second light and make a right onto South Jefferson Street. From there go to first STOP sign and make a right onto Central Avenue. **Bella Italia** is on the right hand corner. There is a driveway next to the building which leads to the parking lot.



Antiques Road Show – Sunday 28 March 2004 – Bella Italia

Reply by 22 March 2004

Name(s): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

_____ adults @ \$25 each + _____ children (age 6-12) @ \$12.50 each = Total _____

Send Form and Check payable to MBCA-NNJS to Lucille Chabala, 6 Brook Way, West Orange, NJ 07052 Phone 973-731-9133

OPERATION SANTA

Suzanne, Val, and I packed up the Jeep and left Ziggy at home because of the weather forecast and headed out before the snow hit. We were humming up I-287 and onto I-84 before the first "Honey, can we get off at the next rest stop?" was heard from the passenger seat. We stopped at the Plattekill rest stop for a trip to the necessary and a cup of coffee. As we were just about to start off, a smoke silver 1991 300TE with New Jersey plates pulled into the parking lot.

I jumped out and waved them down. It was Valerie and Joe Cristiano and they were also headed up to the Sagamore at Lake George for the Operation Santa Charity Ball to be held on Saturday night. We decided it might be fun to caravan the rest of the way. We had beautiful weather along the way and we managed to stay ahead of the snow. After stopping for a bite to eat, we headed back out to the highway to begin the rest of our journey.

When we arrived at Lake George, Joe and Valerie headed for the hotel and we headed for the local Wal-Mart to buy a bathing suit for Val. Can you imagine our disappointment when we walked down to the pool and found that it was closed for "renovations". Oh well! We went back to the room and changed clothes and then went to the Veranda for a drink and then we went to Mister Brown's Pub and enjoyed another drink in front of the fireplace before having dinner. Then it was back to the Veranda for the "special dessert party" along with other members of MBCA -specifically the Hudson -Mohawk Section. After bidding our fellow Benzers "Good Night" we headed up for a good night's sleep.

We woke up to a gray morning with about 8 inches of snow on the ground and a snowy, blustery forecast. We decided to have room service for breakfast after our morning run. Suzanne took Val to ballet lessons and then went to a yoga class. Since we had several hours before the Ball, with the pool closed, we decided to go into town. We gave Valerie and Joe a call and asked them if they would like to join us for a ride into town; they were quite eager to get out of the hotel. We piled into the Jeep and really put the four-wheel drive to the test.

We were competing for a spot on the road with the snowmobiles going up and down the main street in town. The day was not lost, however, some of the shops were open and were very glad to have some customers. It was quite a pleasant afternoon of shop owners serving hot cider and cookies; we especially liked the shop where the owner served us hot cider laced with Apple Jack - hot cider will never be the same again. We headed back to the hotel in order to get ready for the evening's festivities.

The evening was elegant. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by Santa, then some of his elves placed our unwrapped gifts under the tree. We enjoyed meeting and greeting other attendees and members of other MBCA sections as well. Richard Simonds, our National President, was also in attendance and graciously posed with members of MBCA in front of the tree so that we could have our picture taken.

This was our fifth year at the charity ball and Val decided that

she wanted to come and see what her parents raved about each year. She got dressed up in a long gown and the sitter brought her down and she had her picture taken in front of the tree as well as a few other places before returning to the room. We enjoyed the ball, the money raised from the ball, the charity auction, and the unwrapped gifts are then donated to a charity that helps those who are less fortunate in the Adirondack area.

After brunch on Sunday, we headed up to Lake Placid to allow Val to skate and to hear how her music would sound in the arena. On Monday, we rented ice space in order for her to practice for her competition to be held on January 9, 10, and 11. She will be competing in free style, artistic, and compulsory skating in the 2004 ISI (Ice Skating Institute) Lake Placid Championship.

We headed for home on Tuesday morning. The driving conditions were pristine and the sunshine, the clear blue sky, and the scenic countryside made the drive home picturesque.

The Operation Santa Charity Ball is a worthwhile event and is premier holiday party for the Hudson-Mohawk Section. I urge our members who are able to attend the ball next year. Perhaps we can even have a NNJS table.



At Operation Santa, standing from the left: Ed & Suzanne Jahn, Joe & Valerie Cristiano, from NNJS; Dave & Ginette Maslanka, Bob & Rita Gray, from Hudson-Mohawk Section, seated Santa, and, Richard Simonds, National President Mercedes Benz Club of America.

*-Ed Jahn
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*Ed's
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EDITOR'S JOURNAL:**SMART ROADSTER COUPE 2004...OPEN YOUR MIND**

On the last full day of UK overseas trading before we fly home to execute the London Heathrow airport drill, I always like to pay a quick visit to the car dealers in Northampton, North Hampshire. There, in the sparkling glass display cases of the Automotive Boutique, lie the collectible logo car goodies I crave to add to my collection.leather date books, key chains, flashlights, silk scarves, and sundry other gift items that have but one purpose in life—just to make you smile and enjoy them because it feels good to have adult toys. My favorite auto gift shops Mercedes-Benz and Porsche are side by side just beyond the main roundabout in town, and we have been there so frequently we need not consult the map. On this recent late Fall trip, however, in early December, we had to do battle with more than our share of rain, fog, and pervading dampness. At four o'clock in the pre-winter afternoon zone there is almost total darkness at that hour with very poor visibility.

We pulled into our customary Visitor Parking space but something didn't seem quite right in the hazy darkness next to the Mercedes-Benz dealer. Porsche was no longer partner, and instead in its place, an all-new Smart Car dealership had just opened its doors. We spied a Smart Car displayed outside on the wet grass gleaming under the floodlights, but more than that, it was the 2004 Smart Roadster-Coupe model. We tried to take a digital photograph to share with you but that was not entirely successful given the weather, and it looked like the dealership was closing for the evening. Noticing our piqued interest, however, was a friendly British salesman, who welcomed us inside to get a bird's eye view whilst discussing the cars' attributes, once we told him of our involvement with Star Cars in the USA. We gleaned quite a bit of information on these novel and racy little machines, first introduced to you by Stuart Birch, European Editor of The Star, in the Jan/Feb. 2003 issue in an article titled "Smart Roadster Debuts."

Smart Car is a brand of Daimler Chrysler produced overseas and not yet available for American consumption, although with steadily rising sales of roadsters in the US, the possibility remains strong in the next decade or sooner. The theme of the sales campaign overseas is "Open Your Mind". The sight of a Smart Roadster-Coupe will leave the viewer spellbound, and indeed, invite a closer look. I admit we felt compelled to give it a thorough once-over viewing after our initial eye contact with this interesting little creature, so captivating was its external appearance.

The lightweight, puristic car at 1,740 pounds with a supercharged three-cylinder engine delivering 81 hp from its 698 cc engine, delivers a thrilling experience behind the wheel to recreate an exhilarating ride reminiscent of the open, direct, and authentic roadster models of the 1950's and 60's. Driving pleasure has nothing to do with horsepower, so states the glossy brochure I was given. Change the gear, put your foot to the floor, and you will discover that the Smart Roadster-Coupe was built for a single purpose—your uncompromising driving pleasure. The wide tires, short overhangs, classic mid-engine/rear wheel drive layout, low center of gravity, and good weight distribution all add up to distinct ingredients for direct handling and outstanding cornering

performance for your sheer personal driving pleasure. Speed is measured at the rate of your pulse with your instincts telling you how fast to drive this responsive roadster, which will attain 1-100 kph (62 mph) in 11.2 seconds. Top speed for this vehicle is governed at 109 mph and European Union combined fuel consumption exceeds 43 mpg.

The design of the Roadster in unmistakably Smart (no pun intended) representing beauty that is unquestionably in proportion with distinctive lines, sporty low slung styling, and functional engineering based on the tridion safety cell. There are six delicious colors to choose from ranging from Spice Red to Shine Yellow to Glance Grey, and if you cannot decide which is your favorite, the Smart two-color concept allows the buyer to cus-



tomize the exterior to allow double the choice of color combinations. The body panels are flexible plastic material that are considerably lighter than steel and offer a host of advantages such as recyclability, rust resistance, and easy replacement for repairs.

Converting the roof for open top motoring is a cinch! The hard-top roof has two halves each weighing only 5 kg that can be easily removed and stashed into the rear luggage compartment. For driving in the UK, a special water resistant model is available. The entire interior passenger compartment is outfitted with a waterproof neoprene material similar to scuba suits with drain holes located along the bottom chassis so the ubiquitous UK rain can run through the car without sustaining damage.

Unfortunately, at press time the Smart Roadster-Coupe is not yet available in the USA, but if you were to take a liking to one and had a home overseas, GBP 14,500.00 would be required to take one home. That's approximately just under \$25,000 depending upon conversion rate, and certainly a heck of a lot of fun for this kind of investment. Of course, options are available such as Comfort Packages, special alloy wheels and tires, and exterior body panels which increase the base price. Straight from the factory or to "take away", there are extras for all tastes. I had to use great restraint from pulling out my credit card to order myself one in Spice Red with Jack Black body panels on the spot.but where would I drive it, beyond my dreams?

Editor's Note: More information can be obtained at www.thesmartcar.co.uk and www.smart.com

---Ellen D. Ruck

WINTER BRUNCH WARMS NNJS GROUP

Sunday, January 11th forty NNJS Members braved the winter cold to attend our first meeting of the year, the Winter Brunch. It was advertised as both a New Member meeting and General Planning session for the 2004 calendar year, and was held at the 18th century Long Valley Brew Pub upstairs stone walled loft overlooking the historic and snowy German Valley.

We had plenty of time for discussions of all kinds. The appetizers were well received and passed family style down the long twin tables while awaiting the luncheon buffet service, and come to think of it, we are all friends of a very large Mercedes family, so despite the ambient noise, we managed to carry onward with our business at hand.

John Bleimaier started the meeting with comments and an introduction to his friend of six years, Senator Igor Artemov, who was visiting from Pakrov, a small village between Moscow and Vladimir in Russia. Igor is a PhD Historian and Chairman of the political party Russian National Union, which represents the province of Vladimir. He took the floor and explained to us his visit's chief purpose was to raise funds for orphanages.... in very good English so we all could understand. As a Senator, he had a driver and explained that it is cowardly to wear a seat belt in Russian cars. While there are plenty of Mercedes overseas, they were expensive, so his personal choice was a German built Ford Skorpio. He offered us his good wishes and invited us to visit reciprocally anytime we are in the USSR.



After the main course was served and cleared, President Valerie Cristiano opened the business oriented section of the meeting with a recap of the 2003 monthly events and totals in attendance for each one. Of course the June Jamboree at Montvale Mercedes-Benz HQ had the largest turnout, but several other events had nearly a count of 40 persons attending. Treasurer Lucille Chabala gave a reading of the Club-Treasury and a short explanation of the funds, explaining that the Club breaks even or subsidizes costs for many events, but does not gain revenue from overcharging Members. Increases in Treasury are gained through National stipend, newsletter advertising, and fundraising promotions.

Following formal remarks, the floor was opened for a Member forum of comments, criticisms, and open discussion. Lively and animated banter crossed the crowded and noisy dining room as a variety of topics were brought up and aired for general debate. Con-

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cerns and issues were heard from all positions and voted upon publicly where called for.

Bob Wegner proposed choice of three summer car shows which sound very enticing. Sunday, May 16th is the 13th Annual Rotary Auto Show at Carnegie Center in Princeton. Various clubs exhibit pre 1979 cars of classic, foreign, exotic, and custom persuasion and may feature up to 400 cars that day. If MBCA-NNJS can gather a minimum of ten vehicles of any age, we can compete and participate as a Club showing at this venue. More info on this show will be in the upcoming newsletters. Bob also recommended the Monmouth Park Car Show at the horse track the third Sunday in July, and third Saturday in June for Meadowlands Arena Richard Nader Doo-Wop fun fest.

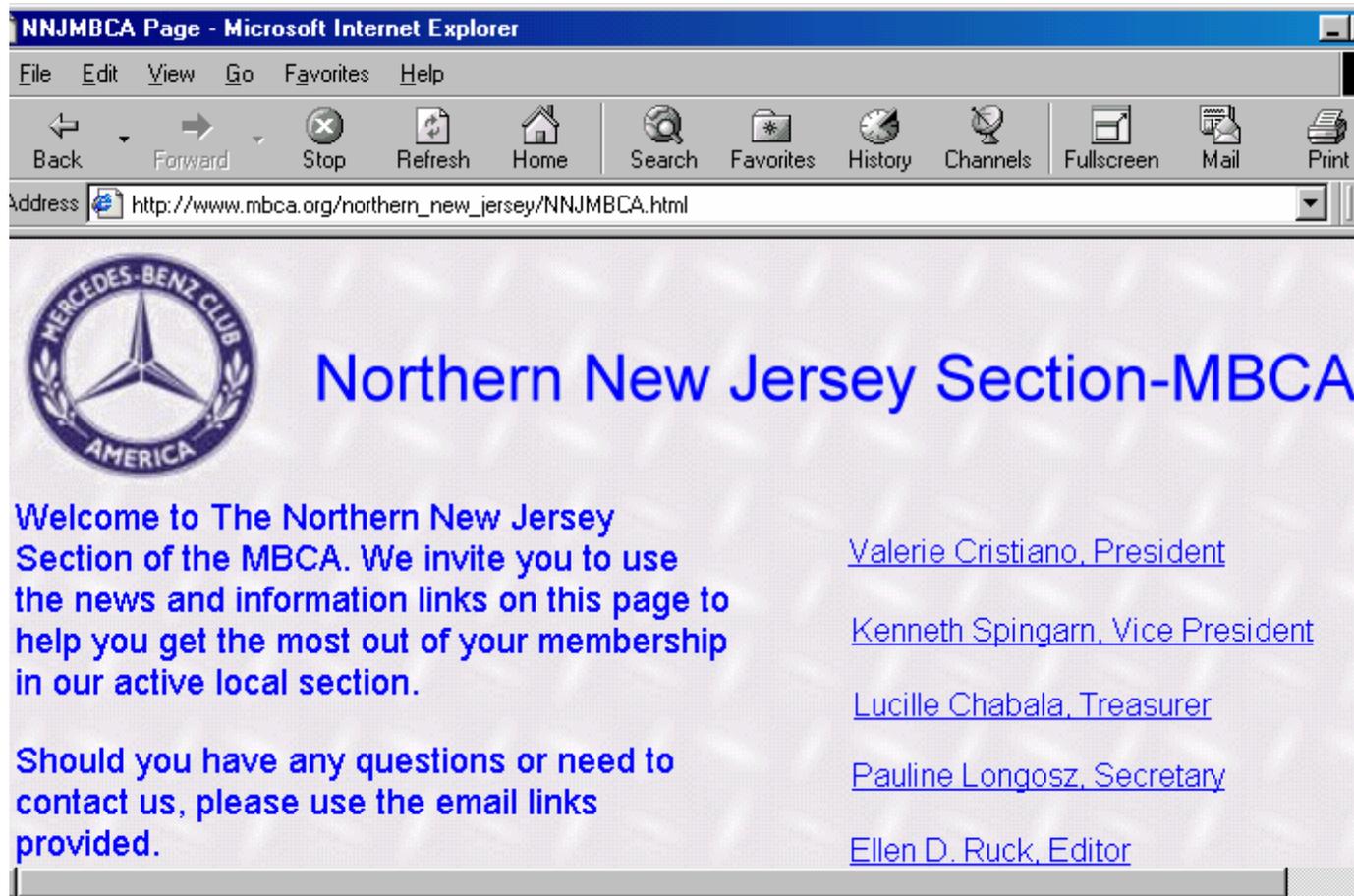


John Bleimaier was recently asked to do a Porsche rallye, and suggested we might combine the two Clubs for a driving event. The

(Continued on page 11)

NNJS Website is up and running —

Ken Spingarn, NNJS Vice-President, has the website underway, and can be considered our Webmeister !!! He will be upgrading and enhancing the website with your comments and suggestions.



There are a couple of ways to access the NNJS web site for the first time:

Use the URL: http://www.mbc.org/northern_new_jersey/NNJMBCA.html
(Be sure to make it a Favorite, or Bookmark)

Or, via National's website: www.mbc.org

Click on **Administration**, then scroll down to **Regions & Sections**.

On the Regions & Sections page, find Northern New Jersey under **Mid-Atlantic Region**

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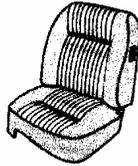
SCCA has nine autocrosses per year, and it is only \$30 for a non-member to participate at Englishtown Raceway Park. John will investigate dates at the planning meeting for Porsche next month and report back to us with his findings.

All of the ideas are worth a try and all other ideas and comments are always welcome. We ended the meeting at 3 PM on a positive note to carry on throughout the year with new venues of general club interest, and disbanded from the cozy stone dwelling until next month's meeting at the French inspired Bistro.

--Ellen D. Ruck



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UNDER THE HOOD STAR

Keeping the oil changed in your engine crankcase is still the #1 thing that needs to be kept up with every 5-6k miles or less, regardless of what the flexible service system maintenance message on your 1996 and younger Mercedes-Benz says at the instrument cluster. Mercedes claims the 1998 and later engines that use synthetic oil can go 12k + miles, but my opinion is to reward the engine with fresh clean motor oil and filter change more frequently.

For 1997 and earlier engines I recommend the same, however conventional motor oil – not synthetic!, That is what Mercedes recommends. 1998 and later vehicles were engineered to use synthetic while older vehicles were engineered to use good conventional oil, i.e. Pennzoil, Quaker State, Castrol GTX, and many other. Oil viscosity of 5w/30 or 40 with synthetic and 10W or 15W /40 with conventional.

I also would like to add — remember to change the engine air filter every 30k miles as well as the fuel filter. Brake fluid flushes every 2 years and coolant flushing every 3 years or 40k miles. Take a good look at your tires, get down and look at the inner edge with a flash light, if it looks like the tread is going bald its time for tires. There is still a lot of winter left and tire tread depth is critical for driving safely.

Happy Mercedes motoring. *--David Veith.*



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UPCOMING NNJS 2004 EVENTS:

- Feb 8** Annual Valentine Sweetheart Brunch
Chez-Z (See page 3)
- March 18-21** Barrett Jackson Palm Beach FLA
Collector Car Auction (Barrett-Jackson.com)
- March 28** Annual Great MBz Antiques
Roadshow - Alan Snyder, Appraiser
- April** TBA Globe Motors Tech Session/Concours
Judging School (to be confirmed)
- April 10-18** New York Auto Show
Jacob Javits Center
- May 16** Princeton Car show (Tentative)
- June 19** Annual June Jamboree (Tentative)

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