



STAR TRACKS 2004

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA – NORTHERN NEW JERSEY SECTION

March/April 2004

Volume 5 Number 2

INSIDE MAR/APR ISSUE:

<i>Presidents Message</i>	2
<i>Editor's Message</i>	2
<i>More Sweetheart Photos</i>	2
<i>Amelia Island</i>	3
<i>Enthusiasts</i>	4
<i>STARFEST 2004 !!!</i>	5
<i>Collectible Classic 123</i>	6
<i>Editor's Journal</i>	8
<i>The Story of 2 SLs</i>	9
<i>Naming your Star</i>	10
<i>Hef's Limousine</i>	12

Sweetheart Brunch – A Real Sweet Treat

The day was crisp, clear, and beautiful as we stepped from our magnificent Benzes and into a wonderful sidewalk Parisian café, Chez Z. Smiling faces greeted each other as



the lovers walked in arm in arm. While enjoying a glass of wine, animated conversation flowed from the sidewalk and from the balcony surround our café as we welcomed friends whom we had not seen in a while, and greeted new ones. Soon it was time to sit down and enjoy the wonderfully prepared and delicious brunch.

We dined on tossed salad, Caesar salad, seafood crepes, chicken francaise, vegetable lasagna, and made-to-order omelets, perfectly prepared by the café owner himself. While letting our over-indulged stomachs have a well-deserved break, adorable Valentine's favors were passed out to all in attendance. There were also some very special

prizes given. In recognition of Valentine's Day and our Sweetheart Brunch there were two very wonderful events to celebrate. Bob and Joan Don-



nelly were congratulated and honored for celebrating 50 wonderful years of marriage, the longest marriage of those in attendance, and

These were not our only special guests.



Marylalice Ritzmann of MBUSA joined us in celebrating the day and was awarded her very own "Love Bear". We were then ready for dessert, and what a dessert it was – a delicious strawberry shortcake covered in whipped cream and dedicated to "Sweethearts and Mercedes Lovers". It was then time to say "adieu" as we lingered over coffee and tea before heading back to our Benzes and home.



SPRING RALLYE

May Rallye - will be held on **Saturday, May 22nd**. Joe Grattan and Doug Ochwat, co-rallye masters, are in the process of planning and designing the rallye. Details of the time and location will be in the next newsletter or NNJS website.

MOVING:

Send Address Changes to:
MBCA
 1907 LeLaray Street
 Colorado Springs, CO 80909
 or call 1-800-637-2360

Daimler-Chrysler



prizes given. In recognition of Valentine's Day and our Sweetheart Brunch there were two very wonderful events to celebrate. Bob and Joan Don-

Read your STAR TRACKS 2004 online:
http://www.mbca.org/northern_new_jersey/NNJMBCA.html

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...



It is finally Spring – and after a long, cold, and fortunately not too snowy Winter, many a Mercedes Benz owner looks forward to getting the car cleaned up, polished, and ready for showing off. It may be just showing off your beauty by letting him or her (many people name their cars, so I can't call the car an "it") sit in the driveway, or driving down the highway with the top down (for those convertible owners) and the wind blowing through your hair, getting into the engine and starting to really get rid of the winter grime, or finally being able to take the baby out from under wraps and out of the garage after a long winter. Whatever the reason, come bring the family or just come by yourself, show off your car, and join in some of the wonderful fun and informative events that the club will be hosting in the future.

Sincerely, Valerie vjcristiano@msn.com

EDITOR'S COMMENT



The snow shovel still rests against my front door as I write this, wary of a possible sneak attack of wayward rogue snowflakes. This long cold winter season, generating many cozy-warm days by the fireside with woolly lap blankets and fuzzy slippers, has led many of you to pen and ink, or in more modern speak, to the keyboards of your home computers, to compose a delightful selection of personal inspiration Mercedes-Benz articles. Thank you for your enthusiasm and input, and even as the lightly frosted nights give way to sun filled, glorious fresh air spring days, please remember to keep Star Tracks 2004 newsletter contributions in mind. Soon we will be battling the Green Enemy of tree pollen instead of Old Man Winter, but nonetheless, each season brings us particular joys and woes we turn our attentions to with full force intensity. Make a point to join us in our Club activities when you find the time, and you shall be justly rewarded with good friendship, a fun day, and perhaps learn something new about Star cars.

Spring cheers-- Ellen – "190 girl", Star Cruiser eruck@kirkland.com

STAR TRACKS 2004
The bi-monthly publication of the MBCA-NNJS.

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
lulusmalley@msn.com

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

Technical Advisor:
David Veith
973-731-5871
dlvbenz@aol.com

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

Mid Atlantic Regional Director:
Robbie Ackerman
robby@ackerman.net



More Sweetheart Brunch Photos



ANNUAL JUNE JAMBOREE
is **SATURDAY JUNE 19th 2004** at
MONTVALE, NEW JERSEY
Details in Next Newsletter

Escape to Treasure Island

John Kuhn Bleimaier

The Amelia Island classic car show is a great excuse to get on Route 95 and head for the sun. I slipped into the cockpit of "Stinky," my 1980 Mercedes 300CD, at 2 am on Thursday March 11th and was in Florida before sundown. I had sandwiched my escape between two northeast snow storms. My old diesel coupe hit her stride at 77 mph as we passed into North Carolina. I cranked open the sunroof an



1936 Mercedes Benz 360D

extra couple of inches for every 100 miles of travel south through Dixie. By the time we sailed into Georgia it was fully open. At the Florida line the side windows came down.

The old 300CD isn't my favorite mount. I'd rather get behind the

wheel of my trusty '73 914 or my '02 C230K Carlsson Mercedes with 6 speed manual tranny. However, when I consider the cost of fuel, the disparity between diesel and premium unleaded, as well as the inherent economy of compression ignition... I made a perfectly rational choice. Besides, for straight line interstate travel there's nothing

wrong with this good old clattering starship.

The Amelia Island weekend has two components, the classic gimmick rallye and the concours d' elegance. I'm not a fan of poker rallyes but it is fun to see a 1929 Duesenberg, a 1935 Bugatti, a 1955 Zagato bodied Alfa and a 1964 356C Porsche all driving off down twisty back roads under gnarled live oaks, heavy with Spanish moss. It was worth getting up early on the morning of Friday the 12th in order to witness the flagging off of the classic rallye competitors.

The Concours d' Elegance takes place on Sunday, so this leaves Saturday free except for a collector car auction at the Ritz Carlton. After previewing the cars slated for the block I drove inland to break some clay targets



1935 Bugatti Type 57

at the Okefenokee Sporting Clays Range with my classic Parker side-by-side. That was a lot of fun. However, when I compare the Amelia Island weekend with the Pebble Beach weekend, the big shortcoming of the Florida fling is the absence of a classic car track event. A critical component of the Monterey peninsula activities takes place at Laguna Seca where the historic races are held. What Amelia Island needs to reach world class status is a wheel-to-wheel vintage competition event.

I know just the place. It's the Roebling Road track in Georgia. I've run time trials there with the Mercedes Club.

It's a well known SCCA and Porsche Club of America venue. Can you conjure the image Blower Bentleys, grand prix Delage, silver arrows, speedsters and bug-eyed Sprites... all churning Castrol and burning rubber under the Georgia pines as in



1936 Delage

the days of yore... Just my little suggestion.

This year's Amelia Island Concours featured quite a few Porsche entries commemorating the 40th anniversary of the 911. Most notable were the prototypes 901 and 902. It's been said many times, but it really is remarkable how Zuffenhausen has managed to continue building a practical classic from the '60s into the new millennium without

(Continued on page 11)

STAN'S AUTO TOP



A FAMILY BUSINESS SINCE 1957
SPECIALIZING IN GERMAN CARS

973-635-3443

CHATHAM, NEW JERSEY

PETER SERBANICA

Enthusiasts - by Robby Ackerman

It was the perfect June day for a Mercedes-Benz Club Concours D'Elegance. The sky was blue with puffy white clouds and the temperature hovered around ninety degrees. I was wearing my white hat emblazoned with *MBCA Judge* as I peered into the engine compartment of an immaculate SL. Everything under the hood had been clear coated. Every accessory, every wire, and every hose had been meticulously painted. I lifted the floor mat in a beautiful red 190E and not only was the underlying velour carpet like new, but the four inch lines left by the vacuum were perfectly parallel one to the other.

In September a 190SL owner completed a professional twenty-five month body-off restoration and drove off to Nova Scotia. As he headed for Cape Breton the weather turned too cold for comfortable top-down driving, so he turned around and drove to Tucson, Arizona.

A US Airways pilot was looking for a car to commute from his rural Virginia home to Richmond International Airport. He is now driving a perfect original condition 1972 280SEL 4.5, which he purchased from the original owner.

The owner of a 450SL removed the big V-8 and installed a 240D engine with a turbocharger. Tom Hamilton, Alex Dearborn and Bruce Adams race 190SLs. Gary Wallick and Jim Villers race 230SLs.

The owner of the Best-in-Show 300SL at the June Jamboree held at MBUSA managed the Ferrari racing effort at the 24 Heures Du Mans.

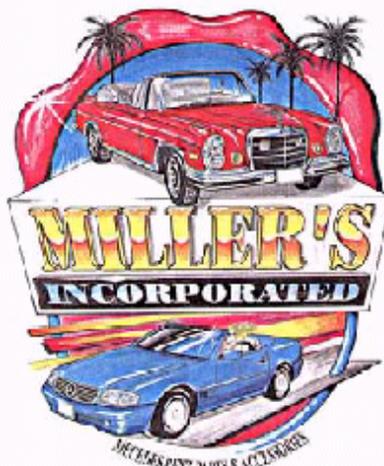
Frank Cozza, when asked why his SLK ran out of fuel, in his understated way said, "It uses a lot of gas at 125 mph." Bob Platz has 2,206 Mercedes-Benz automobiles in his basement level garage. Six full size cabriolets and 2,200 model cars. If you take the elevator to his 4th floor office you will find another 800 Mercedes-Benz model cars.

Why?

None of us can plausibly defend our passion by claiming it has any utilitarian purpose. We just do it and as a group we are averse to leading examined lives. If you must ask why you won't understand. The Mercedes-Benz Club of America is made up hundreds of enthusiasts doing extraordinary and outrageous things with automobiles. The Club is here to help you get together and share this passion with other equally passionate members. In this day and age of the Internet this is easier than ever. Check out the Special Interest Groups on the Mercedes-Benz Club of America website www.mbca.org or go directly to <http://mbca.cartama.net>. Presently we have Forums for Adenauers, Pontons, AMGs, 5.0 SLCs, MLs, G-Wagons, 190Es and model cars. These Special Interest Groups have been established as a friendly means for communicating with other enthusiasts, to exchange general

**MERCEDES-BENZ PARTS
SPECIALISTS SINCE 1981**

*Vintage 50's 60's 70's & 80's
Parts Specialists*



NEW LOCATION



We have Moved to our new warehouse
Call Kevin O'Brien for Moving Sale Specials!

Miller's East 877-226-1870
Local 704-226-1870 or 24 Hr. Fax 704-226-1652
Open Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EST
1749 Williams Road, Unit C, Monroe, NC 28110 USA



Visit Our On Line Store - www.millermbz.com

Miller's Inc. has a California Location also:

Miller's West 800-338-7787
17420 Mt. Herrmann, Unit I Fountain Valley, CA 92708
Local 714-557-0115 or 24 Hr. Fax 714-557-0155
Open Monday - Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm PST

information, maintenance tips, parts sources, optional upgrades, driving and social events and to help drivers preserve and enjoy their automobiles. If you would like a Forum established on our website for your passion contact me at robby@ackerman.net or Bill Streep at bstreep@satx.rr.com. We would be more than happy to set up your SIG via our website, whether you are just two or two hundred.

The Super Bowl is Sunday and I have a choice to make. I picked up the phone and called my son at Harvard Med. He says he could use a break from the ER at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and we agree to meet Sunday for brunch. We decided that the MBUSA parking lot in Montvale, NJ would be a convenient location to meet and just around the corner is the Park Ridge Diner. Hans suggests that we swap cars. "Bring the 4-matic wagon and I'll drive it to ski in Vermont," he says. I reply, "Bring the Cosworth 190E 2.3-16, and I'll drive it at Virginia International Raceway later this month." Don't ask why.



Don't Miss Starfest 2004

<http://www.starfest2004.org>

Hosted by the Western Reserve Section

Starfest 2004 July 31-August 4, 2004

presented by:



Schedule of Events Mansfield, Ohio

Saturday, July 31

8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.	Registration in Hospitality Suite
1:00-5:00 P.M.	Road Rallye, Technical seminars
5:30-6:30 P.M.	Concours judges meeting
7:00-9:00 P.M.	Welcome Cocktail Reception Carousel Park

Sunday, August 1

8:30 A.M.	Cars placed for Concours d'Elegance
10:30 A.M.	Concours judging begins
4:30 P.M.	Novice Drivers Meeting
5:30 P.M.	Drivers Meeting required for all drivers
7:30 P.M.	Cocktails at Ashland University
8:00 P.M.	Concours Awards Dinner-Ashland Univ.
All day	Road Rallye, Technical seminars

Monday, August 2

8:00 A.M. to noon	Instruction & Defensive Driving at track
1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.	Track events
7:00 P.M.	Acceleration Runs—Dragway 42
All day	Amish country tour and lunch

Tuesday, August 3

8:00 A.M. -noon	Instruction & Defensive Driving at track
1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.	Track Events
All day	Events and tours for non drivers

Wednesday, August 4

All day	Track events and Events and tours for non drivers
7:00 P.M.	Final Banquet-Kehoe Center (Black tie optional)

(From the starfest2004.org website):

The Defensive Driving, Autocross and Time Trials will be held at the famous Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. The Acceleration Runs will be held at Dragway 42. Experienced driving instructors will be available to assist you and help you learn the track. We will have classes for all levels of abilities so you can drive at your comfort level.

The 2004 tech sheet is included in the registration packet and a reminder that a SNELL 95 or newer helmet is now required. If you are planning to drive in the Autocross, Acceleration Run or Time Trials, have the technical inspection sheet completed by your mechanic prior to arriving. Tech inspections at the event will only consist of spot checks and verification and will be done at the autocross and time trial sites. If your vehicle is found to be unsafe, or brake fluid has not been changed within 6 months, under MBCA rules you will not be permitted to drive high speed events. Call Ted Gottfried, our technical director, at (330) 650-0751 if you have any questions.

Our Concours d' Elegance will be held at the Kehoe Center in Shelby, Ohio—about 7 miles north of Mansfield.. This will be a beautiful venue to show off our prized cars. It will also be the location of our

(Continued on page 11)

Collectable Classic: 1977-1985 Mercedes-Benz W123

By Randall L. Kress

Mercedes-Benz makes good cars; however, among them are a few great cars. At the risk of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for a vintage 300SL *Gullwing*, another great Mercedes “300,” a W123, can be had for just a few thousand dollars. The spiritual predecessor to what is now the E-Class; the W123 is a modern day legend.

Debuting in 1976 on the heels of the wildly successful, vastly popular “*Stroke-8*” W114/5 smaller sized Mercedes; the slightly larger W123 was head and shoulders above its predecessors. Looking much like a shrunk-to-fit version of the period S-Class, the W123 incorporated the now timeless “*wedge*” styling with prominent belt-line trim, ample (yet tasteful) use of chrome and a traditional, upright grill/front light treatment. Safety and performance were also enhanced with a fuel tank mounted just behind the rear seat (and over the rear axle), and greatly improved crumple zones for superior crash worthiness.



1982 240D

Throughout its nine years of production, the W123 was available in popular sedan and elegant coupe forms, as well as the first-ever official wagon (call it *Touring* or *Estate* if you must) from Mercedes-Benz. Engine types and sizes varied, but most popular for the United States by far were the diesel four and five cylinder offerings.

Nearly indestructible, the diesel powered W123s were the darlings of taxi and livery services around the world. Some are still used as such in many underdeveloped countries today. A good number of W123s are faithfully soldiering on in private hands with well over 250,000 miles on the clock.

The later (1982-85) 300D/CD/TD *Turbodiesel* (sedan, coupe and wagon) models are recommended for the best real world performance and driving experience featuring a Garrett turbocharged three-liter, five-cylinder diesel engine. Power is in the neighborhood of 120 horsepower, but torque is

healthy at around 185 pound feet. Sixty miles per hour comes smoothly and leisurely at tick over 12 seconds, but economy is excellent, even in mixed driving. Handling is also very good considering their age. W123s offer a nicely balanced, comfortable feel yet surprisingly athletic in maneuverability.

Most *Turbodiesel* W123s came with everything standard including power windows and locks, automatic climate control, a four-speed automatic transmission, durable MB-Tex seating (Mercedes-speak for vinyl) and a sunroof. Options were few but included heated seats, an alarm, rear headrests and leather. Wagon models were also available with a highly desirable rearward-facing third-row seat.

W123s are fantastic Mercedes-Benzes but they're not perfect. Rust proofing was still new at the time, and although galvanized; 123s rust particularly on the bottom sills, rockers and around the fenders. Door locks and climate controls (among other things) work off a complicated pneumatic vacuum system that can be pesky some twenty years on. But like most everything Mercedes-Benz, parts and information for these cars are readily available from a vast variety of sources including DaimlerChrysler itself.

With the 123s finally bowing out to the more modern W124 models in 1985, the W123 is a Mercedes relic of an age before wind tunnels and plastics. Some even regard them as the last true, classic “chrome-bumper” Mercedes-Benzes. The W123 offers vintage Mercedes looks, motoring feel and prestige at a reasonable size, economy and price. Owning a classic car has never been as easy as 1-2-3. - RK



1983 300D

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

If you have not received NNJS notifications via email, or if you have recently changed your email address —

Please send your email address to
vjcristiano@msn.com

IS YOUR VEHICLE PROPERLY INSURED?

Are you protected in case of
Fire, Theft, Collision, or Flood Damage?
What kind of parts will be used?
Do you have a choice of Repair Shops?
What is the true & fair amount of coverage if you should have a
claim?

Buying an antique, classic, special interest, or
muscle car...

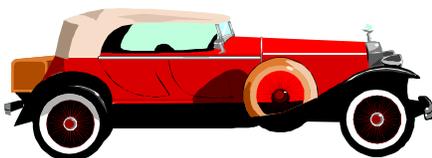
BUYER BEWARE !

**Seller Misrepresentation? Odometer Fraud? Prior Collision?
True Mechanical Condition? Actual Value?**

These and many more questions will be answered when you have
East Coast Antique and Classic Auto Appraisers INSPECT, ROAD
TEST, and EVALUATE your possible purchase or currently
owned vehicle.



LICENSED and BONDED by
NEW YORK STATE INSURANCE DEPARTMENT
NEW YORK STATE MOTOR VEHICLE DEPARTMENT as
AUTO APPRAISERS & BODY DAMAGE ESTIMATORS
Our Appraisals Accepted by ALL Insurance Companies



East Coast
Antique & Classic Auto Appraisers

P.O. Box 1189
MONROE, NEW YORK 10950

ASE Certified and I-CAR Trained

(845) 988-0359

FAX (845) 988-0411

E-Mail: ecstappr@warwick.net **Web** <http://ecstappr.tripod.com>

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Pothole Potpourri

Each month I endeavor to take the armchair readers along with me spiritually to a Mercedes-Benz destination, or otherwise share a new and exciting "find" with you. But, in this issue, I choose to share with you the scientology of a menacing monster known to us all throughout the Garden State at this time of year.

I bet many of you are thinking I might discuss the legendary Jersey Devil of the southern Pineland barrens in Salem and Gloucester counties, where the majority of our nation's blue berry and cranberry crop is harvested. The Jersey Devil, with its pointed ears and fiery eyes that glow in moonlight, has been said to roam the terrain endlessly for more than two hundred years, but our monster of discussion this month, victimizes and terrorizes innocent Star Cars statewide at all hours of the day and night.

It shows no favorites in its frontal attack, seemingly pops up out of nowhere on local roads, and wreaks evil damage to the four wheeled victim. Coupes, convertibles, ML's, QQ plated cars, sedans, diesels, and even bicycles can fall as easy prey to this vicious Monster.

Just what IS this dreadful Winter Monster? By ordinary name, it's nothing more than roadway "Pothole", but oh! the damage it causes to your automobile as it rears its ugly head on your chassis. The roads this year were ravaged extra early with this monstrosity caused by freezing weather as early as Thanksgiving time. Continued cycles of extreme freeze/thaw result in pock-marked road craters larger than soup kettles that are nastier, larger, deeper, and wider than ever before.

What, exactly, causes Potholes? Potholes are created when water freezes and expands after seeping into minute cracks in the road's asphalt surface skin. As the snow and ice melt into the liquid watery state and combine with ground water rising to the surface, it settles in the cracks, forms a pocket, and refreezes at nightfall under the road surface. The frozen water pocket expands through the surrounding soil, while the above ground higher temperature thaws the water, creating a hollow cavity. Weight from the pounding tires of speeding Mercedes-Benz and other marques causes the asphalt to collapse, pulverizing the roadway to bits as it creates the resulting pothole.

Potholes can form in a matter of hours if heavy trucks are traversing the road surface with temperature fluctuations. Pothole craters, when struck at high speed in unyielding conditions, are instantly recognizable terrors of bone-jarring, car-rattling automotive damage. Potholes cause destructive damage especially to primarily high-end, European models with their expensive replacement parts, and repair can be astronomical, depending upon the model. The aftershocks to the vehicle resulting from the hit of a deep crater can ruin the Star Car rims and tires, which may cost upwards of \$400 each. Although tire, wheel, and alignment problems are the most common pothole potpourri of problems, gravel loosened around the pothole edges can also lead to cracked windscreens and body paint chips. Sudden impact, even without visible damage to the observers' eye, may cause hidden damage later on by a fraction of an inch bending

to the wheel's rim. It might be a good idea to have your car looked at for peace of mind should you suspect hidden Monster Pothole damage.

So if you see the Pothole Monster coming at you, what should you do? If you simply can't swerve to avoid the hole, stay off the brake when hitting it, as advised by NJ AAA. That's because braking locks the wheels and cause a more solid hit, which can lead to additional damage. Instead, touch the brake pedal lightly to warn cars travelling behind you, then release the accelerator to let the wheel roll through and over the pothole. Maintain proper tire pressure in winter; under inflating tires can damage the suspension, wheel, or steering components, while the tire itself will take the worst hit if over-inflated. At a time like this, you'd almost wish you'd see the Jersey Devil rather than experience a Garden State Pothole Monster in the dark!

NJ DOT crews diligently attempt daily pothole repair to our highways and byways, but please be aware, the situation will not clear up until the overall temperature evens out. Currently, crews are utilizing a special winter mix of bituminous concrete and asphalt that can be applied externally in the current cold temperatures before hot asphalt season begins. Of course, careful navigation and an ever-watchful stance are the best antidotes for the driver right now.

To report a Pothole to the State Department of Transportation, please call (800) POTHOLE (that translates to 768-4653.) You can also fill out a form online at: www.state.nj.us/njcommuter/roads/pothole-form.htm. Please be prepared with an approximate location of the offending crater in order to file your report. This year, Route 80 East/West was so besieged with Monster Potholes, it seemed nothing short of a land mine!

I wish you all safe motoring free from the devilish Pothole Monster, and remind NJ Drivers once again of the state laws to be enforced at ALL times, not only winter.....SEATBELTS; "Click It or Ticket", and WIPERS ON/LIGHTS ON! These are ticketable offenses should you be unluckily pulled over for another violation. Good luck dodging the Winter Pothole Monster!
- EDR

From the Editor's Mailbag...

Ellen,

Just received my copy of the Jan\Feb Star Tracks 2004. Very nice.

Jim Miller - Miller's West

Ellen,

I surely enjoyed your article about the Smart Roadster. As you said, I'll bet it was hard not to bring one home with you. You could almost stick in your luggage.

Best Regards, *Dave Johnson*

Ellen,

Thanks for the great newsletter. It is very professional and you can be proud of it. I got a kick out of seeing the picture of Chet and Win at your Holiday Party.

Jack MiddleBrook - President SW Florida Section

The Story of 2 "MB SLs"

Bob and Claire met on July 21, 2002, at the annual car show held at Monmouth Park Race Track. Bob was driving his Highly Polished sparkling Silver 1971 280 SL. Claire had her beautiful light blue 1956 190 SL which sparked Bob's interest. However Claire saw the ring on Bob's left hand and walked away.



The following year they met again at the same show with the same car's. But there was a slightly different approach involved after chatting about there car's and Claire trying to figure out how to read Bob's license plate: "XPNSIV". Bob gave Claire an application for "MBCA" and things started to work out for them. Although Bob still had the ring there was a good explanation.

They met again in Asbury Park only this time Bob had his



1963 Corvair Convertible. After this meeting, things really got serious. By September it seemed like there was wedding bells that might be heard in the near future. If anyone can remember at Falkenhurst picnic, the cars were parked side by side with signs in the 190 SL, "Hers" and the 280

SL had "His" in the windshield.

By the Halloween party it seemed that things were on the fast track between the both of them because when they arrived Claire was driving a newer car E-320 Midnight Blue maybe a sign in the windshield Our's. When the time of our Benz Christmas party arrived things were almost "Driven Down".

Bob thought it would have been nice to be married when they were in "Aruba" in November. However Claire prevailed and set the date for February 21, 2004 for the wedding. Now there" a 3 "MB" family 1909 SL, 280 SL and for trips etc a E320. Rumor has it... inside their wedding rings they have the Tri Star engraved.

- Claire Wegner

International Vehicle Appraisers Network

John Kefalonitis
Certified Appraiser

(908)459-4201

www.i-van.org

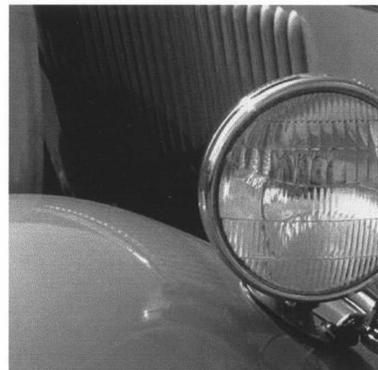
Fax: (908)459-9868

bjspecialties@accessgate.net

2 La Barre Road, Blairstown, NJ 07825



FINE AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRONICS,
DETAILING AND ACCESSORIES



Complete Detailing Packages
Concours Prep • Paintless Dent Removal
Symphony Sound Systems

19 E. HENRY STREET • BASKING RIDGE • NJ • 07920

908•766•7115

“The Lost Tradition of Naming Your Automobile”

by Doug Ochwat

When I was growing up it seemed as though everyone I knew had a name for his or her car, or at least it was that way in my neighborhood in the Midwest. Names such as old Betsy, the Poncho (Pontiac), Lead Sled, Heavy Chevy, were some of the many names.

Many, many years later in 1998 after purchasing our third Mercedes which was our first new Starship the idea came to me; if we named our cars back in the 60's why couldn't I do it now?

Granted, back then it wasn't a formal process most of the time, the names were simply nicknames that evolved one way or another, the same as with a family pet etc. Fond memories remind me of names being painted on cars usually on the both sides near the front wheel well. One memory is of a beautiful blue Plymouth that was named Rhapsody in Blue and another of a striking black Chevrolet sporting the name Black Orchid.

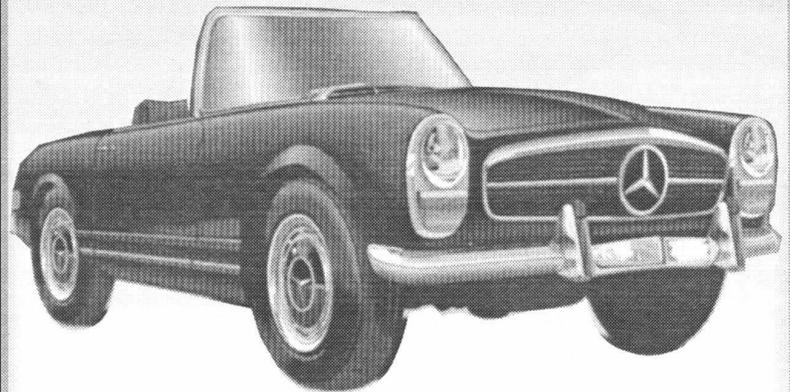
Back to 1998. Our third Mercedes Benz was an E300 Turbo Diesel. The official MB color name for the car was Brilliant Emerald. In my opinion a name for a car should include its color so I thought I'd name the car the EMERALD EXPRESS. When I went to my body shop, Dale's Custom Auto in Hackettstown, to have the EMERALD EXPRESS pin striped as I do with all of our vehicles, I decided to make the name official and have it painted on the rear, in the pin striped color, in very small script lettering, right under the E300. It looked great, yet was so inconspicuous that it was very seldom noticed unless it was pointed out.

When the car was sold last summer the new owners (club members in Virginia) liked it so well that they not only left it on but now refer to the car by its name as well. I went so far as to go back and name our first two Mercedes, even though the names were never official and those cars were long gone.

Our next MB was a blue, very used, 1983 300 CD, which Mercedes Benz called Lapis. During her pin striping process she officially became LAPIS LIGHTING. Next came my first and only leased Starship, a 2000 SLK 230 Kompressor which was painted the color Firemist. She became known as FRAULEIN FIREMIST.

I currently own a 1985 190E 2.3 16V in Smoke Silver, known as SMOKESILVER SIXTEEN.

Flemington Foreign Car Repair



Servicing European Cars Is Our Business.

- We specialize in European Automobiles
 - Over 18 Years Experience
- We Accept All Major Credit Cards, Personal Checks
- We Will Maintain Your New Car Factory Warranty
 - All Service and Repair Work
 - Authorized Emission Repair Facility

Flemington Foreign Car Repair

35 Route 12 in Flemington

(908) 806-CARS



Our most recent purchase (from a club member in Ohio) is a beautiful 1999 E320 4Matic Wagon. She hasn't made it to Dale's for pin striping yet, but when she does she'll officially become SMOKESILVER STARWAGON. Yes, all my names include the official Mercedes Benz name of the color with the other name starting with the first letter of the color. This is just my little system that I've had a lot of fun with in naming our Starships.

You can find your own system for creating names and whether or not you have your names "tattooed" on your car as I have, I believe you will have fun as well.

- Doug Ochwat



WWW.GRIOTSGARAGE.COM

(Amelia Island – Continued from page 3)

missing a beat. Other notable vehicles which particularly struck my fancy included a 1952 Abarth Ferrari; a 1909 mahogany bodied Mercedes; a 1936 fin-back Delage; a 1941 Packard with coachwork designed by Darin, and a competition Type A Duesenberg.



1955 Zagato Alfa Romeo

Out of respect for "Stinky" I have to mention a couple of very unusual vehicles

which were on display at Amelia Island this year. For the first time a diesel Mercedes made its appearance on the field of glory. A beautiful 1936 360D cabriolet created quite a stir when it was fired up with a cloud of thick black smoke and accompanying distinctive combustion clatter. Another important historical landmark car was the 1932 Cummins diesel race car which had competed at Indianapolis.



Competition Duesenberg

A diesel never won at the "Brickyard" but the Cummins was the first car ever to complete the 500 mile race without refueling!



Competition Porsche

After the show "Stinky" and I headed back north up Interstate 95. I managed to calmly post a very high average speed while sneaking by all the speed traps. I guess you could say I'm a sort of diesel person... low volatility,

but slippery as greased lightning!

John Kuhn Bleimaier

photography by Marina Pushkareva
March 2004

(STAR FEST 2004 - Continued from page 5)

final awards banquet on Wednesday night.

Your registration form (available via the website) must be received **by July 1**, or a late fee will apply. On site registration will be accepted but is not encouraged because we must order food and set up driving classes prior to the event. **Those registering by July 1 will be eligible for a special drawing.** Your MBCA membership must be current at the time of registration. If it has lapsed, it may be renewed at the registration desk.

The Holiday Inn in Mansfield is our host hotel with back-up rooms at the Comfort Inn North and Ramada Inn. Other lodgings in the Mansfield area are as provided by the Mansfield Visitors Bureau.

- *Holiday Inn & Suites 800-521-6744 or 419-525-6000
\$72 double and \$99 suite
- *Comfort Inn North 800-918-9189 or 419-529-1000
\$64.95 double \$69.95 king \$74.95 suite
- Ramada Inn (at Bellville exit) 419-886-7000
\$74 double \$84 king

Be sure to mention you are with Mercedes Benz to receive the quoted rate.

*Parking lot security will be provided.

A number of **Technical sessions** will be presented by Mercedes Benz experts. Possible topics will be: European delivery, Concours preparation, older car maintenance, older car restoration, and oil and tire information. The cost of these is included in your registration fee. A more complete schedule will be available at the registration desk.

ZYMOL CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE

The Concours d'Elegance is a showing of cars which are prepared and cleaned to appear as close to "showroom original" as possible. Cars are classed in accordance with rules established by the National Events Committee. The event is judged and trophies are awarded. In Show Class, the entire car, including the undercarriage is judged. In Street Class, undercarriage is not judged. Display class is not judged, but is a chance for others to enjoy your car. This is a good selection of Mercedes from very old to very new to view and enjoy.

We're out of space here but the other important events include: **ROAD RALLYE, AUTO-CROSS, ACCELERATION RUNS, TIME TRIALS, DEFENSIVE DRIVING, PERFORMANCE DRIVING SCHOOL.**

VISIT THE WEB SITE !!!!



Christie's Sells Hef's Limo for \$78K

As part of its 50th anniversary celebration, Playboy auctioned memorabilia on December 18th at Christie's - New York. A Mercedes



limousine owned by Playboy founder Hugh Hefner was sold at the auction. The winning bidder for the automobile received an invitation to the 2004 New Year's Eve party at the Playboy mansion. The vehicle went for \$77,675. Here is the auction listing:

1988 Mercedes Benz 560 SEL Stretch Limousine

Estimate: \$30,000 - \$50,000 U.S. Dollars

Coachwork by Allen Coachworks

Chassis No. WDBCA39DOJA14939

Black with black leather interior – 61,000 miles

Engine: V8 single overhead cam, 5547cc; Gearbox: three speed automatic; Suspension: hydraulic self-leveling; Brakes: four-wheel disc; Left hand drive.

UNDER THE HOOD STAR

This month I'd like to tell you about a small repair that should be done on any electronic automatic transmission from 1997 1/2 to present.

These electronic transmissions have no seals that can leak fluid externally, except for one place. This is from the large electrical connector that sends information to the central transmission control unit. There are two "O" Rings that seal the connector to the transmission before it leaks fluid slightly. By removing the connector clamp, and replacing the two "O" rings, this will stop the seepage. If it goes undetected for a long period of time, the fluid could "wick" its way down the wiring harness and contaminate the control unit. Have this inspected by your dealer.

Cars younger than model year 2000 would be in warranty. I find a lot of these without customer complaint as they don't leak a lot on the ground... but could cause a major problem.

On another note, a nice little upgrade on alloy wheels from 86 through 91, is the center star that is now chrome. You can remove your old style center cap and install these they look sharp and are about \$5 each from Mercedes.

Until Next time, Happy Mercedes motoring. *-David Veith.*



STAR TRACKS 2004



P.O. Box 146 Chester, NJ 07930-0146

UPCOMING NNJS 2004 EVENTS:

May 7-9 MBCA National Board Quarterly Meeting hosted by Pittsburgh Section www.mbcapitt.org

May 16 Princeton Car show

May 22 Rallye - Joe Grattan and Doug Ochwat (Details TBA) - Check NNJS Website

June 19 41st Annual June Jamboree – Montvale NJ

July 31- Aug 4 STARFEST Western Reserve Ohio

Aug 15 Defensive Driving / Autocross (Tentative)

Sep 18 Mid-Atlantic Regional Picnic – Falkenhorst

Dec 11 NNJS Holiday Party

Please contact Valerie Cristiano, President, or the Editor for permission to reprint information from this publication.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Place Mailing Label Here

