



Vancouver Island Section

February, 2013

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Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!

Mar 24: Lunch, Shawnigan Lake. This will be a repeat of last year’s popular spring lunch outing to Steeple’s Restaurant ([click](#)). Organizer: Barry Patchett. Please drop Barry a note with numbers if you intend to go ([click](#)).

Apr 20 or 21: Detailing event. This will be a visit to and demonstration at a full spectrum detailing shop. Organizer: Bob Wilson

May 4-5: Seattle Section tour of LeMay Museum (Sat) and open house and detailing demonstration at Griot’s Garage (Sun.). Starting at 2 PM at the LeMay Museum, at which there is a discounted entry fee of \$10. 6:30 dinner at BJ’s Brewhouse. Overnight at Hotel Murano, Tacoma: group rate \$129 for a king suite. Pre-registration is required with the organiser Ian Gleadle, Seattle Section ([click](#)) by April 27. Contact me, please, if you’d like further info first.

May 11: Chemainus Theatre. Buffet lunch and *Delicious Lies*, an adaptation of Molière’s comedy *Scapin*. A row of seats has already been booked. Cost \$65 per person. The registration deadline is April 28; look for more details in early April. Organiser Barry Patchett

Jun 22-23: Islands wine tour, Saltspring Saturday market, Saltspring wineries, dinner and overnight on Saltspring, Cowichan Valley

Section Officers

President: [Bob Wilson](#)

Vice President: vacant

Secretary: [Hazel Ostrowerka](#)

Treasurer: [Rob Watson](#)

Membership: [Jeff Cohen](#)

Director at large: [Dennis Ostrowerka](#)

Newsletter: [Bob Wilson](#)

Hon. Vice President: Peter Trzewik

Past President: [Barry Patchett](#)

New Members!

Philip Topalian

Renewing Members

Lou & Catherine Hobson
Allan Mactier
Bob & Donelda Wilson

Thank you!

wineries, lunch Cowichan Bay. Organiser: Stan Garrod ([click](#)).

Jul 20-21: Forest Grove Concours, Oregon. 2013 is the 50th anniversary of the W113 (pagoda-roof) SLs. Portland Section is planning a Feature Class for this model and is coordinating attendance by Club members. More details will be available later. Organizer: Allen Stephens ([click](#)), Portland Section.

Jul 28: Barbeque. A mid-year afternoon barbeque, hosted by John and Cordelia McIntosh at their home on Coal Point.

Aug 18: Rally/ treasure hunt. Jeff Cohen and Rob Watson have offered to put together a rally and treasure hunt in the Victoria area.

Sep 8: Mercedes-Benz in the Park, N Vancouver. The BC Stars Section invites Island members to their annual event at Waterfront Park in North Vancouver. I went last year and

enjoyed the day, seeing some unusual older models that we don't have in our Section, and the hosts made me feel very welcome. Organizer: Louis Fourie ([click](#)).

Sep 15: Lunch. The tentative destination is the dining room at the Point-No-Point resort, west of Sooke. The Section went there for lunch four or five years ago and had a good time. Organizer: Bob Wilson

Oct 19: AGM Discussion of the event calendar and election of officers for 2014. Union Club. Organizer: Jeff Cohen

Oct 25 or 26: Oktoberfest. Our annual homage to German culture at the Edelweiss Club, with dinner and dancing. Maybe this year we'll be able to field a contestant in the Schuplattler contest ([click](#)). Organizer Hazel Ostrowerka.

Nov 10: Morning coffee, locations TBA. Organizers: Bob Wilson and Barry Patchett

Dec 13 or 14(?): Xmas party, Union Club. Date subject to confirmation.

Coffee and Conversation

Though the January coffee meetings in Saanich and Chemainus were sparsely attended, those present had a good time trading stories. It was nice to talk in a relaxed setting without concern for timetables or moving along to the next part of an event.

Our next coffee meeting is scheduled for November 10. If you'd like one sooner, please drop me a note.



In Victoria...

...and in Chemainus

Nothing but the Best (with Wurst)

Over 20 members and guests assembled last weekend in the service area of Three Point Motors for a hosted introduction to new models and technology. Peter Trezwick set the stage, mentioning that Three Point Motors, Nanaimo would be moving to a new showroom and service facilities at the end of April, and that a driving academy for customers at both locations was being held quarterly at Western Speedway, in the parking lot and inside the track. The Section directors present all took notice of the potential opportunity to improve driving skills, and you can expect to hear more of this down the road.



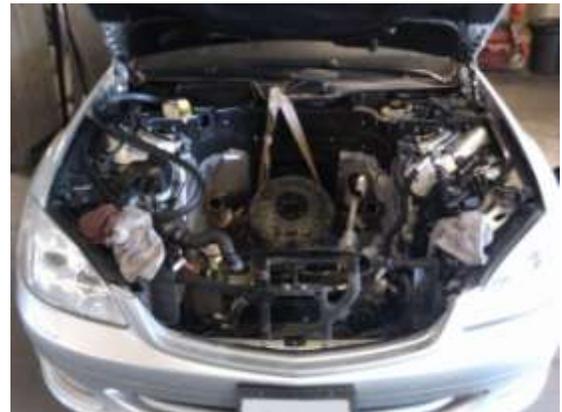
This year's model introductions were ably handled by David Rabii. We looked over the new GL 550, ML 350 Blutec, GLK 350, C 350 coupe, B 200 and SL 550, with David telling us about their features and new technology. He told us, for example, that although the GL and SL share the same twin-turbo, 4.7-L V8, the engine mapping in each is considerably different, resulting in different power and torque curves.

After a lunch of bratwurst, potato salad and coleslaw, the new vehicles were made available for short test drives. The weather cooperated, a cloudy February day letting the top-down SL testers experience first-hand the benefits of AirScarf. Though I didn't get out in everything, my favourite of the bunch was the C 350 coupe, a significant improvement over its W203 predecessor in terms of refinement, ride, power, appearance and pretty well everything else.

A few side-notes. The CLA will become available sometime after September as a 2014 model. This new, front-wheel drive sedan will be sold initially only with the 2.0-L four, which presently makes 208 hp in the B 250. Pricing is expected to be several thousand dollars less than the C. Sometime later we can expect the CLA 45 AMG, which will have the world's most powerful production, four-cylinder turbo engine. The pre-production version, with the same 2-L displacement, generates 360 hp and 331 lb-ft of torque. To accommodate all that power, the CLA 45 AMG will have full-time four-wheel drive. This vehicle should create waves at its March introduction during the Detroit auto show.

The GLK four-cylinder diesel is now accumulating at the Halifax Autoport, where it has to sit until Transport Canada's certification of the engine has been completed. This will be the first appearance of MB's direct-injected diesel four in our market.

A rather grubby looking S 550 was sitting in a corner of the service facility with its hood ajar. Opening the hood revealed a cavernous hole where the engine should have been. Engine transplants in modern MBs are rare indeed, this one having been occasioned by the driver's heading into a "puddle" which ran over the top of the hood. The engine air intakes became submerged, resulting in the pistons trying to compress water, which even MB's cylinder technology can't do. Replacing this engine will be a roughly \$50K job. Moral: drive into standing water very slowly, and back out if it reaches the level of the doorsills.



Thanks to Peter Trezwick, GAIN-Victoria, and David Rabii, Three Point Motors, for providing their time and facilities to host the event. Thanks also to Hazel and Dennis Ostrowerka for coordinating arrangements on behalf of the Section.

Stargazing

What Do We Drive

The MBCA National membership database has a field for the year and model of vehicle(s) that each member owns. Some members list just one MB, others list several. With the growth in membership over the last couple of years, I'd like to repeat the short statistical analysis of the cars in Vancouver Island Section carried in the May, 2011 newsletter. The executive would like to know how much has changed.

The Section has 53 primary members, 16 of whom have elected not to complete the vehicle field in the database (which is, of course, voluntary). I suspect that some others have not updated the cars they own since they first joined.

This is a plea for you to update your information in the database, which you can do by signing on to mbca.org and editing your profile information. First, you have to log on with your user name. If you don't have one, please consider setting one up. After you log on, click your user name (just under the Logout button at the top right), which will load the page with your profile information. Click the Edit Profile tab and then the Additional Information tab, after which you will be able to add or remove vehicles that you own or have sold. If that sounds too complicated, you can call the National Office and ask for a change over the phone.

I'll report the re-analysis in the May, 2013 newsletter.

MB in India

Daimler has opened a new R&D centre in Bangalore, in southern India. With 1,200 employees, it becomes the company's largest research and development centre outside Germany, and the largest run by any German car manufacturer in India.

Bangalore is over three times the size of Toronto. The new centre will take advantage of its competitively priced, highly qualified engineering workforce, and will help build networks with Indian suppliers. It will also help build presence on a continent seen to have the potential for great market growth.

Daimler photo



Despite India's enormous population, MB sales there are less than a quarter of those in Canada. The local market for the C and E class is supplied by an assembly plant in Poona, which is currently remodelling to begin making the GL and ML classes.

Fuel Cell Development

The Daimler-Nissan technology alliance has signed an agreement with Ford to pool resources on further development of a fuel cell system. The partners plan to develop one fuel cell stack and power system that can be put into individual vehicles from each manufacturer. The program's stated goal is to jointly develop the technology while, at the same time, reducing the investment in engineering that each partner will make.

Fuel-cell powered cars don't get much mention in these newsletters. Despite roughly 20 years of investment and development, no manufacturer has yet been able to make one commercially viable. It could be that, like the rotary engine, the fuel cell will be a dead-end branch off the road forward; that's my belief, anyway.

Twisting in the Wind

MB will open a new wind tunnel at its Sindelfingen technology centre later this year.

Wind tunnels are widely used throughout the industry to test aerodynamic drag, which is measured in units called C_d (Coefficient of drag). Higher numbers equate to greater drag, which means more fuel has to be used at a given speed to overcome the air's resistance. The new CLA has a C_d of 0.22, said to be the lowest for any current car, while the more boxy GL has a C_d of 0.35.

The new wind tunnel has a measuring stretch 90 m long with a turntable that can be rotated in the airstream to simulate crosswinds. Vehicles will sit atop the turntable on a conveyor belt system that mimics the rolling road underneath. A collection of weight-measuring devices sensitive to within a few grams will measure lift and downforce at the wheels. The wind tunnel will be used to measure drag and, with the aid of microphones, wind noise at various points on and inside the vehicle. It will join the climate tunnel and the driving simulator centre at Sindelfingen, strengthening the development capability for comfortable and efficient new vehicles.

Vintage Rallies

Though the world of professional rallying, with the World Rally Championship at its pinnacle, has gone through a few dark years recently, vintage rallying is alive and well at every imaginable level of participation. The most famous event is the Mille Miglia retrospective; you may recall the series of articles we ran on Cees den Holder's visit to it in 2009. Unlike the Mille Miglia, however, most vintage rallies these days are untimed events, organized tours on scenic paved roads—enjoyable driving free from legal repercussions and competitive elements other than the driver, the car and the road.



Club members Rondi and Dave Opko follow a Ferrari somewhere in the Okanagan on last year's Spring Thaw Rally.

I'm on the mailing list for two such events whose coordinates I want to share with you. The first are the rallies organized by two young men under the name of Classic Car Adventures ([click](#)). Warwick Patterson and Dave

Hord hold three events a year for vehicles made before 1980: the Spring Thaw, the Rush to Gold Bridge, and the Fall Freeze. The middle event is designed more to appeal to ex-rallyists who like to test their old cars on mountainous logging roads. The first and last are three-day events suitable for anyone with an older car. The routes change in detail year to year but, in general, loop through the Okanagan and interior on all-paved roads. I've run the Spring Thaw a couple of times and can report that it's a fun, low-key trip with a wide range of participants and collector vehicles. Some drive fast and some don't. One or two cars might be pretty valuable, most are not. This group's route books (the instructions for driving the course) are faultless and easy to follow, even for a complete novice. The entry fee of a few hundred dollars includes modest accommodations and some meals, and buys an enjoyable weekend out.

Towards the other end of the scale are the events put on by an American couple under the name Vintage Rallies ([click](#)). From their base in Connecticut, Rich and Jean Taylor organize three or four tours a year for sports and GT cars made before 1976. This June, they plan to hold one just to the south of us, I think for the first time. Starting and finishing in the Seattle area, the Northwest Passage will explore the many fun roads between the Olympics and the Cascades, taking up most of a week. The not-insignificant entry fee includes five-star accommodations and visits to special attractions. It also includes free use of a new Porsche should your old crock expire at the roadside along the route.

Follow up one or both of these links if you'd fancy joining a group of like-minded people for an entertaining and interesting drive in your old MB, or whatever else might lurk in your garage.

Really Fast

This month's hat tip is to the W125 streamliner, which set a new world speed record on public roads a bit over 75 years ago, on January 28, 1938. Driven by Rudolf Carraciola, the car averaged 432.7 km/h in two runs over a



one-kilometre stretch on a straight stretch of the autobahn. The highway was, of course, closed to other traffic at the time. That record still stands today and, with the present attitude towards using public roads for this sort of event, is unlikely ever to be broken.

The record-breaking W125 streamliner is mounted on the wall of the MB Museum today.

Daimler photo

Caracciola's car was based on the W125 Grand Prix car, whose 5.6-L V12 engine had two superchargers and 736 hp. The body had been designed with the aid of a wind tunnel and had a C_d (coefficient of drag) of only 0.157, a sensational number even by today's standards. One very unusual feature must have made handling very sensitive. To reduce frontal drag, the radiator was not open to the air stream. It was fully enclosed and embedded in a 500-L chest filled with a mixture of ice and water. Since the ice would have melted during the run, and ice takes up more volume than water, the cooling system translates to roughly 500 kg of increasingly unstable mass.

A Living Link to the Silver Arrows

You might be surprised, as I was, to learn that legendary racing driver Hans Herrmann celebrated his 85th birthday on February 23. Born in Stuttgart, Herrmann gained international recognition during his time as a works driver for Mercedes-Benz in the years 1954 and 1955. The cars he helped make famous were the post-war “Silver Arrows”, the W 168 R Grand Prix racing car and the 300 SLR (W 196 S) racing sports car.



Hans Herrmann behind the wheel of a W196R, at the 2011 Goodwood Revival.

Daimler photo

Alfred Neubauer, Head of the Mercedes-Benz racing department in the 1930s and again in the 1950s, discovered Herrmann as an up-and-coming talent and brought him into the works team for Mercedes-Benz's re-entry to Grand Prix racing after the Second World War.

In the very first race of the post-war Silver Arrows at the French Grand Prix of 1954, held at Rheims, Herrmann drove the fastest lap time. Over the course of the season he took two Grand Prix podium places, in the 1954 Swiss Grand Prix and the 1954 Avus race, in each case coming 3rd. In 1955, Herrmann was seriously injured in an accident during practice in Monaco and was no longer able to start during that season, MB's last until 2010.

These days Herrmann regularly gets behind the wheel of historic MB competition vehicles as an honoured guest at classic events, where he provides a living link to the post-war period of Grand Prix racing.

A 1931 MB 77 "Grand". The chassis designation is W07.

Daimler photo

