



**Vancouver Island Section**

**March, 2013**

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**Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!**

**Apr 21, 1:30 PM: Detailing event.** This will be a 3-hour visit to and demonstration at Diamond Detailing, a full spectrum detailing shop at 2925 Douglas. Sean will demonstrate interior and exterior cleaning procedures using some lucky member’s vehicle as the basis. There will be a Q&A session on products. Those interested and able to come to lunch beforehand could meet at noon at the White Spot on Douglas at Caledonia. 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. Pre-registration is required with the organiser Ian Gleadle, Seattle Section ([click](#)) by April 27. I forwarded the event information and registration form for this event separately on March 18.

**May 11, noon: 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 including lunch. 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 wineries, lunch Cowichan Bay. Organiser: Stan Garrod ([click](#)).

**Jul 20-21: Forest Grove Concours, Oregon.** 2013 is the 50<sup>th</sup>

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**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](#)

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## Welcome New Members!

*Tony Hubner*  
*Brian Light*  
*Gerald Woloshyn*

## Renewing Members

*Marke Simmons*

**Thank you!**

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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.



## The March Event

About 15 people met for a casual lunch at Steeples Restaurant, in Shawnigan Lake on March 24. The weather was at least slightly cooperative, no rain, but it was a chilly early spring day at best. We were seated promptly around one large table and hardly noticed the other diners. Most of the party seemed to choose one

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of the Asian-themed three-course lunches for \$9.95, though I did see a couple of brunch orders headed to other parts of the table. We dispersed after a couple of hours, with Donelda and I taking the road back around the west side of the lake.

## Stargazing

### The CLA

Details of the CLA were released this month by Daimler. Pitched towards a younger demographic than the C-class and priced to fit just under it, the CLA will be another addition to MB's expanding line-up. The new sedan is 31 mm narrower and 7 mm lower than the current C-class but is actually 39 mm greater in overall length. The CLA nomenclature reflects the company's determination to position this four-door as a coupe and not a sedan, something that does little credit to their heritage, in my view, but which isn't likely to disturb the target audience.

There are two good articles about the CLA in the current issue of *The Star*, including a very readable interview with MB USA's Communications boss Geoff Day. Day describes the CLA's role in attracting younger buyers to the marque, a task MB has been finding more difficult than BMW and Audi.

Mercedes-Benz Canada's website says the CLA will be available here in the fall, as a 2014 model. At least initially only one engine will be offered, the 1.9-L turbocharged inline 4 with 208 hp and 258 lb-ft, tied to a dual-clutch, seven-speed automatic. I think this is the first dual-clutch gearbox to be offered on a Mercedes-Benz outside the AMG line, an inducement to those looking for a performance-oriented driving experience. The car will weigh in at a relatively light 1480 kg and scoot to 100 km/h in 6.7 seconds. Bi-xenon headlights will be an option, but not LED headlights.



*The CLA 250 is the model Canada will get.*

*Daimler photo*

The body appears more aggressive than the C-class, a theme that continues into the interior, which has sculpted front sport seats and a leather-wrapped steering wheel with paddle shifters. Unlike MB's other sport-oriented offerings, there appears to be no console-mounted shifter on the CLA 250. COMAND will be optional but Bluetooth standard.

The driver-drowsiness warning system Attention Assist and the radar-based Collision Prevention Assist package will be part of the standard specification. Some of the safety and convenience technologies offered further up the model range will be optional.



*CLA 250  
Interior  
photo:  
Mercedes-  
Benz Canada*

*Interior of the CLA 45 AMG; this model will have a console shifter.*

*Daimler photo*



### **The Electrifying B-Class**

MB's stand at this month's New York auto show included a fully electric B-class; not a hybrid, it has no internal combustion engine. Power is supplied by a lithium-ion battery pack under the floor. Range on a full charge is estimated to be 200 km, more than enough for most daily needs, with the charging time for a range of 100 km being about two hours at 240 volts. The car will be fully connected to the internet; information about its charging state can be retrieved from a PC or smartphone and functions such as the climate control can be turned on and off remotely.

The electric drive-train was developed in partnership with the electric car specialist Tesla, a company located in southern California. Tesla sells a delicious looking large sedan called the Model S and a Lotus-based sports car,

one of which can occasionally be seen on Saltspring Island. Daimler owns 4.5% of Tesla, making a US partnership for the first fully electric MB a natural.



*Daimler photo*

The company said it planned to commence sales of the Electric Drive B in the USA next year, interesting because no other version of the B is sold there. Pricing was not announced; we can expect it to cost considerably more than its gasoline-powered equivalent if, indeed, it's offered for sale at all in the Canadian market. Canadian pricing for the Smart-for-two electric drive coupe is almost \$13,000 more than the base gasoline-powered version, a differential that suggests an electric B would be priced in the low-to-mid \$40s.

MB also announced in New York that the next (sixth) generation S-class will be in showrooms this fall.

### **Hill Climbs**

Hill climbing was once a popular branch of motorsport, though not in the shape familiar to most modern motorsport enthusiasts. The premier hill climb today is probably England's annual Goodwood Revival ([click](#)), held in a garden-party atmosphere on the estate of the Earl of March. The hill is paved. Straw bales at some of the tricky bits protect the crowds, and at one point near the top an unforgiving stone wall runs along the edge of the road. Every kind of performance vehicle you can imagine has been up this hill during the Festival of Speed but most are there for demonstration purposes, putting on a show for the crowd in a fog of tire smoke. The few serious competitors after the title of King of the Hill reach speeds of about 150 mph near the top.

Here in North America, we have the equally famous and much longer Pikes Peak hill climb, which has been changing in character as the National Parks Service gradually paves the road; most of it is paved now. You can watch Monster Tajima set a new course record in 2011 [here](#) on YouTube, in a car built from the ground up for this one event. If you've ever lost control of a car on a race track, parts of this video might horrify you.

Closer to home and not at all in the same league, we have the hill climb at Knox Mountain ([click](#)) run on the Victoria Day weekend every year since 1958. Knox Mountain is a city park on the outskirts of Kelowna, a pleasant place to spend the May long weekend. Through the 1960's you could turn up with your daily driver

and run, but the event is now restricted to race-prepared cars. You can watch a Formula Ford run up the hill [here](#), with great sound and a G-meter overlay on the video.

All this is by way of introduction to two photos and a link passed along by Berry Patchett. Taking us back to the dawn of motorsport, when just getting to your friend's house could be a challenge, you can see a 1903 60-hp Mercedes tackle a dirt hill climb in Hertfordshire last year via the magic of YouTube ([click](#)). It's worth watching at full-screen resolution.



*Roger Collings' 1903 60 hp Mercedes Simplex;  
9.2 L inline 4 cyl, 60 hp @1200 rpm.*



*David Biggins' 1913 Grand Prix car tackles the hill at  
Prescott, England; 7.2 L inline 6 cyl, 90 hp@3000 rpm.*

The 1903 Mercedes 60 was the basis for a whole generation of racing cars. In its initial form it had a 9.3-L inline 4-cylinder engine and four-speed gearbox. It had drum brakes on only two wheels (the rear ones!) augmented by the latest in Mercedes safety technology, a device that spritzed a cooling water spray onto the drums each time the brakes were applied. Rigidly mounted tires, which had to be wrenched off the wheels in a frightening operation, were replaced in 1908 with Michelin's demountable rims. The basic design lasted of 1903 lasted until 1913, when the big fours gave way to a more sophisticated six-cylinder in a new chassis. The 1913 Mercedes 90, built for the French Grand Prix of that year, featured a vee-shaped radiator and tapered chassis but still had rigid axles at both ends suspended by leaf springs, and chain drive. You can see a video of it at a Shropshire hill climb in 2010 ([click](#)).

### **Anti-Collision Radar Moves into Racing**

Almost from the first day somebody thought that his ride was faster than the next guy's, cars built for racing have incorporated the latest, cutting edge technology. Some of it trickled down into the showroom, where it generally made production cars go faster or stop shorter. Overhead camshafts, turbochargers, superchargers, four-valve cylinders, disc brakes, multi-link suspension, shock absorbers and engine management systems are all examples of developments from racing that made the leap to the street. Safety technology has been the most obvious exception. MB's use of the safety cell passenger compartment, for example, predates safety cells in Formula One by at least a decade.

If your TV is tuned occasionally to the endurance racing series held in the US and Europe, you'll want to take a look at this video ([click](#)) from the Pratt and Miller team. Pratt and Miller ran a C6 Corvette in this month's 12-hour race at Sebring. In another example of reverse technology transfer, the Corvette was equipped with an adaptation of collision avoidance radar, very similar to the technology we find throughout the current MB line-

up, and also based on sensors from Bosch. The video shows it working in the rain and at night, making one wonder how the racing world has survived so long without it.

### The Pagoda Roof Turns 50

The W113 230 SL, known popularly as the pagoda-roof for the shape of its removable hardtop, was launched 50 years ago this month at the 1963 Geneva auto show. The replacement for both the 190 SL and 300 SL, it was a step up in comfort, safety and practicality but, compared to the 300 SL, a step back in performance.



*Daimler photo*

Chief designer Friedrich Geiger produced a car with contemporary flair that still looks elegant today. His design was also the first sports car to feature a safety body, having a rigid passenger compartment with crumple zones front

and rear. The distinctive roof, with its huge greenhouse and lowered centre section was the work of designer Paul Bracq.

The W113 met with strong sales throughout its run. The one main criticism was that the car was more about comfort than performance, a perceived shortcoming in a sports car. The floor assembly, suspension and engine were all adapted from the 220 SE, MB's luxury sedan of the period, so its 150-hp straight six had to push 3,600 pounds, not a lot by today's standards but heavy for the time when a Porsche 911—which also turns 50 this year— weighed 2,360 lb. Sixty mph came up in a relatively leisurely 11.1 seconds, a tick slower than an MGB and over 2.5 seconds slower than the 911. Not only that, but purists were indignant at MB's offering of a four-speed automatic transmission in a sports car.

The W113 has, however, aged very well, arguably better than an early 911 and surely better than an MGB. The Pagoda Roof has become popular with collectors, especially those with a passion for Mercedes-Benz; at least one can be found at several of our Section's events. Though the engine sounds a trifle busy on the highway, as do most from that period, the W113 remains a usable and stylish car that excites comment and desire. Not bad for a 50-year old.



*Also turning 50 this year*

*Photo: Porsche-mania.com*