



Vancouver Island Section

September, 2013

In This Issue:

Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!	1
Club Activities	2
July Barbeque	2
Tour of Victoria	3
Motor Gathering	5
BC Stars Section Whistler Weekend	6
Presentation to Three Point Motors	7
Stargazing	8
Next Generation GLK	8
S 500 Plug-In Hybrid	8
The Driverless S-Class	9
Refrigerant Debate Heats Up	10
Recall Campaigns	10
Historic Rally Winner	11
For Sale	12
The Back End	12

Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!

Sep 22: Tech event and Lunch, Nanaimo, 1 PM. Dennis Ostrowerka has organized a barbeque lunch and new model presentation at Three Point’s new facility in Nanaimo. This event will be similar to the ones held in Victoria and will let us view the new showroom and service facility and try out a selection from the current vehicle line-up. This event may include a sneak peek at the new CLA, which should just be at the dealership. I think I saw one in Victoria on the 17th.

Please contact Dennis and Hazel Ostrowerka to let them know you’ll be coming ([click](#)).

Oct 19: AGM Lunch, discussion of the event calendar for 2014 and election of officers. Would you like to volunteer? Union Club. Organizer: Jeff Cohen

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](#)



Welcome New Members!

Robert Allen

Colin Boerkamp - '88 560SL

Richard Ediss

Renewing Members!

Dorothy Shortreed

Thank you!

Oct 25: Oktoberfest. Our annual homage to German culture at the Edelweiss Club, with dinner (optional), dancing to the music of S-bahn, and demonstrations of rhythmic athleticism by the Edelweiss dancers. Maybe this year our group will be able to field a contestant in the Schuplattler contest ([click](#))! Tickets will be \$28 each, which does not include the delicious and reasonably priced dinner cooked by the ladies in the Edelweiss kitchen. Dinner starts around 6:30, with the dancing and demonstrations beginning at 8.

We've booked one table and reserved a second. Please contact the organizer, Hazel Ostrowerka ([click](#)), as soon as you know that you're able to come so we know how many tickets to buy.

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

Dec 14: Xmas party, Union Club. Our annual windup party, with conversation, drinks, awards, draw prizes, slide show, the predictably doomed attempt to deplete the Union Club's dinner buffet, and dancing. Organizer Cordelia McIntosh

Club Activities

July Barbeque

A lovely Sunday afternoon in July saw members and guests of the Vancouver Island Section gather for a salmon barbecue at Cordelia and John McIntosh's home in North Saanich. To help set the scene, Tom Body brought a large Mercedes-Benz flag to fly from the flagpole. Guests admired the view, wandered the grounds, hung out on the deck, the lawn and the island, fed the seagulls, talked, and just relaxed. Local spot prawns and west-coast smoked salmon were the main appetizers, followed by barbecued salmon with several salads. A variety of desserts filled any leftover spaces, and we left warmed by the sun and conversation.



Members and guests assembled on the deck. Panorama: Christo Pandelidis



*Under the flag and the summer sun.
Photo: Christo Pandelidis*



Thanks to Cordelia and John for all the preparation and for opening their house and grounds to the Club. It was a great afternoon.

Tour of Victoria

Article: Rob Watson, Photos Christo Pandelidis

A small but enthusiastic group of members from the Vancouver Island Section along with a few from the Portland and Seattle Sections met for breakfast at the James Bay Inn Sunday, August 18 to kick off the Victoria City Rally and Tour. After fortifying ourselves and listening to Jeff Cohen’s driver briefing as well as ‘the rules’, participants headed out to — as they say — start their engines. Jeff sent out the eight participating cars in quick one-minute intervals.

Jeff and I were eager to find out how our plans for the route would work out. We had set up ten ‘legs’ throughout Victoria, Oak Bay and Saanich. Each leg ended at a scenic or historic point and required participants to answer questions using information from historical markers or signs. One leg included a timed lap; they had to determine how long it takes to drive around Ring Road at the University of Victoria, observing



the posted speed limit. Other stops included the lookout at Beacon Hill Park, Clover Point, the Lieutenant-Governor's residence and Mt. Tolmie.

As soon as the dust from the wheels of the disappearing drivers settled, Jeff and I dashed to the end of the final leg at – where else? – Three Point Motors. Three Point had generously agreed to us setting up our post-Rally lunch at the entrance to the service garage. Rain threatened but the enthusiasm in the air seemed to help keep it at bay.



Breakfast at the James Bay Inn



An international crowd exchanges stories of the event



Ninety minutes after leaving the James Bay Inn, the Rally's winning car, a beautiful green 1969 280SL owned and driven by Paul Vincent, along with navigator Sandy Beaman, arrived. They checked in with Jeff, who was ready and waiting to record everyone's time and calculate their scores. Soon to follow were Rennie Parrish and Alec Lewis who laid claim to second place. One by one, the remaining cars roared in, including the venerable 1952 300 'Adenauer', owned and tenderly cared for by Horst Loewel. Although not participating in the Rally and Tour, six Seattle and Portland members joined us at Three Point to share conversation, sandwiches, snacks and refreshments. The event ended about one o'clock to ensure our American guests had plenty of time to catch the Coho Ferry over to Port Angeles.

Even those who didn't "win" seemed to feel it was a "winning" day.

Jeff and I appreciated the enthusiastic involvement of the participants and give special thanks to Three Point Motors for their support.

Motor Gathering

The Motor Gathering on the Grounds of the Queen Alexandra Children's Hospital saw a good turnout of members and cars in the face of an iffy weather forecast. The reality was a mostly dry and sometimes sunny day with a couple of short showers, just enough water to send those with convertible tops scrambling to raise them.

With the addition of a 300SL gullwing from Rudi Konicek, the Club put on a display every generation of SL up to the current model, and that was around the corner on the dealer's stand.

The event was a success from several points of view. Most importantly, it raised over \$58,000 for the Vancouver Island Children's Health Foundation. Horst Loewel's 1950 170S cabriolet B won the award for Best Unrestored Entry. The supporting activities, from food vendors through to events for kids, were more varied and enjoyable than at similar shows. The mix of cars was engaging, from classics to hot rods. People seemed to be talkative and in a good mood. And lastly, those staffing the Club table spoke with several who showed interest in becoming members.



Part of the Club's section of the field



Horst Loewel with his 1950 170S cab B

Thanks to all the members who braved the weather forecast to bring out their cars. Cees den Holder remarked that his 1957 220S coupe, a recent acquisition from a long time Arizona owner, had never before seen rain and



had no windshield wipers mounted when it was delivered to him! I hope it wasn't traumatized by the trip home!



Barry Patchett staffs the tent



The next generation of enthusiast tries her hands (and feet) in the slalom course.

BC Stars Section Whistler Weekend

Article by Marke Simmons

The Whistler Weekend Run, Sept. 13-15, staged by the BC Stars Section, began in North Vancouver where most of the participants were billeted on Friday night at the Pinnacle Hotel. Manfred and Marie Stenzel's much time and efforts resulted in many fine happenings during the weekend, including accommodation and restaurant venues. Early Friday evening, the President of the BC Stars Section, Louis Fourie, offered his lovely home for an informal greet & meet get together. A "foggy foggy dew" greeted us on Saturday morning when we met at the North Vancouver MB dealership for registration and route instructions. Nestor Balce, Marketing Mgr. for Vancouver MB Retail Group, arranged for the meeting in the dealership showroom and provided beautifully appointed MB garment bags for participants.

We departed from the dealership heading west around 10am under an overcast sky and a light Scotch mist. President Fourie, driving his beautiful MB W113 roadster headed the procession of MBs along with official Club Photographer Mark Block in his BMW roadster as we paraded through West Van along the waterfront to Horseshoe Bay, where the group joined the multitude of northbound traffic heading to the annual Beer Fest in Whistler Village. Arriving at our destination at around 2 pm, after a spritely drive over the Sea-to-Sky Hwy., our cars were displayed under a hot sunny sky — 25 degrees C — in a prominent area near the Olympic monument in the Olympic Village, and close-by the throng of thirsty beer lovers who were lined-up a hundred deep for entry into the Beer Gardens.

The People's Choice Award went to Ian and Linda Gleadle of Seattle for their splendid 190 SL — Ian is the President of the Seattle Section of the MBCA. Many of the group shared Sunday breakfast at a nearby patio restaurant before bidding each other adieu. The comradeship with our good neighbours from the Seattle and Vancouver areas was exuberant and joyful, and made for a wonderful weekend together.





L to R: Bob & Tanya Willits (Seattle & Vancouver Island), Saras & Sean Clark (BC Stars), Carol & Marke Simmons (Vancouver Island). Photo: Gabrielle Storck (Seattle)

Presentation to Three Point Motors

Northwest Regional Director Barry Patchett presented a plaque to Three Point Motors' General Sales Manager Scott Shears at a small ceremony on September 17th witnessed by several members. The award recognized the dealership's strong and steady support for the MBCA since the Vancouver Island Section was formed in 1999.

The plaque reproduces an article about Three Point Motors that appears in the current issue of *The Star*. The article marks the first time for several years that a Canadian Mercedes-Benz dealer has been recognized by the MBCA. Also, the award is the first such the Club has ever presented, a new initiative that we can hope continues well into the future.





Barry Patchett makes the presentation to Scott Shears in Three Point's showroom

Photo: Christo Pandelidis

Stargazing

Next Generation GLK

A replacement for the current GLK has been spotted testing in Europe. *Car and Driver* magazine says the new GLK will be more carlike; a rendering from photos in camouflage shows a face and profile similar to the present B-class. It will be based on MB's new MRA platform architecture, which debuts next year on the C-class. Power will come from a choice of turbocharged 4- and 6-cylinder engines, with the 2.1-L diesel in the current model being carried over.

Crossover sales in Canada and the USA are headed upwards, making this upgrade important to MB sales here. *Car and Driver* predicted the new GLK will be introduced in the spring of 2015, with availability starting about two years from now. The current generation, X204 GLK was given an extensive facelift for 2013. Its sensible size, above-average comfort, driving poise and ease of use will make it a tough act to follow.

S 500 Plug-In Hybrid

Daimler has taken the wraps off a plug-in hybrid version of the new S-class. Equipped with a twin-turbo, 3.0-L V6, an electric motor and a new, high-voltage lithium ion battery pack, the S 500 plug-in hybrid will arrive in North America about a year from now. The car will do zero to a hundred in 5.5 seconds and returns 3.0 L/100 km in the European driving cycle. While the same may not apply over longer distances, it's clear that the car should be amazingly economical in city driving.





Nothing to see under the hood, but the trunk shows a substantial loss in luggage volume. Daimler photos

The battery is recharged from a socket on the right rear panel of the car below the tail-light. Four operating modes can be selected with push-buttons on the console: hybrid, e-mode, e-save, and charge. In e-mode, the car drives on the electric motor only, said to be good for a range of 30 km. In e-save mode, a fully charged battery is preserved to be used later while the car runs along on only the gasoline engine. In charge-mode, the battery is charged through the gasoline engine and regenerative braking, letting the car run on gasoline only and saving the battery for later.

Outside the luxury segment, sales of electric cars and hybrids have lagged manufacturers' expectations. Journalists have said they've been too expensive compared to their conventionally powered siblings. In the spring, Nissan lowered the price of their full-electric Leaf by \$6,500, tripling sales. Last month, GM chopped \$5,000 from the price of the plug-in Volt hybrid, also boosting sales. By offering a plug-in hybrid in the S-class, MB should be able to test demand in a market segment where the extra cost is less critical to purchasers.

It will be interesting to see the extent to which the new power-train is a hit with buyers of the S-class. CNBC says that American buyers of Tesla's Model S, a full-electric luxury car, are overwhelmingly male and, on average, younger and wealthier than those purchasing MB's S-class. The Tesla S sells for around \$100,000 in the USA and the company can't make them fast enough.

The Driverless S-Class

Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche was driven onto the main stage at this month's Frankfurt Auto Show in a new S-500 with no driver. MB had previously demonstrated the feasibility of autonomously driven cars by retracing the route taken by Berth Benz in her famous drive from Mannheim to Pforzheim 125 years ago (see the *Back End*).

Zetsche went on record: "For us, autonomous vehicles are an important step on the way to accident-free driving. They will bring greater comfort and safety for all road users. That's because autonomous vehicles also react when the driver is inattentive or fails to spot something."

The driverless S-class uses the vision technology currently available on that model. It may be the potential for crippling law suits and the lack of a regulatory framework which prevent Daimler from launching the S-class with full driverless mode, but the company is said to be working hard on the technology.



Refrigerant Debate Heats Up

European regulators are starting to lose their cool over air-conditioning chemicals. Air conditioning systems are filled with an exotic refrigerant that we normally don't give a thought to unless the vents stop blowing cold on a hot day. Its chemical makeup has been changing over time to satisfy environmental concerns.

In the beginning, let's say 1953, we had Freon, also known as R12. Over time, R12 leaked out of air conditioning systems into the atmosphere, where it had an effective lifetime measured in centuries. It became linked with depletion of the earth's ozone layer in a process with a wide range of risks to human health and global ecosystems. While you can still buy cans of R12 at a local auto parts store to refill your now-classic car's AC system, the manufacture of R12 has been prohibited in the USA and Canada since 1996. R12 is incompatible with the AC systems in cars made after the early 1990s because everything from compressor to hoses to seals had to be changed to use its replacement, R134a.

R134a addressed the issue in which the inevitable slow leakage of refrigerant affects the ozone layer, but it was shown after its adoption to be a potent greenhouse gas. It is over 1400 times as potent a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide, which means that a kilogram of R134a released today will have over 1400 times the greenhouse warming effect of a kilogram of carbon dioxide over the next 100 years. 'Not good' said environmentalists. Enter the European Union.

The European Union decided in 2006 to phase in a prohibition against the use of automotive refrigerants with a global warming potential of over 150, or about a tenth that of R134a. They issued a ban on R134a in vehicles type-approved for sale after the start of 2013, letting those certified earlier have until 2017 (or is it 2019?) to comply. At the time, the most promising replacement looked to be another chemical known by the forgettable designation R1234yf. R1234yf has a global warming potential of just 4. However, tests by Daimler engineers showed that R1234yf poses a greater fire risk than R134a in the event a vehicle is involved in an accident. The extent of the increased risk seems to be a topic of debate, with other manufacturers failing to reproduce the fires reported by Daimler but supporting continued use of R134a. Daimler has declined to comply with the EU's new rule, citing safety concerns about the flammability of R1234yf, an interesting position when you consider that a car's engine compartment already contains quite a bit of very flammable gasoline under pressure.

That brings us to the reason you're reading this story. France has banned the registration of certain new Mercedes-Benz models that use R134a: the A- and B-classes and the CLA. These, the newest models in MB's lineup, were type-approved after the start of 2011 and, coincidentally, comprise the bulk of MB's sales in France. The AC systems in the first 3,500 W246 B-class cars off the line were actually filled with R1234yf but Daimler recalled these cars last year and replaced the refrigerant with R134a.

R1234yf has been in short supply, with its price in 2012 being 14 times higher than the price of R134a. On a mid-sized car, *Motor* magazine said the increased cost for a fill would be in the order of \$50, a not insignificant sum in an industry known for pinching individual pennies to increase profitability. Daimler took the French government to court over the registration ban and, last month, the court rejected the government's position.

This isn't the end of the story. The EU has other options but apparently has to convince Germany that a change in refrigerants is worthwhile. And, of course, the US EPA is evaluating a switch to R1234yf Stateside.

Recall Campaigns

New models are usually released with one or more built-in defects despite their manufacturers' best efforts in design and quality control, regardless of who that maker is. Federal regulators in Canada and the USA have



investigative procedures for defects that might affect safety or emissions, and negotiate recall campaigns with the companies concerned.

Three Point Motors seems to check for recalls every time I take a vehicle in for service. However, you may own a non-MB or, like me, you may be curious to see what the recalls cover. Both the Canadian and American regulators provide a search capability based on vehicle make, year and model. Interestingly, for my MB, each country's recall content is different. The Canadian database is maintained by Transport Canada ([click](#)) and the US database by the NHSTA ([click](#)). The NHSTA plans to allow searches by Vehicle Identification Number to make coverage more certain.

Historic Rally Winner



This month's hat tip is to the 50th anniversary of a historic rally win by a pre-production W113 230 SL in late August, 1963. The Liege-Sofia-Liege was one of a number of fast, long-distance road rallies that characterized the top end of rallying during the first half of the 1960s. Unlike world rallying today, these competitions were held on open roads with no controls over other traffic, of which, of course, there was considerably less than there is now. The Liege-Sofia-Liege started and ended in Belgium but covered 5,500 km in 90 hours.

Winners of the 1963 Liege-Sofia-Liege Rally, Eugen Bohringer and Klaus Kaiser in the factory-entered 230 SL. This car is in the Museum in Stuttgart. Daimler photo

Mercedes-Benz entered works drivers Eugen Bohringer and Klaus Kaiser in a pre-production W113 230 SL. It featured the typical rally modifications of the era, such as reinforced suspension and a larger fuel tank. The rally car also had a hardtop rigidly attached to its body. Thanks to a larger displacement (2.6 as opposed to 2.3 litres), the engine produced about 20 hp more than its series-production counterpart. The rally car had around 170 hp on tap as well as more torque.

Starting in Spa, the route took in the Saarland, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria before moving on to Austria, Italy, and Yugoslavia. Then there was a slight detour to Romania followed by a short stop in Sofia, before heading back to Yugoslavia and Italy again, where the toughest Alpine passes awaited the competitors. Bohringer had a minor accident in Dubrovnik on the way to Italy, costing him only two minutes, and was in second place entering the Alps. There, the leaders Rauno Aaltonen and Tony Ambrose, who were in an Austin Healey, left the road. Bohringer/Kaiser inherited the lead and kept it all the way to the finish in Belgium.

Rallies of that day were scored on the basis of the number of minutes competitors fell behind the organizers' target times for each leg of the event. The Liege-Spa-Liege organizers had set target times that most entrants failed to make. Between accidents, crashes and falling behind the maximum lateness allowed for each day's



run, just 20 of the 129 starters were classified as finishers. The Mercedes duo accumulated only 8 penalty minutes, an outstanding achievement and a tribute to their skill and to the careful preparation of a competitive car.

After the event was over and the dust had settled, the winning SL was taken to the Frankfurt Motor Show, where it appeared, dirt and all, in the debut of the W113 on the Mercedes-Benz stand.

Bohringer died just this last June. A skilled competitor in these long distance events, his back-to-back wins in the 1962 and '63 Liege-Sofia-Liege rallies were a high-point of his driving career. He came third in the 1964 event, the last to be run under the old format and rules. Stage rallying began in 1965, requiring ever quicker cars and different skill sets, and it did not provide an environment in which MB prospered.

For Sale

Mercedes Benz 280SE Coupe 1969, Auto, PS, PB, PW. This high grille coupe belongs to the last of the hand built Mercedes luxury models.

Total production of the coupe and convertible models from 1968-1971 was 5,187 units. The car was always garaged and used during summer time only. Everything works as it should and this car is in general good condition. This type of car is useable in today's traffic while being reliable and very collectible. An impressive amount of hard-to-find spare parts to be negotiated.

Asking Price: Can \$25,500. Cees den Holder, 250-246-1585.



The Back End

The BBC looks at the CLA <http://www.bbc.com/autos/story/20130114-mercedes-benz-cla250>

The S-Class Concept Coupe at the Frankfurt Auto Show http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_1SCxuff6c

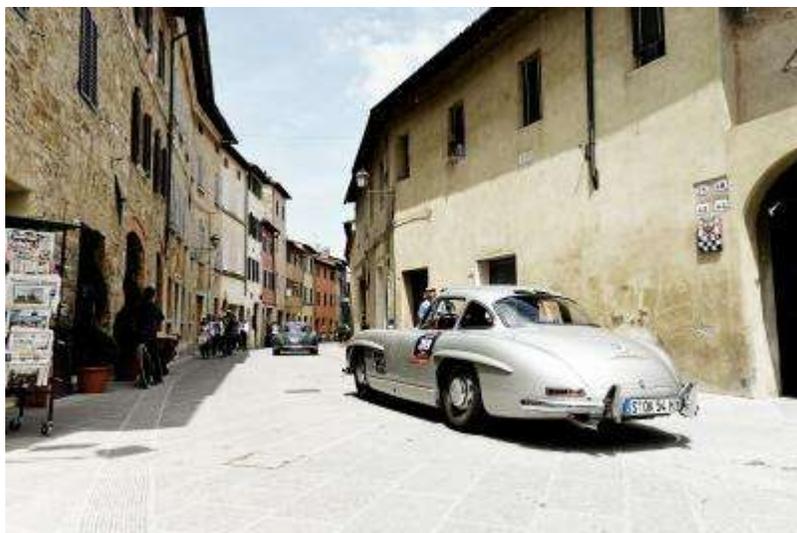


Why your dashboard fuel economy readings may be off

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130914/AUTO01/309140030?>

Automotive News TV discusses the very first family road trip, and makes the point that autonomously driven vehicles could add years to the mobility of elderly drivers. It's in the last half of the short video at

<http://www.autonews.com/article/20130918/VIDEO/309189965/first-shift-how-a-woman-led-the-way?ccid=email-autonews-firstshift&r=9442A3821023E2S#axzz2fGXifwNF>



A 300 SL coupe on the 2012 Mille Miglia

