



**Vancouver Island Section**  
**November, 2013**

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

**Dec 14: Xmas party**, Union Club. Our annual windup party, with conversation, drinks, awards, significant draw/door prizes, slide show with 225 photos from this year’s events, the predictably doomed attempt to deplete the Union Club’s dinner buffet, and dancing. Organizers Cordelia McIntosh and Dennis Ostrowerka.

Tickets will be \$65 per guest. To reserve, please call Anne-Marie Graham at 250-385-6737.

Some members are in the habit of staying overnight at the Union Club to avoid the post-party drive home. You should book early if you’re thinking that sounds a good idea, because rooms on the Xmas party weekend usually sell out. Call the Union Club at 250-384-1151 to reserve; the \$99 rate for a standard room includes breakfast. You may need to mention that your stay is sponsored by John and Cordelia McIntosh.

The MBCA helps recognize loyalty by presenting colourful year-pins to members in good standing for 10 years or longer. The pins come in five-year increments and are presented at the annual windup party.

Members eligible for pins this year are:

**10-year pins:** Kevin Carle, Helen Massingham and Paul Vincent, Gareth Rees, Christo Pandelidis, Kevin Pirie, Ken & Joan Loga, Cees and Ellen den Holder, Ralf & Valerie Hasenfuss, Barrie Aldritch, Terry & Barbara Peace, Peter & Jackie Taitt.

**15-year pins:** Jeffrey Smith, John & Cordelia McIntosh.

**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 Member!**

*Richard Ashley*

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**25-year pins:** Barry & Gwen Patchett.

## 2014 Draft Schedule

The Executive has assembled the draft schedule for 2014 based on discussion at the AGM. While the dates may change somewhat, the outline below is our starting point.

Vancouver Island does not plan to run a weekend tour in 2014. However, both the BC Stars (Vancouver) and Seattle sections will have similar events you can reach. These will be added to the schedule as the year progresses.

Please let me know if you have a comment or suggestion ([click](#)).

**Jan 25: Brunch**, Fireside Grill

**Mar 23: Detailing Demonstration**, focussing this year on the interior

**Apr 13: Chemainus Theatre**, where the play is a comedy *Jeeves in Bloom*

**May 11: New models and technology**, Three Point Motors

**Jun:** Placeholder for a driver training event organized through Mercedes-Benz Nanaimo and Three Point Motors. This event will likely be at Western Speedway.

**Jul 20: Summer BBQ**

**Aug 17: Rally/tour**

**Sep TBA: Motorcar Gathering**, the annual show in the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital

**Sep 14: Tech event**, Mercedes-Benz Nanaimo

**Oct 18: Annual Meeting**

**Nov 16: Morning coffee**

**Dec TBA: Xmas party**

## AMG Driving Experience

*Article and photo by Barry Patchett*

On October 23 I was pleased to drive from Chemainus to Pitt Meadows, rising at 0430 to do it, to attend an AMG Performance Tour using several 2014 Mercedes Benz cars. I was eligible for this for buying my E350 at Three Point Motors last year (thank you, Scott Shears). Seven people attended, along with three driving instructors and two presenters. The morning started with several videos and PowerPoint presentations on the history of AMG, the models available in Canada and some of the technical modifications that AMG do to enhance the performance of our favourite cars. Some of the custom work that AMG will take on is entertaining. One customer from the Middle East didn't think that four exhaust pipes were enough for his car, so he had AMG do a redesign using six pipes – this apparently simple work also caused significant changes in the electronic control system of the car! Another customer showed up in Germany with a bath towel from his home and requested that all of the trim and paint be that particular colour on his car – powder blue. There is no accounting for taste – just bring money.





The driving program used seven cars, which each driver used at least once. The cars were all potent AMG models. I drove, in no particular order, a C63 sedan, an E63 wagon with ceramic brakes, a CLS 63, an SLK 55, a C 63 coupe, an SL 63 with the top down and finally, a gull wing SLS! We all had at least two tries at four exercises – a slalom at about 65-75 km/hr, a braking stop from heavy acceleration to be astride a marked line, a lane change at speed (about 80) and finally, a drag race against one another for “bragging rights”. I managed the first two without incident, clipped a cone on my first run of the lane change (in the SLS!) and won my drag race using the CLS 63, so I had a good day! The SL and the SLS both had torso support systems in the seats, which inflate on the left side during hard cornering to the right and vice-versa – I found them quite useful during my 180 degree turns to get back to the start line!

We were asked to pick our favourite car at the end of the session – I chose the E63 wagon, largely because of the brakes. It is a delightful car and one that has stunning performance without looking like a target for police action. It will also pull any trailer that you might have in the driveway.

The entire program was repeated in the afternoon for another lucky batch of enthusiasts, who started driving just as I drove out of the airport to head for the ferry to Nanaimo. Now I want to try an AMG Driving Academy course, but only when they bring it to the West. At the moment, those courses are only available at Mosport Park in Ontario and Mont Tremblant in Quebec.



## Stargazing

### The 2015 C-Class

Some details of the 2015 C-Class, possibly to be designated the W205, were released in late October. It will be the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of a C-sized car, not counting the CLA. For the first time, this model will be produced for the North American market at Daimler's assembly plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, together with the ML, GL and R. The current C-Class (W204) is MB's best seller in Canada and globally, where it competes against the BMW 3-series and the Audi A4 among others, so a lot of people will be paying attention to this redesign.

The new model will be lighter than the current W204 and offer improved fuel economy, thanks to aluminum in the roof and chassis and high-strength steel with graduated thickness. Pre-release cars show an exterior that is more flowing and curvaceous than the outgoing, angular W204, but in an evolutionary way.

The big story is in the interior, a completely fresh design from MB's advanced vehicles studio in Lake Como, Italy, the first production interior from that group. Like the exterior, the inside will look more organic than in previous models, with curves and concave surfaces in the door panels.

The interior acquires a fresh display interface and, optionally, the advanced safety features found on the incoming 2014 S-class. The display can be operated either by the central COMAND knob or by a mouse-like touchpad located just above it. With the spread of smartphone technology, on-screen gestures like swipes and pinches have become deeply engrained in users. Front-seat occupants in the new C can trace a single fingertip on the touchpad's surface, controlling all of the same functions as the underlying dial. Using two fingers to swipe upward reveals a shortcut to audio functions.



A single tap on the pad selects a function and is confirmed by a strong haptic feedback (pulse) response. Alphanumeric inputs can be made by tracing a finger on the surface and are confirmed by voice feedback through the audio system. Only deliberate one- or two-finger commands are recognized, so resting a hand on the pad or fiddling with it in traffic is unlikely to trigger an accidental input.

As a strike against distracted driving, the new C will feature available heads-up display, projecting an image of speed and navigation information onto the lower windscreen, in the driver's direct line of sight. Standard or available safety features will include Pre-Safe Brake (pedestrian s and stationary vehicles), BAS Plus Brake Assist (cross-traffic) and Active Parking Assist (autonomous parking).

On cars with a navigation system, there's also a feature that will automatically close the fresh air vents and switch to recirculation when entering a tunnel. And, as proof that we haven't yet come to the end of what designers can imagine and engineers can implement, a couple of paragraphs from Daimler's media release describe a new accessory:

"Another highlight for creating the feel-good atmosphere is the AIR-BALANCE package with active fragrancing, ionisation and even more efficient filtration compared with the standard model. It was adopted from the S-Class in which the AIR-BALANCE package only recently celebrated its world premiere.

"The interior fragrances extend the sensual perception of the Mercedes-Benz interior and help individualise the smell of the interior. Four different fragrances are available: FREESIDE MOOD, NIGHTLIFE MOOD, DOWNTOWN



MOOD, SPORTS MOOD. The fragrancing system comprises a glass flask with a dispenser and a fragrance generator in the glove compartment.“



*The interior is characterized by a smooth central stack flowing forward from a high console.*

*Photos: Edmunds.com*

### **The 2015 GLA**

Rounding off MBs line of SUVs, the GLA was released at the Frankfurt auto show a couple of months ago. The smallest of the family, the GLA looks more like a crossover vehicle than an SUV and, unlike the rest of the line, will be built on the MFA front-wheel drive architecture. It will be higher off the ground than the A or B classes to provide an off-road capability and has a stepped-up engine to deal with the increased weight. The GLA would appear to be Daimler's attempt to offer an alternative to buyers of BMW's X1 series.

Under the hood is a 2-litre turbocharged four cylinder engine, cranking out 211 HP and 258 pound-feet of torque, and capable of 0-60 in 6.4 seconds. A 2.1-L diesel with 170 hp will be available in Europe, at least. The initial production will all have 4-Matic, though a version with front-wheel-drive only might follow in a year. Power will reach the wheels through the 7G-DCT dual-clutch gearbox with variable torque splitting.

Interior pictures show a pop-up infotainment screen in the top centre of the dashboard and prominent round, chrome air vents that will not be to everyone's taste. The informatics software can seamlessly integrate an iPhone and will include Glympse real-time location software. Glympse lets users share their current location with selected friends, possibly a way to reduce those "Where are you?" phone calls. Additional software access includes Facebook, Twitter, internet radio, AUPEO! personal radio and the advanced navigation system from Garmin with internet-based real-time traffic information, online point-of-interest search including Street View, and a 3D map display.



The GLA is scheduled for the fall of 2014 in 4-Matic form, with a front-wheel drive option to follow a year or so later.



*The GLA:*

*photo:  
noblecustom.com*



*Daimler photo*

### **Return of the In-Line Six**

The respected British magazine *Autocar* reports that MB will replace its current series of V-6 gasoline engines with an in-line six, starting with the 2016 E-class ([click](#)). The benefits of the switch would come from modular construction, where Daimler plans a family of 3, 4 and 6 cylinder engines all sharing the same architecture.



A straight six was the standard gasoline engine in MB's mid-size cars from the time the company entered North America until the 1996 model change from the W124 E300 to the W210 E320. It continued to soldier on until 1999 in the W140 S-class, but not in North America.

## Wearable Computing

In what is said to be the first case of its kind, a San Diego policeman issued a ticket last month to a motorist wearing a Google Glass computer ([click](#)). Google Glass looks something like a pair of eyeglasses with a small, transparent screen before just one eye, which displays images on the inside in a way that allows the wearer to look through them. A touch pad is located on the temple (side) and there is, of course, stereo sound as well.

Stopped for exceeding a 65 mph speed limit, the unfortunate motorist was issued a supplementary ticket because the policeman said that the Glass computer was obstructing her view and violated a California state law about watching video while underway. Other states, and the UK, are said to be considering draft regulations specifically to prohibit drivers from using certain types of wearable computers.



Photos: google.com



You're reading this story because the tech world thinks that motorists are a big market for this type of hardware, and our favourite car maker is working on the integration of Google Glass into its infotainment system. MB's application-in-progress, called Door-to-Door Navigation, has reached the stage where a driver can enter a destination in Google Glass, which is then transferred via his phone to the car's navigation system, and then back again to Glass when he leaves the car to finish his trip on foot. Ironically, the system presently requires an iPhone intermediary, but Daimler is in talks with Google about a direct link.

It will be interesting to see how regulators deal with this technology. On the one hand, an image like the one shown above (for a pedestrian, but it was the best example I found), occupying just a small part of a driver's field of view, would seem to be an aid in reducing driver distraction. It would not require the same shift in line-of-sight needed to use a conventional COMAND navigation system. Viewed that way, it's just another form of heads-up, which MB has already developed (see above). On the other hand, Google Glass will let users watch movies and interact with internet applications. Viewed that way, Glass will also allow real-time sharing of the view through the windshield, enabling rapid access on social media to those mad high-speed runs that the news media like to broadcast. Maybe that's a worry for law enforcement too.

## The Back End

Jim Kenzie grumps about connected cars <http://thestar.blogs.com/kenzie/2013/11/have-we-lost-the-connected-battle.html>



Edmunds explains why they added a CLA 250 to their long-term test fleet, and what they bought <http://www.edmunds.com/mercedes-benz/cla-class/2014/long-term-road-test/introduction.html>



*Bob Sirna's modified 300SL running on the salt flats at Bonneville. That's a parachute on the back.  
Photo: roadandtrack.com*



*The AMG Vision Gran Turismo, a concept developed by MB for the makers of the upcoming video game Gran Turismo 6. No build plans announced! Daimler photo.*

