



Vancouver Island Section

March, 2014

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Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!

Mar 23, 10:30 am: Detailing demonstration, focussed this year on the under-cover bits. The event will again be at Diamond Detailing, where owner Sean Scott will give an informative narrative and answer questions about the work underway. This year we'll cover cleaning and detailing the engine compartment, where many have concerns because of all the electronics, the trunk and the interior. Sean will select one or more lucky members' cars to improve. There will be a charge of \$10 per car at this event, to be collected on the day. Morning refreshments provided. RSVP for numbers please ([click](#)) by **March 17th**.

Diamond Detailing is at 2925 Douglas St., Victoria. The shop is on the east side of Douglas, just north of the traffic light at Burnside Road. If you're headed north, turn right into the driveway first past the light, and look for us at the back of the lot.

Apr 7: Board meeting. The next Executive meeting will be held at Three Point Motors at 5 pm. These meetings are always open to members who have something to say or who just want to see what makes the Section tick along.

Apr 13: Chemainus Theatre, where the play is the comedy *Jeeves in Bloom* ([click](#)). Barry Patchett has already booked our tickets!

There are two ways to attend. Theatre tickets plus the buffet lunch beforehand (arrive at noon) are \$60 each. Theatre tickets only (arrive

Section Officers

President: [Bob Wilson](#)

Vice President: vacant

Secretary: [Hazel Ostrowerka](#)

Treasurer: [Rob Watson](#)

Membership: [Jeff Cohen](#)

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Hon. Vice President: Peter Trzewik

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Welcome New Members!

Peter Braunschmidt (Jr.) – 05 CLK320
Neil Mahady

Renewing Members!

Lou and Catherine Hobson – 04 ML350
Bob & Donelda Wilson – 05 CLK500

Thank you!

at 2 pm) are \$40 each.

Advance ticket purchase is required. To reserve yours, please phone Jessica, the receptionist at Three Point Motors, by **March 31**. Jessica is there from Monday through Thursday each week at 250-385-6737.

May 11: New models and technology, Three Point Motors annual demonstration of what's new in the world of Mercedes-Benz. BBQ lunch and a chance to drive the new models included. Organizers are Hazel and Dennis Ostrowerka.

Jun 6-8: Lake Crescent: MBCA Seattle Section Section weekend event, organizers Brown and Sara Maloney. Join the group heading

down from Vancouver Island. Lake Crescent is in Olympic National Park about 17 miles west of Port Angeles and easily reachable via the Coho ferry crossing. Full details are in Bob's message of Feb. 6 or [here](#) on the internet. We'll meet in the Coho ferry lot 90 minutes before the 10:30 am sailing time.

Jun 14: Summer BBQ. This will be a full-day event. Ron and Donna Drane have offered to host this year's BBQ on their private island off Saturna. We'll also have an impressive photo opportunity at Saturna's heritage Fog Alarm Building. The date has to be a Saturday because of the Sunday ferry schedule.

Look for details in a future newsletter.

Jul 17: Driver training event organized by GAIN-Vancouver Island. This half-day event will be held at Western Speedway. Please note that the date is a Thursday.

Jul 25-27: Regional Leavenworth weekend, BC Stars Section event, organized by Joseph Anthony. Leavenworth is a delightfully Bavarian-themed town on the east slope of the Cascades and a favourite destination for car clubs. The return journey on the North Cascades Highway offers one of our region's most enjoyable and scenic roads.

Aug 24: Motorcar Gathering, the annual show 'n shine in the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital, organized by GAIN-VI with a section of the grounds set aside for the MBCA.

Sep 7: Camano Island Beach, Seattle Section drive organized by Bob Willits; Bob is also a Vancouver Island member. Camano Island is most easily reached from the mainland by turning west to the south of Mount Vernon. The beach is within a State park.

Sep 14: Tech event, Mercedes-Benz Nanaimo; details later

Sep 28: Rally/tour: Details forthcoming later.

Oct 18: Annual Meeting, the Club's one and only business meeting of the year for the general membership.



Nov 16: Morning coffee, locations TBA.

Stargazing

The GLA

MB's new GLA model is the latest addition to the company's SUVs, though some say it falls into the crossover category. On display at last month's Canadian auto show, the vehicle should be in showrooms by the fall. Canada will start with the GLA 250 4Matic and the GLA 45 AMG, both with four-cylinder gasoline engines. Front-wheel drive will follow next year but there's no word on a diesel.

Built on the MFA platform, the GLA shares its 106.3-inch wheelbase with the CLA, but at 173.6 inches long, the GLA is 8.7 inches shorter. The design language looks aggressive and familiar. It is likely to stand relatively tall, owing to the desire of MB to meet the US EPA's standard for a light truck, making the American model ride over an inch higher than its European brother. The suspension is reported to be more compliant than the CLA's.

Several exterior and interior features and the 2.0 L engine have been borrowed from the CLA, but the GLA's taller roofline alleviates the sedan's restricted headroom in the back-seat. Pricing should be slightly higher than the CLA. As predicted (May, 2013 issue) the most innovative features of the GLA concept vehicle shown last year did not make it into production: the interior fibre-optic lighting strips and the pulsating laser headlights. I doubt they'll be missed.



On MB's stand at the Canadian International Auto Show last month, in Toronto. Photo: thestrada.net

An Important Safety Upgrade

When a vehicle is involved in a serious accident, first-responders want to know certain details about its construction before they start to rescue the occupants. Questions like: where is the gas tank? how can the



battery be disabled? are top-of-mind for rescuers. Daimler has recently taken a significant step in improving our safety in this regard. From their press release:

“When an accident occurs and the vehicle is seriously damaged, the first thing the rescue services must do is free the occupants. This can be dangerous for all those involved if information about the vehicle is not available. So for the rescue workers, quick access to the rescue card is important. It contains all the construction details specific to that vehicle model, such as the location of airbags, battery and fuel tanks, so that equipment such as a hydraulic cutter can be used safely. Already today all manufacturers have rescue cards available for fitting on all their vehicle models.

“Daimler is the world's first car manufacturer to offer direct access to vehicle-specific rescue cards by means of a QR (Quick Response) code. "Electronic access by means of a QR code enables Mercedes-Benz to support in the rescue of accident victims", says Christian Treiber, Director, Service & Parts for Passenger Cars at Mercedes-Benz Global Service & Parts. “The sticker is easy to retrofit to second-hand cars. So this safety benefit is something we can offer not just to owners of new Mercedes-Benz vehicles." The QR code has been fitted as standard in all new Mercedes-Benz cars since the end of 2013 and is to be fitted in smart vehicles starting in January of this year.



“With immediate effect, the QR code can be installed in all Mercedes-Benz and smart used vehicles manufactured from 1990 onwards. The fitting must be done by an authorised Mercedes-Benz or smart service station. Treiber: "In many

Generic QR code sticker

countries, we are offering our customers the chance to have the QR code retrofitted free of charge."

“For ease of access, the QR code stickers are attached to the fuel filler flap and the B-pillar on the opposite side. Accident investigators have established that these two areas offer easy external access and only in rare cases are both of them seriously damaged. The black-and-white, scannable symbol can be seen practically everywhere today: on adverts, packaging and even on business cards. It comprises a string of characters that enable a quick response and take the user to a predetermined web address. When the code is scanned with a smartphone or tablet, with an existing internet connection the rescue card can be quickly accessed to provide safety-relevant vehicle information. The rescue card is currently available in seven languages, and from February in 23 languages, and will display in the language of the end-user's mobile device. If the language required is not available, the text will revert to English. An app for the emergency services that will allow the rescue card to be read even without an internet connection is planned to be available by the end of June 2014. Mercedes-Benz has waived its right to make a patent application so that the technology will be available for everyone.”

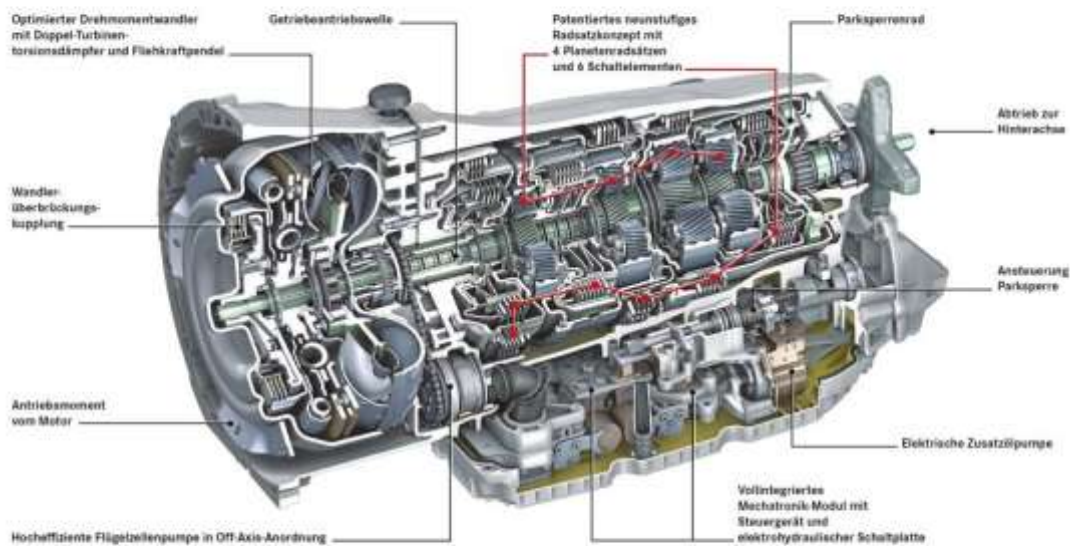
Contact the Parts Department at Three Point Motors or Mercedes-Benz Nanaimo if you are interested in having QR code stickers retrofitted to your car. The stickers are model-specific and have to be ordered in.



More Speeds

The first nine-speed automatic transmission with torque converter, the 9G-Tronic, will be standard equipment on the E 350 BlueTec later this year. The new gearbox will be coupled to a new torque converter. The gearbox casing is magnesium with a plastic oil pan, and the torque converter housing is aluminum. Compact construction means that the combination takes up the same space as the current 7-speed. Innovative design means it runs more smoothly and weighs 1 kg less. On the E 350 BlueTec the combination appears to improve fuel economy by about 3.5%. It would seem the drive to improve fuel economy by adding extra gears is near the point of diminished returns.

▲ Mehr Komfort, mehr Fahrspaß, weniger Verbrauch: Die neue 9G-TRONIC Aufbau des neuen, neunstufigen Wandlerautomatikgetriebes 9G-TRONIC



MB was a late-comer to the automatic transmission party. In 1955, the 300 Adenauer was the company's first model with an automatic, a three-speed Borg-Warner of American design. From 1957 to 1960, the company offered its own "Hydrak" gearbox as an option, a hybrid arrangement that eliminated the clutch pedal but still required manual shifting. From 1961, a four-speed automatic was built in-house for the S-class, becoming available throughout the model lineup in 1963. This gearbox still had no torque converter but used a hydraulic clutch instead. The first in-house automatic with a torque converter was the four-speed installed on the S-class in 1973. This gearbox used hydraulic pressure to activate the gear changes. The electronically shifted 7G-Tronic made its appearance in 2003, giving way to the 7G-Tronic Plus in 2010. The company also offers a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission on compact models, an automatically shifted gearbox with internals similar to a manual transmission.

The R129 SL turns 25

This month's hat tip is to the R129 series of roadsters, introduced in March, 1989 at the Geneva motor show. The R129 succeeded the R107, whose production span from 1971 through 1988 set the modern-day record for longevity in the marque. The R129's lifespan was 13 years, ending with the 2002 model.



The R129 SL was sold in Canada badged as a 300, 320, 500 and 600, with engines of six, six, eight and twelve cylinders, respectively. In those days the numbers actually stood for something real, and these engines displaced 3.0, 3.2, 5.0 and 6.0 litres. The six cylinder engines disappeared from the lineup in 1998, leaving just the 500 and 600 for the rest of the run.



Nigel Oddy's R129 SL600 waiting for its next event. Photo: Nigel Oddy

Designed in 1984, the R129 was based on the shortened floorpan of the W124 E-class and featured many innovative details for the time, such as electronically controlled shock absorbers (optional on all but the twelve-cylinder cars) and a hidden, automatically extending roll-over bar. The R107's rather dated rear swing axle gave way to multi-link suspension. It was the last SL with a fabric top, though a 34 kg hardtop could be purchased for year-round use.

Two facelifts kept the model fresh. The first, in 1995, introduced the electronic anti-skid technology ESP, which soon became standard across MB's model range. With this system, sensors detect and compare the steering angle with the yaw rate—the angular departure from a straight line. If the movements don't match, the system is automatically activated. Individual wheels are braked separately in such a way that the vehicle is easier to hold on track. The second facelift (MY1999) introduced a new design for the 5.0 litre engine.

Emergency Calling

MB offered TeleAid as an option on new cars until not too long ago. It was a subscription-based product that lets vehicle occupants contact a call centre in the event of a breakdown or emergency, or just for information. Later versions will automatically call for help if an airbag inflates or an emergency seatbelt tensioner is set off.



It was never a popular option in Canada, perhaps because of the initial and ongoing subscription costs, and MB Canada has dropped it from the equipment list on new cars.

As of next year, however, every new car sold in Europe must have an eCall system that automatically dials 112 (their version of 911) during an emergency, even if the occupants are unconscious. Making the core feature of TeleAid a part of standard equipment, the EU is requiring technology that automatically supplies a crashed vehicle's location to rescue crews.

International safety and environmental standards have been in the news lately, with MB Canada pushing for their harmonization. We all know that Canada and the US have different standards than Europe, and that some of the Canadian safety standards—daytime running lights and the strength of child-seat safety anchors, for example—differ from those in the USA. Transport Canada, who oversees our safety standards, defends these differences on grounds that our highway systems and driving conditions are different. Turf, bureaucratic ego, and nationalism don't feature in the Department's public information but it would probably be misguided to think they're not a factor.

These differences cost Canadians an estimated \$1,000 to \$1,500 on the price of a new vehicle and keep several vehicles that Canadians might like, such as the A-class, out of the country. As MB Canada's CEO Tim Reuss recently said (January 2014 issue), it's simply wrong-headed to think that cars that pass today's European safety and environmental standards would be unsafe or unclean in Canadian conditions.

We read from time to time about a police search for people who turn out to have driven off the road into a location where they're hard to find. These and other accident victims sometimes end up in situations where rapid response is essential to saving lives. Automatic emergency calling is an important safety feature that Transport Canada's fixation on national standards will deny to the majority of Canadians for a few years at least. I think we deserve better.

For Sale

1990 Mercedes 560SEC coupe - \$4250 (Victoria) - phone 250 727 9692. Odometer: **203856** VIN: WDBCA45E4LAS20382, automatic transmission.

Excellent condition, two-owner Mercedes 560 SEC Coupe, with the current owner having possession since 1996. This limited edition sport model is painted white with beige leather upholstery and burl walnut veneers. The vehicle is RWD with a 5.6L-V8 engine (238hp). The vehicle shows well as it has been always been garage-kept. The engine bay is clean as are the wheel wells. The paint is good with some patina reflecting its age and mileage. The wheels are in good shape with minimal curb rash. The vehicle has not been in any accidents while in the possession of the current owner, and the current owner is not aware of the previous owner having been in any accidents. This is an excellent car for the collector or the enthusiast that wants a sporty classic daily driver. This vehicle is priced fairly within the blue book range of \$3,500 to \$5,350.

A photo is on the next page. The thumbnails link to an online ad.





The Back End

An interesting Globe & Mail article on paint colours, how manufacturers choose them and why we buy them that way (link shortened): <http://bit.ly/N88ltP>

Edmunds takes the CLA 45 AMG for a drive: <http://www.edmunds.com/mercedes-benz/cla-class/2014/road-test3.html> . Their conclusion: fast, fun, but not for every day.

Photo: indianautoblog.com

