



**Vancouver Island Section**

**June, 2015**

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**CALENDAR**

- Ponton Tour Stop, Tue. Jun 23 (BC Stars Sec)**
- Advanced Driver Training, Thu. Jul 16**
- Board Meeting, Mon. Jul. 27**
- MB Regional Show ‘n Shine, Sun. Aug 9 (Seattle Sec.)**
- Motor Gathering, Sun. Aug. 16**
- Columbia Gorge Tour (Seattle Sec.) Aug 22-24**
- Summer BBQ, Sat. Sep. 12**
- Salt Spring Tour with the VIR-PCA, Sat. Sep 19**
- Annual Meeting, Sun. Oct. 4**
- Safe Drivers, Safe Families, Sun. Oct 11 (Seattle Sec)**
- Craft Brewery Tour, Sun. Nov. 15**
- Annual Party, Sun. Dec. 12.**

*More information about upcoming events is inside*

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- Hon. Vice President: Peter Trzewik



## Coming Events

### **Tue. Jun. 23, 19:00: Ponton World Tour Stop, North Vancouver**

Fred and Elisabeth Smits' round-the-world tour in a 1957 220S pontoon sedan ([click](#)) will stop over in North Vancouver at an event hosted by the BC Stars Section, at 2121 Lonsdale Ave. The couple is nearing the end of their North American leg, which began last August, and will soon be turning their wheels towards South America via Mexico. Refreshments will be provided by the MB Retail Group.

### **Sun. Aug. 9, 10:00-15:00: MB Regional Show 'n Shine (Seattle)**

Are you ready to experience the delight of viewing dozens of Mercedes-Benz spanning a half century of design all in one place? If so, come join the Seattle Section's Annual Regional Show & Shine at the Nile Golf & Country Club just north of Seattle. In addition to the largest area display of Mercedes-Benz owned by MBCA Northwest Region members, this event offers People's Choice voting with awards & trophies, local dealer & vendor displays, gift basket ticket sales with proceeds to support our charity of the year, and door prizes & demonstrations.

Now is the time to pre-register your cars and to reserve a picnic lunch prepared by Nile Club Catering featuring your summer time favorites.

Location: The Nile Golf & Country Club, 6601 244th Street SW, Mountlake Terrace, WA. Take exit 177 (State Route 104) off I-5. Travel west 3/10ths of a mile and make a right into the club.

Registration Fee: \$15 per person for lunch, \$10 for registration of your first show car and \$5 for registration for each additional car you place in the show. Registration and payment is due by Thursday, August 6, 2015 so that organizers can provide the caterers with a lunch count.

**Local Hotels:** Our out of town members may enjoy an overnight stay in a nearby hotel, close to the Nile Golf & Country Club and shopping at the Alderwood Mall. The **Hampton Inn & Suites** Seattle North/Lynnwood, located at 19324 Alderwood Mall Pkwy in Lynnwood offers breakfast, an evening manager's reception and rooms starting at \$179 per night. They are also located across the street from one of the first Chick-Fil-A's in our area. Contact them directly at 1 855-271-3622 for reservations. Another option is **La Quinta Inn** located at 4300 Alderwood Mall Boulevard in Lynnwood. They are a pet friendly hotel and offer a continental breakfast with rates starting at \$134 for a standard room. Contact them directly at (425) 775-7447 for reservations.

For registration and more information, contact **Linda Gleadle** ([click](#)).

### **Sun. Aug. 16, 08:00-14:30: Motor Gathering.**

The Motor Gathering, Vancouver Island's premier show 'n shine for mixed-make classics, will be held again at the Viscount Aero Centre, 9800 Macdonald Park Rd., Sidney (same location as last year). This is a charity show supporting several worthy local causes—last year's event raised over \$75,000 in cash and over \$200,000 in in-kind sponsorships.

An organizational meeting for local car club representatives was held in March. We have been encouraged to participate with good turnouts of members' cars. Driver-quality cars are welcome, and there will be judged category trophies for those in better condition. MBCA-VI member Paul Vincent won last year's trophy for best German car with his lovely 1969 280SL.



Cars will be placed on the field between 8 and 10 am. The event opens to spectators at 11, with food and engaging activities for kids available on-site. Last year the organizers ran out of spectator parking space, so it's probably better to come early or late if you're planning just to wander the field. I was pleased to meet several Section members doing just that last year. Advance car registration is strongly encouraged. The registration form and more information are available at the event's website <http://www.motorgathering.com/>.

## Francelli's

Francelli's coffee shop is located in the Royal Oak Shopping Centre near the Co-Op gas bar. For several years the adjacent parking lot has been home to an impromptu show of hot rods and muscle cars on summer Saturday evenings.

On Sunday mornings, Francelli's regularly hosts a small group of car guys who have breakfast and/or coffee there between about 9 and 11. Many of the regulars are members of the Porsche Club, but I've seen a Ferrari, Lamborghini, Renault Alpine, Tesla roadster, and other interesting cars there in recent weeks. Feel free to drop by.

## New Models & Technology Recap

*Article and photos by Barry Patchett*

On Sunday, May 18, more than 20 members and guests attended a technical seminar at Three Point Motors. David Rabii did his usual superb job of describing the models introduced during the past year, along with the technical changes and advances that came with them.

The first addition that I noted was for the new "C" class. Near the top of the performance spectrum there will be "S" models, as in a C63 becoming a C63S. There will be "semi AMG" models as well, with extra enhancements to the suspension and engine settings, including adjustments to the "harmonic" sounds of the exhaust system. The C400 will become the C450 in this upgrade. Boy racers will be delighted. Watch for them in September. The harmonic exhaust settings will not be available for the S class.

There will be ten plug-in models available in North America by 2017, but mostly for the USA. There will also be a new Smart car, but not the four-seater. Also in the cards is a new AMG GT, but we do not have the specifications yet.

I drove a new C300 equipped with many new features, including a heads-up display. I was expecting to dislike it, but found it to be unobtrusive and informative. Speed, direction, city location and street name are displayed. There was a GLA "compact SUV" available with a 2 litre turbo engine (photo). I did not drive it but Bob told me that it has good space inside and ample power to keep up with the traffic.

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### New Members!

***Tony Morris - 02 CL230***

### Renewing Members!

***Ron Drane***

***Dale Fickinger***

***Cathy Leblanc - 08 B200***

***Jon Mills***

***David Rabii***

***Dorothy Shortreed***

**Thank you!**

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*The very thin rear tire of the S63 AMG.*

There was a new, privately owned, S63 AMG sedan (photo) in the garage. It had many custom features, including 19" wheels (photo) with amazingly compact tires. The fronts were 225/40 (photo) and the rears 295/25 (photo), believe it or not. These tiny sidewalls may keep more rubber on the road during cornering, but a very sophisticated and compliant suspension is imperative to avoid a ride similar to the solid tire logging trucks of the 1920's.

David Rabii told us the Cowichan Valley racetrack by GAIN is under construction and due to be finished in the spring of 2016. The track portion will be 2.4 km long and there will be no concrete walls, so the inhibiting part of Western Speedway will be absent. There will be a meeting room among the facilities and access will be by membership only. David did say that a tire sponsor is needed, so please send any ideas to President Bob!

*Hazel's BBQ lunch in progress.*

The day was completed with a delicious German lunch of potato salad, bratwurst, buns and condiments along with coffee and/or water (photo). Hazel Ostwerka did her usual first rate job of organizing the barbie and the goodies. Bob Wilson presented David Rabii with a bottle of Scotch for all his help for the Club and to help celebrate his upcoming stag weekend.



## Seahorses Rally

Six cars plus the organizers gathered under a cloudless sky in the parking lot of Saanich Plaza, outside Tim Hortons. The occasion was a short rally to lunch in Brentwood Bay, mostly up and down some little-travelled roads and byways. The organizers handed out the general instructions to considerable consternation, as the victims—er, competitors—came to grips with basic course-following rules and abbreviations. After a suitable interval of conversation, the exchange of phone numbers, and a short pep talk, competitors left at two-minute intervals so the cars would be spaced out along the route.

The rally was untimed, with no average speeds, but competitors were scored on their answers to questions about signs and landmarks along the way. The route went out the Island Highway to Goldstream, then up Finlayson Arm Road into Central Saanich. Two entries got only one question wrong, so the winner was determined from a tie-breaking question about the length of the official route. Congratulations to Alex Currie and Cheryl, and to everyone completing the course.

## Stargazing

### The Three-Pointed Star



*Image and story: theglobenadmail.com*

The founder of Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft, Gottlieb Daimler, first used a three-pointed star as the logo for his cars in 1909, with each point representing Daimler's ambition to dominate in the air, on the sea and on land. When Daimler merged with a company owned by Karl Benz, the tri-star was put into a circle surrounded by the company's new name: Mercedes-Benz.



## New SUVs

The GLC was officially unveiled this week at the German headquarters of clothing giant Hugo Boss. Its nomenclature and styling cues are intended to link the SUV to the C-class sedans. Gone are the utilitarian interior and exterior of the GLK it replaces. The GLC has another 118 mm between the front and back wheels and sports a more chiselled look than its predecessor. Leg and shoulder room increase and a hands-free tailgate is offered to ease loading the groceries.

Release photos stress the off-road capability of this new SUV, though I suspect it will be the rare owner indeed who drives one on a rocky foreshore (picture below). Agility-control suspension is standard and an air-suspension is optional, the latter smoothing the bumps, as on MBs luxury sedans, but also offering the capability to raise the ride height 50 mm at the push of a button or to lower it for highway travel. The underbody has skid plates.

Of the many models available, Canada will initially get only the GLC300 4-Matic, which has the same 241-hp turbo inline 4-cyl as its C300 counterpart, but mated to a new 9-speed gearbox. This transmission has a hill-descent mode for serious off-roading. The GLC300 should reach Island showrooms in the fall, with a plug-in hybrid rumoured for next year. That reportedly gets 2.6L/100 km and can travel up to 34 km on electric power alone.



*The GLC can challenge the most difficult terrain. Daimler photo*

The GLE will reach our showrooms sooner. Its look and profile are similar to the ML it replaces, but the front and rear ends have been refreshed together with the interior. MB Canada is promising it for July 1. We'll get both gasoline and diesel versions of the GLE350, a GLE400 and an AMG variant, the GLE63. These engines will



be coupled to a 7-speed gearbox with 4-Matic. As above, air suspension will be available and, again, a plug-in hybrid is rumoured.



*Daimler photo.*

### **C-Class Milestone**



*A European 190E photo:Wikimedia*

The C-Class was launched in 1982 with a model designated the 190E. Built on the W201 chassis, the 190E lasted 11 years, all the way to 1993, when it was replaced by the W202 C-class. MB celebrated a milestone last month, delivering the 8-millionth vehicle in this mid-size series of sedans, station wagons and coupes. The present incumbent is the W205 C-class, of which over 250,000 examples have been delivered since last year. The C remains MB's single most popular model.

### **Colour My World—Or Not**

Like me, you might be surprised to learn that MB offered 48 different paint colours last year. In a survey of the auto industry's 2014 colour palette, *Car & Driver* recently reported that the 42 major nameplates available in our part of the world offered 1,284 colours between them. Almost 20% of those hues—237 to be exact—are just shades of grey. You've likely heard or read me previously on this topic (*many conversations and the issues for June 2009, October 2009, May 2010, and September 2012*). I've been quiet about this for a while but I haven't forgotten.



A recent study suggests the human eye can distinguish only about 30 shades of grey. If you look at the cars around Victoria, you might think that MB has sold most of them. In fact, our favourite manufacturer had four blacks, ten different shades in the grey-to-silver range, and eight more tinted greys last year. Here's a breakdown of MB's palette for 2014:

- Beiges, tans, golds, and other off-browns – 3
- Blacks - 4
- Browns - 5
- Blues – 6
- Blue greens – 1
- Grey-blues and silvery blues – 4
- Greys and silvers – 10
- Grey-greens – 4
- Greens – 2 (when was the last time you saw a newish, green MB?)
- Maroons and purple – 1
- Reds – 7
- Whites – 5
- Yellows – well, not for a while, though yellow will be available on the AMG-GT. No orange, copper or pink either.

The discouraging news: nearly three-quarters of the new cars sold in North America last year were essentially colourless, some shade of white, black, grey or silver—which is just a metallic grey. If you look on the lot at Three Point, you could be forgiven for thinking that proportion was higher. The good news: we've started to see more interiors in a colour other than hot black.

### **More Automation for the W213 E-Class**

News reports suggest that Daimler plans to introduce the next model in the E-class series sometime next year. The interior will take its basic layout and design elements from the current S-class. There is speculation that the engine will be from a new series of in-line six-cylinders, replacing the current V-6. The chassis will be lighter and, of course, there will be fresh technology ([click](#)).

A big part of that new technology will be Daimler's next step towards the autonomous car. Self-drivers have been made available for testing by the media ([click](#)). The W213 will reportedly be able to steer itself at highway speeds. Drivers who opt for this technology will have to get used to the steering wheel turning in their hands, all by itself. It's another step forward in Daimler's drive to reduce human error, the factor that's been blamed for about 93% of all vehicle accidents.

On a drive on freeways and country roads in southern Germany, near where the E class is built, *Automotive News* reported that "the car's sensors and cameras smoothly kept it in the middle of the lane. It navigated around generous bends in the road and automatically adjusted the speed according to street signs. While tree shadows and temporary signs at big construction sites sometimes confused the system, it managed dark tunnels and operated to a top speed of 130 kilometers per hour. Though nerve-racking at first, the effect was eventually relaxing and comforting. Sharper turns, while technically possible, aren't part of its repertoire yet, said (Thomas) Weber, (MB's head of development).



“If the car detects that the driver doesn't have their hands on the steering wheel, the steering-aid system first switches on a warning light, then beeps, then turns itself off, forcing the driver to retake the wheel. The experience is interactive enough to prevent the driver from zoning out.

“Technology like this is moving faster than the laws of the road can keep up’, said Wolfgang Bernhart, an automotive expert at Roland Berger Strategy Consultants. ‘The legal framework will eventually have to allow customers to let go of the wheel to check emails or read the newspaper’, he said. ‘If that's not the case, these features will be a hard sell,.’”

## The Back End

A thoughtful look at the potential for serious social and economic dislocation consequent on autonomous trucks (*see last issue; hat tip to Mike McBride*): <http://bit.ly/1QPQmcS>

Daimler has opened their order books for a battery storage system similar to Tesla’s Powerwall (*another hat tip to Mike McBride*): [click](#)

Driving.ca has a first look at the GLC: [click](#)



A 1929 710 SS at the 2015 Mille Miglia retrospective. Photo: [sportscardigest.com](http://sportscardigest.com), who published a great photo gallery of the event ([click](#)).

