



Vancouver Island Section

January, 2015

In This Issue:

Coming Events2

The Annual Dinner2

Stargazing4

 MB’s 2015 Technology and Model Deck4

 GLE Crossover4

 Charging Ahead5

 With All Four Wheels.....5

 The Future of Driving?6

 The China Trade.....7

 Biodiesel in the USA: A Cautionary Note.....7

 Transparent Pillars.....8

The Back End.....8

CALENDAR

- Morning Coffee, Sun. Feb. 8**
- Sweetheart Drive, Sun. Feb. 15 (Seattle Sect.)**
- Tour of Victoria, Sat. Mar. 21**
- Visit to Rudi & Co., Sun. Mar. 22**
- New Models & Technology, Sun. Apr. 26**
- Joint Tour with Porsche Club, date TBA**
- Cat & Mouse Rally, Sun Jun. 7**
- Advanced Driver Training, Thu. Jul 16 or Fri. Jul. 17**
- Motor Gathering, Sun. Aug. 16**
- Summer BBQ, Sun. Sep. 13**
- MB’s Safety Technology, Sun. Oct. 4**
- Morning Coffee, Sun. Nov. 15**
- Annual Party, Sun. Dec. 12.**

Information about the next two events is inside

Section Officers

- Membership: [Jeff Cohen](#)
- Director at Large: [Ron Drane](#)
- Director at Large: [Jamie Graham](#)
- Dealer Ambassador, Victoria: [Dennis Ostrowerka](#)
- Secretary: [Hazel Ostrowerka](#)
- Dealer Ambassador, Nanaimo: [Barry Patchett](#)
- Treasurer: [Rob Watson](#)
- Newsletter: [Bob Wilson](#)
- President: [Bob Wilson](#)
- Vice President: vacant
- Hon. Vice President: Peter Trzewik



Coming Events

Sunday, Feb 8: Morning coffee and conversation, 10 a.m. one location only: *Serious Coffee*, on the Malahat just south of Mill Bay. Join us for a breakfast of organic coffee and free-range conversation.

Sunday, Feb 15: *Seattle Section* runs their **Sweetheart Chuckanut Drive** on the Valentine's Day weekend. Chuckanut Drive is a short trip across the border, just south of Bellingham to the west of the I-99.

There's nothing that says loving like FOOD! This drive will satisfy even the most fastidious foodie. We start our journey at the north end of the beautiful Chuckanut Drive. About half way, we will finish the serpentine embrace of the hillside and arrive in time for a delectable brunch at the scenic roadhouse, the Chuckanut Manor.

We will then head back north for a guided tour of Taylor Shellfish Samish Bay Oyster Farm. Then we head south to Edison to the Breadfarm... no tour, but plenty of fresh baked goods to share with that special someone. Then it's off to Samish Island for a tour and tasting of the gold-medal-winning Samish Bay Single Malt Whiskey at Golden Distillery. It will be calving time at Gothberg Farms so there may be some new surprises as we sample Rhonda Gothberg's famous goat cheeses. We'll finish our day at Bow Hill Blueberries with a tour and tastings. It's worth the trip just for their tempting ice cream.

So bring your sweetie and your appetite as we eat our way down Chuckanut Drive! Meet in the south parking lot of Fairhaven Park, 107 Chuckanut Drive North, in the south end of Bellingham. Drop a note to the organizer, Bob Willits to let him know you're coming. Make a weekend of it and stay Saturday night in Bellingham! **RSVP Bob Willits** ([click](#)).

New Members!

Justin Shah

Renewing Members!

Barrie Aldrich - 89 560SL, 02 S500

Wilf & Betty Beaton - 09 E320

Neil Mahady - 98 SL500

Gerry Woloshyn

Thank you!

The Annual Dinner

Twenty-five members and guests enjoyed a fun evening at Vancouver Island Section's annual dinner. Hazel and Dennis Ostrowerka greeted people on arrival at the Union Club's Palm Court room and handed out draw tickets for the door prizes. Dennis was also selling raffle tickets on an entry to one of Three Point Motors' driver training sessions. Peter Trzewik says these will continue to be held at Western Speedway until GAIN-VI's new facility outside Duncan is ready, probably in the fall.

After a couple of false starts, Bob Wilson managed to get the slide show going. It had an assembly of pictures from all our events in 2014 and a few extra besides, such as shots from Stan Garrod's coincidental meeting with the Mille Miglia retrospective, and a few of Mike McBride's pictures from German and French museums.

Guests started with something from the bar and we stood around for a good ice-breaking conversation. The Palm Court room was just the right size and the group seemed quite at ease, despite some members being at



their first Section event. Conversation went on unabated in small groups until a waiter came to tell us dinner was ready. The President spoke a few words and we were off to the buffet.



Before dinner. Photo: Christo Pandelidis

Dinner came from the Union Club's holiday buffet tables: diverse salads and cold seafood, a hot table with vegetarian, fish and meat dishes, a prime rib and ham carvery and, of course, the dessert table.



A dinner table



John & Cordelia McIntosh accept their 20-yr pins

Both photos: Christo Pandelidis

After-dinner proceedings kicked off with presentations: 10-year pins to Rob Watson & Linda Derrick; 15-year pins to Dennis & Hazel Ostrowerka; 20-year pins to John & Cordelia McIntosh. Cathy LeBlanc was awarded a gift certificate donated by Three Point Motors to accompany the Enthusiasts Trophy, given annually to the member attending the greatest number of Section events. Cathy participated in 8 events in 2014.

The door prizes consisted of Club-branded clothing and merchandise donated by the Section and memorabilia from the Museum store in Stuttgart donated by Mike McBride. The happy winner of the raffle for a driver-training session was Linda Derrick, who was on the wait list for last year's event and can now catch up to husband Rob.



A big thank-you to Cordelia & John McIntosh, who hosted the evening at the Union Club and kindly donated the dinner wine for each table. Thanks also to Three Point Motors and GAIN-VI for donating the major prizes, and to Hazel & Dennis Ostrowerka for many arrangements behind the scene.

Stargazing

MB's 2015 Technology and Model Deck

MB Canada has released its annual product deck for MY2015. Heavily illustrated, it contains 27 pages on new or notable technologies, followed by a section showing base equipment, trim levels, and all the option packages and single options for every available model. There's a price list up front and a page of technical data for each model. There is, interestingly, no sign of the Urban and Style Lines mentioned a couple of issues ago.

The MSRP list shows the least expensive MB model as the B 250 at \$31,300 and the most expensive as the S 65 AMG coupe, at \$259,900.

The deck is indispensable reading if you're in the market for a new car. It might be interesting even if you're not, and it serves as an introduction to our April event. All this information is available for download in an Adobe Reader file. At 455 pages, this is a large document—the file size is 38.2 Mb. You can retrieve it from this link ([click](#)).

GLE Crossover

Autonews.com has shown photos of a near-production prototype of a GLE crossover, a category also called 'compact SUV'. Confusingly at first, GLE is the name also set aside for the face-lifted ML due out next year. It appears that there will be two versions—the one shown below and a more conventional SUV. Both will be built in Alabama.

Sure enough, MB intends to call this SUV a coupe to differentiate the two versions. Daimler's press release: "Our GLE Coupé combines typical coupé attributes, such as sportiness, dynamism and agility, with the confident presence, versatility and robustness of an SUV", says Prof. Dr Thomas Weber, Board Member responsible for Group Research and Mercedes-Benz Cars Development, in characterising the latest member of the Mercedes-Benz model family."

Looking beyond the company's purple prose, the defining characteristic of an MB coupe, which can have either 2 or 4 doors, seems to be a roofline that reduces headroom for rear seat passengers. MB is not alone in trying to re-define the coupe: VW released a similar-looking compact SUV called the Cross Coupe GTE at this month's Detroit Auto Show; BMW makes a 4-door 6-series Gran Coupe.

Autonews also says that AMG aims to double sales in the next three years by offering a less expensive product line -- AMG Sport -- to narrow the price gap with Mercedes cars.





Near-production GLE crossover. Photo: autonews.com

Charging Ahead

In a sign of the growing importance of electric drive trains, Daimler is investing €100 million in its subsidiary ACCUmotive to expand the company's capability to produce lithium ion batteries. ACCUmotive is located in Kamenz, Germany, northeast of Dresden. Battery production there started in 2011.



photo: accumotive.de

ACCUmotive will produce batteries for the Smart electric drive and for future hybrid MBs. The company has about 180 employees in Kamenz and another 80 in an R&D facility in the Stuttgart area.

With All Four Wheels

MB's all-wheel drive system 4Matic has come a long way since its introduction, in 1987, on the W124 E-Class. Even in its first iteration, 4Matic was electronically controlled via a central differential. It had three modes: rear wheel drive only, a 35:65 front/rear axle torque split, and a 50:50 torque split. The rear differential had ASD,



which automatically locked the axle if it sensed side-to-side slippage. The centre differential was unreliable, its multi-plate clutch being plagued with problems. The first generation 4Matic was withdrawn in 1993 and the second was delayed until 1998.

We are, I think, now at the stage where 4Matic offerings are fourth-generation on the small cars and third-generation on the C-Class and larger. The third generation is an all-wheel drive system with open differentials at each end and a limited slip differential in the centre with a 45:55 torque split. ABS is used to brake a wheel that starts to spin and the whole is integrated with the safety and stability systems.

Recall that the small cars (B, CLA, GLA) are built on the MFA platform, which has front-wheel drive at its heart. These cars have the dual-clutch 7G-DCT gearbox. Instead of a centre differential there is a compact power takeoff unit for the rear axle fully integrated into the gearbox. The rear differential has a multi-disc clutch. This system provides fully variable torque distribution, being 100% front-wheel drive until sensors decide that some of the torque should be routed to the rear axle. As with the one on the larger cars, the system is fully integrated with stability and engine controls.

Pressure to activate the rear axle is supplied in milliseconds by a pump integrated into the rear differential. The pump activates automatically as soon as the smallest speed difference is sensed between front and rear axles. Pressure control and therefore torque control to the rear axle is performed by means of a proportioning valve integrated into the rear axle. The 4Matic system on AMG variants operates differently.

The Future of Driving?

“With the self-driving luxury sedan F 015 Luxury in Motion, Mercedes-Benz shows how the automobile is changing from a means of transportation to a private retreating space.” That’s how the marketing department chose to describe MB’s F 015 concept car shown at this month’s Consumer Electronic Show. “Anyone who focuses solely on the technology has not yet grasped how autonomous driving will change our society,” emphasised Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars. “The car is growing beyond its role as a mere means of transport and will ultimately become a mobile living space.”

The F 015 was developed to fit a vision of what cities and mobility would be like in 2030, just another 15 years away. According to MB’s vision, “Urbanisation has continued to advance, and the little urban space there is today is scarcer than ever. In an urban environment where space is at a premium and everything happens at a hectic pace, people have a growing desire for privacy and a place to retreat to. Autonomous driving is taken for granted – it is accepted by society and the technology is perfectly reliable. As the autonomous car takes over from the driver in situations where driving isn’t much fun, such as slow-moving traffic, it gives real added quality to time spent out on the road. The passengers in self-driving cars use their newly gained free time while travelling for relaxing or working as they please.” This concept living-room is, by the way, hydrogen-powered.

The CES is held each January in Las Vegas. I may as well be up front about this: I don’t like Las Vegas and I don’t like MB’s vision. “Exclusive cocoons on wheels”, in Zetsche’s words. The F 015 is the product of the most forward-looking designers and engineers in the company. In their urban utopia ‘driving’ is reduced to selecting the destination and route. If the thinkers who developed this mobile living space have it right, the MBCA has a limited future. But I think we can still have fun till we get there. Of course, they may not have it quite right, either.





The private retreating space formerly known as the interior. Look, Ma, hardwood flooring! Despite the swivelling seats it does look harder to get in and out of than my living room at home. There will doubtless be a problem for cars configured like this to meet current airbag requirements. Daimler photo.

The China Trade

The 500,000th locally produced Mercedes-Benz passenger car, a long-wheelbase C-Class model, has rolled off the production lines at Daimler's joint-venture Beijing Benz Automotive Co., Ltd. (BBAC), marking yet another milestone in Mercedes-Benz's increasing footprint in China. About half of these vehicles have been manufactured just within the last two years.

Biodiesel in the USA: A Cautionary Note

Panorama, the national magazine of the Porsche Club of America, has reported that MB's diesel customers have been experiencing problems in parts of the USA. MB has certified its current range of diesel vehicles for B5, a diesel fuel with up to 5% of recent biological origin. The problem is centred in the US Midwest, where biodiesel contains up to 11% organics. When burned in a modern MB diesel, the by-products of combustion turn into a "gunky, goopy sludge"--that's apparently MB's technical term!-- in the crankcase and this leads to other problems. The sludge can coat intercoolers, exhaust gas recirculation valves and engine and turbocharger bearings, putting the vehicle at risk of an engine failure. Once sludged, according to MB-USA's fuel policy director, the engines do not self-clean with fuel additives. In 2011 MB-USA stopped allocating diesels to dealerships in Illinois, where the agricultural lobby has produced a B11 mandate.

Using more than 5% biodiesel voids MB-USA's warranty. VW and Audi have gone a different route, honouring warranty claims but reducing the recommended oil and filter service intervals ([click](#)).



This story raises a cautionary note for the owners of modern German diesels. The Canadian fuels standard allows for up to 2% organics in diesel fuel. A network of gas stations in BC offers 100% biodiesel in clearly labelled pumps. Diesel owners travelling in the USA, in particular, should pay attention to the B-number when refuelling. If there's no alternative to a fuel with more than 5% organics, it would appear to be a good idea to change the oil and filter at the first subsequent opportunity. Biodiesel can be burned with impunity in the classic range of cars.

The recent drop in the price of oil makes biofuels less competitive without strong political support and large subsidies, so we're probably looking at the *status quo* in that area for the near future.

Transparent Pillars

Jaguar-Land Rover is working on technology to eliminate the blind spots caused by the A- and B-pillars. These are the supports for the roof at the side of the windscreen and behind the front seats. JLR recently showed a vehicle with cameras mounted outside the car that projected their image onto the inside of the A-pillars when the appropriate turn signal is activated, and onto the B-pillars when the driver turns her head.

The Back End

MB TV: Making the C-Class—Safety: youtu.be/5M2tqWC1lyc

The amazing detail embedded in Google Maps (thanks to Mike McBride):

<http://www.wired.com/2014/12/google-maps-ground-truth/>

Sports Car Digest's report on MB classic sales at auctions in 2014: pics, prices and pontification. The commentary can be scorching! Example-- "It's really hard not to call this 190SL despicable...."

http://www.sportscardigest.com/mercedes-benz-sold-auction-2014/?awt_l=66XZY&awt_m=JFGj28FG4es.CO

Driving.ca tests the E 250 diesel and likes it: <http://bit.ly/1AOWfxX> (link shortened)

An interesting comparison of 4-wheel drive systems: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqWFCBNPTcc>

In-car video of a 300 SL being driven flat-out on a Swiss hillclimb; brave driver, great sound:

<http://bit.ly/1xKsvnz> (link shortened)

Why it might be important to replace tires in sets of 4 <http://www.rockauto.com/Newsletter/index.html>

Why the MY2015 cars seem less fuel efficient—a simple explanation of the new 5-cycle fuel economy tests:

<http://www.toyota.ca/toyota/en/fuel-consumption-ratings>





The 2015 C-Class wagon. Teasingly, the right-side badge says 'BlueTec Hybrid'. MBUSA announced at the Detroit Auto Show that a C 350 plug-in hybrid will be sold south of the border starting this fall. MB Canada is being more coy about their plans, promising something better. Might it be this? Daimler photo

