



Western Reserve Section

CRUIER

Mercedes-Benz Club of America

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Thank you MBUSA for your loyalty to MBCA

Have you been thinking of buying a Mercedes-Benz (M-B)? MBUSA is rewarding Mercedes-Benz Club members for their loyalty to the brand and to the club. All you need to do is be a member in good standing for 1 year, before purchasing or leasing your M-B. Then with proper documentation, a \$1500 gift card will be issued when a member purchases or leases a new vehicle from an authorized M-B dealer or a \$750 gift card for a pre-owned M-B. Members purchasing a Mercedes from a licensed independent dealer will receive a \$250 gift card.

Gift cards can be used for service, parts or accessories at any authorized M-B dealer. Club Member **Catherine Bellante** joined the club one year before purchasing her first M-B. Thus allowing her to take advantage of MBUSA's reward program. After choosing an E350, she received a \$1,500 gift card. She used her rewards money to add a bluetooth phone connection as well as M-B luggage. On a recent trip

abroad, Cathy reported that her new luggage was the first to come out on the airport turntable and she breezed through customs. Her old luggage was always the last out. She also won a drawing for a flat screen TV during a celebration at **Leikin** in Willoughby, OH.

Fred Gwinn used his reward money at the service center, purchased car parts, and a special suitcase for the SL550. He also bought his grandson, Logan, his first M-B. Logan can now be found driving his SL500 pedal car around the house.



Priscilla Gwinn and Logan Dicus with SL500 Pedal Car

Horse Country Tour through the Western Reserve



The Baldwin Estates is just one of the stops on the Horse Country Tour.

Tom Barratt and **Kim McConnell** are planning a Horse Country Driving Tour for Sunday, June 28. We will gather at the White-North stables in the Chagrin Valley for light refreshments and a tour. Then we will have a road tour of several historic properties and barns throughout the Hunting Valley, Gates Mills, and Kirtland. Late in the afternoon, we will return to the White-North stables for an al fresco summer picnic. Join us for this elegant tour of beautiful country in the Western Reserve. More information will be on the web site and in a flyer.

Board of Directors

Gary Goodman, President
ggood10167@aol.com
330-626-2025

Mary Alice Cozza, Vice President
fcozza@neo.rr.com
330-222-1106

John Tuck, Secretary
John.Tuck1@gmail.com
216-408-8454

John Morrison, Treasurer
gobenzing@aol.com
330-673-7885

Ted Gottfried, Tech Advisor
tbgfried@yahoo.com
330-650-0751

Brian DiPasquale
brian@vecmar.com
440-256-9988

Tracy DiPasquale
tracy@vecmar.com
440-256-9988

Don French
lakemohawk@earthlink.net
330-327-1188

Fred Gesell
wgesell@aol.com
419-332-8398

Dick Gortz
rgortz@gortz.com
440-248-0848

Fred Gwinn
fredgwinn@earthlink.net
440-255-0793

Sue Morrison,
slm2teach@aol.com
330-673-7885

Bill VerDuin
billverduin@alltel.net
440-338-6030

**Frank Cozza, Great Lakes
Regional Director, and
National Events Chairman**
fcozza@neo.rr.com
330-222-1106

Al Calandra, Honorary Member

**Editors: Mary Alice Cozza
Sue Morrison
Priscilla Gwinn**

National and Regional News....

In April, **Frank** and **Mary Alice** hosted the Great Lakes Region Officers meeting. Officers from 7 of the 8 sections attended. The purpose of this meeting was to create more dialogue throughout sections in our region. With 20 members attending, including **Peter Lesler**, MBCA's National President, we had a very productive day discussing such topics as:

- joining section events
- building leadership
- maintaining and increasing membership
- improving communication through websites
- encouraging an exchange of newsletters among the sections
- enhancing dealer relationships
- increasing section attendance at events
- coordinating the Great Lakes Region calendar of events.

We shared with each other what works, and what does not work.

The Great Lakes Region was the only region that had 100% representation at the President's meeting that preceded the Spring National Board meeting in Indianapolis. Some of the same issues discussed in our regional meeting were discussed at this meeting only now communicating across the USA and Canada.

MBUSA has offered Mercedes-Benz Club of America the opportunity to advertise on their digital media players found in many of the dealerships today. There will be 3 different club ads in a 4 hour loop. These ads will greatly enhance our recruitment program, thanks MBUSA. Be looking for these club ads in your dealer's showroom. Please let me know when and where you see them.



Frank Cozza,
National Events Chairman
Great Lakes Regional Director

Think what you could do with \$51,225!

June 15, 2009 is the deadline for your chance to win the first prize – \$51,225 cash equivalent of a 2009 SLK300. Maybe you can see yourself in the second prize C300 – 4Matic or the \$40,620 cash equivalent. Third through fifth prize is \$5,000 which is the cash equivalent of a German tour for two. The sixth through ninth prize is a \$250 gift certificate to the MBCA Club Store.

If you did not receive an entry form, they are available at www.mbca.org or by calling 800-637-2360. Remember June 15, 2009 is the deadline for your chance to win. Let's support the club and have a Western Reserve Section Winner this year. The Raffle tickets are only sold to MBCA members making the odds of winning in your favor.

The drawing will be held on June 30. Good Luck!

Message from the President - Gary Goodman



Gary Goodman,
President

It has been a busy spring with a lot of activity at both the section and national levels. In April, I attended a regional officers' meeting hosted by the **Frank and Mary Alice Cozza**. It was great to meet and talk with officers and board members from sections in Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

There were a lot of good ideas exchanged that will help to make all of our sections better able to serve our members.

This meeting was followed by a trip to Indianapolis, IN, for the national board meeting that included a special one-day meeting for section presidents and officers from all over the country. **John Tuck** and the Cozzas were also in attendance. Over 60 of the 84 sections were represented at the meeting to learn more about the workings of the club at the national level as well as to exchange ideas and solutions to help solve our common issues. As is typical of this type of forum, there was also tremendous benefit to being able to talk one-on-one to other members outside the official meeting.

After attending the committee meetings that preceded the national board meeting, I am confident that the leaders of our club are working hard to lead us in the right direction and to prepare us for a successful future.

Up Coming Events

There are 3 national events this summer that promise to be great fun and should be "must-dos" on your calendar. The first one is Heimatfest to be held in Alabama on May 28 - June 1; StarTrack 2009, hosted by our neighboring Pittsburgh Section on July 18-21, is held in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix; and Mid-America Caravan hosted by the Kansas City Section August 15-18. No matter what your interests are—car shows, performance driving, good food, great people—these events offer something for everyone. Details on all the events are in the current issue of the Star. The Central Ohio Section (Columbus area) is hosting a series of 3 autocross events on May 23, June 27, and August 22. For more details on the autocross, contact **Rodd Masteller** by email at rmasteller@columbus.rr.com.

The Western Reserve Section also has several fun events planned. **Tom Barratt** and **Kim McConnell** are planning a Horse Country driving tour scheduled for Sunday June 28th; our annual Old Cars Fun Day hosted by **Dick Gortz** and **Bill VerDuin** will happen July 11, and our always-popular caravan to the Spread Eagle Tavern and Ice Cream Social at the Cozzas is on Sunday, August 2.

Lastly, work is proceeding on the revision of our section website and our goal is to finalize our plan at the June board meeting. The next edition of this newsletter should be the first one available via email or regular mail. At this point some of you are getting duplicate email messages regarding our events. I appreciate your patience as we work through this, but that will be solved soon.

Bring your car to an event and join the fun!

Member Update

New Members – January through April

Sherry Belohlavek, Joseph Carr, Raymond Caulk, Taraline Coughlin, Craig Cozza, Frank Cozza, Tom Demrovsky, Jeffrey Hildebrandt, Catherine Keith, Guy Kendallfreas, James Kennelly, Edward Mehler, Dawn Neff, Jeff Payton, Germaine Ross, Barbara Slosar, Rodney Tucker, Donald Wagner

Renewals – January through April

Fred Abraham, J. Robert Arther Jr., Richard Buys, John Collins, Joy Comey, Charles Deeds, Jeffrey Delmonico, August Furio, Fred Gesell, Norma Glause, Ronald Good, Gary Goodman, Paul Hamann, Obi Isiguzo MD, Howard Jacobs, Terry Kiwala, Jack Kline, David Kling, Josephine Lesler, Ron Mihalek, Doyle Miller, Hans Proemm, Bert Reimann, Mark Rose, Patricia Seifert, Lawrence Shafer, Marion Shafer, Richard Tashjian, Raymond Vehovec, Bill Ver Duin, Jonathan Veres, Neil Weimer, John Whatmough, Don Woodard, Nathan Workman, Jack Wyatt

Mercedes-Benz dealer versus used car lot

By Ted Gottfried

A classic Mercedes owner asked me to evaluate a 2004 triple black SLK that was for sale at a local used car lot. It had been a lease car and had 31,000 miles. The Carfax was apparently good.

I arranged with **Ganley Mercedes** in Akron to take the car inside and up on a lift for a thorough top to bottom inspection. While driving the car for about 10 miles to Ganley, the car exhibited a lot of lane wandering and the brakes felt "funny." Wind noise from the folding hard top in the up position was excessive, in fact quite loud.

On the lift at Ganley, the bottom of the car was beat up. All 4 wheels had extreme curb rash and would have to be refinished or replaced. New Dunlop tires had been recently installed and were the correct size, but not top of the line. Hence, the weird road feel on the ride down the expressway.

M-B records indicated the engine oil had been changed at 14,000 and 28,000 miles. The inside of the valve cover was "nasty." A compression test was not made, but the condition of the engine became suspicious. A new correct M-B air filter was in place, but no indication of when it had been changed. No indication of when the coolant/radiator had been flushed and the coolant replaced. Future problems are likely if that coolant was 4 years old.

The brake fluid in the reservoir was a dark, dark shade of brown, almost black. That is a pretty good sign that the fluid had not been flushed during the 4 year life of the car. The specification is to power flush the fluid every 2 years. Other issues for the brakes included the fact that all 4 rotors were worn down below minimum thickness. Brake pads on all 4 corners were worn down to the minimum wear level of 2mm. Thin rotors and minimal brake pad material means that heat dissipation would be essentially non-existent. Full panic stops would be out of the question.

The biggest issue was the folding top. It was whistling because it could not seal properly. At one time an attempt to close and store the folding top had been made while something in the storage area was sticking up too high and the back bow of the folding top was bent during the attempted closing. The bend in the top was very severe and would be costly to correct.

A 2004 SLK in February had a Blue book retail price range up to \$22,000. However, because of the service issues, wheels, brakes, tires, and the unknown amount of money necessary to repair the folding hard top, I recommended to the prospective buyer to pass on this car. No amount of bargaining on the purchase price to under \$20,000 would be sufficient to cover the estimated \$5,000 or more to bring this car up to M-B minimum standard for a 4 year old, 31,000 mile car.

Based on the issues that this car showed, a better approach would be to buy a certified used car from a M-B dealer. Your chances of getting a great used car are much better buying from an M-B dealer versus buying from a used car lot and expecting to build the car up to the required level of safety and quality. Buying a used car on a corner lot might work if the car had low mileage, good service records and a good report from a knowledgeable M-B evaluator/mechanic. Otherwise, I recommend that it is better to buy from a M-B dealer.

Have you checked out the MBCA Forum?

I invite you to go to on <http://mbca.cartama.net/index.php> and register on the MBCA Forum.

What will you find?

Forums about all the various models of Mercedes-Benz automobiles and fellow members who ask and answer many posts. Forums also cover: All about Tires, Women and their Mercedes-Benz, General Discussion for club and car questions, Events going on nationally and regionally, and a Region/Section Forum to take a look at the websites of Sections from all Regions. While, For Sale and Wanted Forums give you a way to sell and buy Mercedes-Benz cars and parts.

What else do you get? Many Model Specific Forums, from old to new. Questions can be asked of George Murphy on the Technical Forum. The Marshall Booth Diesel Forum deals with folks who have old 200Ds to the new CDI models. Each Region has a Forum for Event information. Scroll down to your Section's Website. Check it out! And just a little plus – IT'S FREE! Pretty straightforward, but any problems - send me an email at pnzrwgn@mac.com.

Chuck Landenberger
MBCA Forum Administrator
National Director at Large

MBCA 2009 Schedule of Events

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| May 28-June 1 | Alabama Heimatfest | National Event |
| June 21 | Stan Hywet Car Show | Non club event |
| June 27 | Central Ohio Autocross | centralohiombca@gmail.com |
| June 28 | Horse Country Driving Tour | Club event |
| July 18-21 | StarTrack - Pittsburgh | National event |
| July 24-26 | Pagoda meet - Blacklick, OH | ja17@worldnet.att.net |
| August 2 | Spread Eagle Brunch & ice cream social | Club event - Hanoverton, OH |
| Aug. 14-18 | Mid-America Caravan | National event - Topeka, Kansas |
| Aug. 22 | Central Ohio Autocross | centralohiombca@gmail.com |

Flyers will be sent for specific club events. Check the website www.benzclub.org for more information. National events will be advertised in the STAR and on the www.MBCA.org website.

Sharing stories at the new member welcoming party

By Tom Barratt and Kim McConnell.

If you love a good time with lots of new faces and fun stories, then **Ganley Mercedes-Benz** was the place to be on “New Member Night” as our Western Reserve Section partied into the evening with over 50 in attendance. There was a lot to look at and talk about, especially if you appreciate a new custom Gold Designo SLK (ask **Rod Tucker** about that one) or if you admire a beautiful classic white SL600 from the 90s (check with **Kurt von Leyser** on his latest buy) or if you are a big fan of shrimp cocktail (ask **Josie Lesler** about that great spread of hors d’oeuvres that she fit into her E-Class wagon).

The event featured videos, photo albums, and a collection of great memorabilia and books, all on display for members to enjoy and learn about the many facets of MBCA. Presentations at tables featured four main values of the Western Reserve Section, including; Social and Fun, Benefits and Networks, Classic and Heritage, and Racing and Sports. Hosts for the evening were **Peter** and **Josie Lesler**, and **Tom Barratt** and **Kim McConnell**. Kim created great floral displays to accent the members’ pot-luck on the buffet tables. Tom orchestrated the

“mixer” and trivia contest with prizes.

Members offered their most memorable “Mercedes Moments.” We won’t name names, but stories included beating out a new Corvette that wanted to drag race, and taking an M-B to over 140mph on the highway. One member shared a story from when she was a little girl, and the day her uncle came to show his new Mercedes-Benz. She thought he was poor because, looking at the car, she could clearly see he was only able to afford something with two seats! See what you can learn about folks?



Brigitte Gottfried shares stories with new members Dan and Lisa Orha

It was a wonderful time for all and thank you for coming. Remember, every event we have as a Club is just like a New Member event, and we encourage new members that missed this great night, to join us at our coming events. You won’t be alone as new members are coming in all the time, and you will find out how much fun you can have with your Mercedes-Benz. Remember, membership is all about you!

It truly was a night to remember. Thanks to **Ken Ganley** and his staff for hosting the event .

So, what are they talking about...

By Mary Alice Cozza

Do you ever find yourself wondering what are they talking about? Did you ever not attend because you just were not sure what an event was about? Or maybe you thought it was just for race car drivers.

Following are descriptions of MBCA's National Events:

STARFEST is MBCA's premiere event held on even numbered years. Any section with experience in hosting a national event may host a Starfest. Starfest includes a Concours d'Elegance (MBCA car show), rallies, defensive driving, autocross, acceleration runs and time trials on a road course.

There are also a lot of social events such as banquets, tours, seminars, trips of local interest and Mercedes camaraderie. It is 4 or 5 days packed with Mercedes fun. If you love your Mercedes, you will enjoy spending time with the people who drive them. Starfest 2010 will be held September 24-29 in Winchester, VA, sponsored by the Greater Washington Section, with track events held at Summit Point Raceway.

GEMÜTLICHKEIT – Good times with friends – This event is also a National event historically held either in Michigan or Ohio on the odd numbered years. The same types of events are held as at Starfest, however, there are fewer days for this event. Do not worry not everyone is an accomplished race car driver. At the 2007 Ohio Gemütlichkeit, one of the winners said, "I won a prize and I did not even finish."

STARTRACK – The Pittsburgh Section hosts this event in conjunction with the Vintage Grand Prix held at Schenley Park in Pittsburgh. Again the same events are held, with an added bonus of being able to watch the Vintage Grand Prix – the only Vintage races held on city streets in the United States. If you love cars, cars of all kinds, you do not want to miss the Grand Prix. Over two thousand cars, new, old, all makes and models will be on display throughout Schenley Park Golf Course. Vendors also line the area with just what you are looking for. Besides if you sign up for the Mercedes Club Car Show, you will have a great parking spot right in the middle of everything with a

terrific vantage point for the Vintage races held on Saturday, July 18 and Sunday July 19, 2009. Then Monday and Tuesday it's off to BeaveRun Race Track for defensive driving, autocross, acceleration runs and time trials. Check THE STAR for more information.

TRI-O-RAMA – This event is similar to Gemütlichkeit and StarTrack, only it is held on the East Coast usually in September and usually in Virginia or New Jersey. Same exciting events.

MID-AMERICA CARAVAN – A new national event this year to be held in Topeka, Kansas, August 15-18, 2009. Mid-America Caravan will offer the same events as a Starfest with track events being held at Heartland Park Motorsports Complex. Lots of activities have been planned for those less inclined to participate in track events. Such as a road rally, historic tours, technical seminars, sight-seeing and more. Make plans to attend this inaugural MBCA event in the heart of America this August. Check THE STAR for more information.

STARTRAILS – An off road event for the MLs, GLs, GLKs, Gwagons, etc. To test their skills on mountain trails in Colorado. For those of us less adventuresome, they will also have road trips planned. This event will take place in the fall of 2011.

So don't be shy, join in on the fun. You can usually find a few familiar faces in the crowds. There is always something for everyone regardless of skill level. Besides you may even learn a little or better yet come away with a few new friends.

Spread Eagle Tavern Brunch & Ice Cream Social

Mark your calendar for Aug. 2, 2009. Once again members from up North will meet in Streetsboro to caravan to Hanoverton, OH, and the Spread Eagle Tavern where the streets will be dedicated for **MERCEDES-BENZ PARKING ONLY!** After brunch a caravan will leave for the Cozza's home at Guilford Lake, where members will enjoy boat rides, car talk, door prizes, more car talk, and ice cream. A flyer with more details will be mailed at a later date. This event is a must do. You won't be disappointed.

The rewards far surpass the time!

Did you Know?

We always write articles about the events that have occurred in your section and usually give a short synopsis of national events that local members attend, but are you aware how much your section is involved in the national organization? **Frank Cozza**, one of our board members and our regional director, is the National Events Chairman. In that capacity, he and **Mary Alice** attend every national event and many regional events in the country. Most times they have already been to some of the planning committee meetings. Frank is in frequent phone contact with those committees, too. His knowledge of and advice about driving events surpasses all others. He and Mary Alice can always be found teaching defensive driving at all of the events they attend. **Gary Goodman** is also a member of that committee and assists Frank in classing cars not only for events but also for the National Rule Book which Frank and Mary Alice update and have published every spring. Gary attends national board meetings and contributes to the national events committee meetings as well.

Mary Alice Cozza is Vice President of the Educational Foundation. “*The mission of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America Educational Foundation, Inc., is: To preserve the history and heritage of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America, Inc., and the marque, provide support, and promote goodwill for Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts and the public.*” To that end, they have sponsored scholarships for students attending McPherson College. These students are particularly interested in restoration of our loved vehicles.

Peter Lesler is currently serving his second year as National President. He is also Chairman of the Concours Committee and travels to almost all of the national and regional Concours d'Elegance throughout the country. He teaches judging to members of the host sections before events, and is invaluable at providing advice and direction to groups hosting a concours. **Jon Bernardi** is being trained by Pete to lead the judging schools and to represent the national concours chairman at events that Pete cannot attend. Jon is also being educated technically by **Ted Gottfried**.

Josie Lesler is the National Membership Chairman

and has worked countless hours developing programs and ideas to promote the benefits of being an MBCA member. She can be found at all national events sponsored by the club and also at places like the Pebble Beach and Amelia Island Concours with a display for the club and talking to anyone she can get to listen. She has been a true ambassador for the club.

Ted Gottfried is a respected mechanical authority who is contacted by many of the sections to assist at their events. He also has served on national committees. Frank, Mary Alice, Gary, Ted, **Fred Gesell, Dick Gortz, Paul Bailey, and Terry Kiwala** can be found at most events instructing for defensive driving and the autocross. **Eric Goodrich** often spends his days as a starter for the autocross at many of the national and regional events. He also was a worker at the recent StarTech in Indianapolis, IN, both in registration and as chairman of the “Funcourse” (fun concours judge things other than cleanliness, etc.) Frequently, you will find those mentioned above as well as **John and Sue Morrison** assisting at national and regional events as tech support, registrar, cone setters, timers, etc.

Brian DiPasquale and employees of his company, Vecmar, prepared the original registration computer program which is still in use. They also designed the pop-up signs used by the National Membership committee at various venues. **Fred Gwinn**, on the Western Reserve board, is in the process of relocating to Philadelphia. He has already become a member there and hopes they will be as active as the Western Reserve section. He served on the Tri-o-Rama committee held in New Jersey last fall.

This article is not meant to “toot our horns” but to help you realize how active your fellow section members are in furthering the well being of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America at a national level. Join us for some of the events we are working on. The rewards far surpass the time!

Pittsburgh's StarTrack—July 17-21

The Pittsburgh Section is hosting StarTrack in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. For more information, visit—www.MBCApitt.org or contact **David Fabyonic** at 724-327-7361 or davidfab@usa.net.

Dreaming of driving in a new Mercedes

It would not be spring without our annual trek to the Cleveland Auto Show at the IX Center. This year **Bernie Moreno** of **Mercedes-Benz North Olmsted** provided the tickets for forty-eight members and guests to attend.

Participants arrived at their leisure and spent time checking out all the cars. They had a chance to see how they looked sitting in a E-Class and to check out the trunk on the SL to see if their golf clubs would fit. Some checked out the GL and the M-Class to see how it would work for the family. At 7:00 P.M.,

everyone gathered at the Mercedes-Benz venue and went downstairs for a delicious dinner and informative program.

Bernie also made the arrangements for **Greg Clark**, AMG Dealer and Brand Strategy Manager, to be our guest speaker. He spoke about the history of AMG and gave us a sneak preview of the new E63 and Gullwing models. Many of the members drooled over the new

models and probably dreamt about driving one. Greg provided 2 AMG DVDs as souvenirs of the evening.

Doug Lehman, MBUSA Chicago regional parts and service manager is a longtime supporter of our section and joined us for the event. Doug and his wife Donna surprised us with black fleece Mercedes-Benz jackets. The jackets are perfect for the cool spring time weather in Ohio. Thanks Doug for keeping us warm.



Mosely Family attended their first event.

As usual the event was successful and everyone went home with a little better understanding of the AMG

and a little warmer in those fleece jackets.

As you may recall, Bernie also hosted a club meeting at his dealership, providing several displays and discussions by his tech staff as well as the meal for the evening. Thank you Bernie for all you have done for the club.

We appreciate the support of the various people at MBUSA and our dealers.

Check out the Western Reserve Section website at benzclub.org

Western Reserve Section

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Mercedes-Benz Club of America

32312 South Lane

Hanoverton, Ohio 44423