

Western Reserve Section



CRUIER

Mercedes-Benz Club of America

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Our Own Peter Lesler National President

As has been said before, Western Reserve Section has and continues to contribute so much at the national level. Now we are proud to announce that our own **Peter Lesler** has been elected the National President.

Pete has been a member of the Mercedes Benz Club since 1979. He has served many positions at the local level and has acted as national Concours chairman for many years. He has been instrumental in developing a good rating system for judging the cars at the Concours d'Elegance and has taught schools for prospective judges all around the country. In 2002, the National Board asked him to fill a vacancy as a Director at Large. Since accepting that position, he has served as National Secretary and National Treasurer. He is a member of several committees within the national board, and has a sincere drive to make this club the best possible organization of car enthusiasts that can be.

Working as the national membership chairman, is Pete's wife, **Josie**, who shares his passion of building on what is already a good club. We know that the Mercedes Benz Club of America will prosper under his leadership. Congratulations, Pete!



Peter Lesler voted President of the National Mercedes Benz Club

Coming May 18!

On May 18, Coppus Motors along with Western Reserve Section will be hosting another defensive driving and autocross at Sandusky High School. This event is an excellent chance to see what your car can do. The morning is spent doing a variety of exercises with an instructor which are meant to simulate things that can happen during normal driving. In the afternoon, the cones are rearranged so you can practice following a prescribed course and use some of what you learned in the morning. Please read the article about defensive driving to realize how important this date and event are.

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Message from the President - Gary Goodman



Gary Goodman,
President

Welcome to 2008! The Western Reserve Section had an outstanding 2007 and we expect this year to be even better. Your board is working very hard to put together a variety of fun events. Your input is always welcome, so if you have an idea for an event please contact me or any of the board members with your suggestions.

As many of you know, our section has always been very active in the club on a national basis. This year, **Paul Bailey**, **Jon Bernardi**, **Mary Alice Cozza**, **Brian DiPasquale**, **Gary Goodman**, and **Ted Gottfried** have been appointed to serve on various national committees. **Fred Gwinn** has been a contributor to *The Star*. **Josie Lesler** is the National Membership Chairperson and **Frank Cozza** is our Great Lakes Regional Director and National Events Committee Chairman. **Peter Lesler** has been elected to serve as our National President, a richly deserved honor. Our club could not be led by a more dedicated, capable president.

Congratulations to **Fred Gesell**, our 2007 section Member of the Year. Fred has been a dedicated, valuable member of our board for many years and is very deserving of our recognition and thanks.

News from National....

- Have you been a member for at least a year? Are you going to buy a new or used car this year? Be sure to check out the Member Loyalty Program offered by MBUSA on page 107 of the January/February, 2008 issue of *The Star*
- StarFest '08 begins in San Francisco Sept. 26 and continues in Willows at Thunderhill Track. Watch for information in the next issue of *The Star* and join us for this biannual premiere national event.
- A StarTrip is being planned from Gettysburg to San Francisco via the Lincoln Highway. The Lincoln Highway (Route 30) passes through the Western Reserve Section. More information will be available soon.
- Lake Michigan Circle Tour—Oct. 6-13. This is a regional event touring Lake Michigan. You can join the group at any point. Watch *The Star* for more information.



Frank Cozza,
National Events
Chairman

Getting the right parts during the restoration

By **Ted Gottfried**.

My mother's 95th birthday was October 1, 2007 in Ft Myers, Fla. After celebrating her birthday, **Brigitte** and I started north and made some interesting stops along the way home. This article covers our experiences at 2 of them, and a great drive on one of our country's best sports car roads.

BUD'S BENZ, DOUGLASVILLE, GA.:

The last time I stopped at Bud's was in 2002. I maintained an open account there and have been buying SL parts for more than 20 years. David Latham, owner, was a very gracious host and gave us a very thorough tour of his facility.



L-R Ted Gottfried, Dick Gortz, and Mary Alice Cozza

PARTS VERSUS RESTORATION:

Given the changing retail patterns for buying and selling parts, the different business approach utilized by David became obvious pretty quickly. E-Bay Internet shopping, numerous suppliers, etc. has made the parts business more and more competitive. David has 3 people full time in parts. But on the restoration side, he has more than a dozen. We saw nearly 2 dozen cars in various stages of restoration and not all were Mercedes. For example, one owner of a recently restored 280SL wanted his other collector car, a 1955 Ford Thunderbird, done in the same black paint, red leather motif. Very striking!

Since 2002, Bud's Restoration Facilities have been greatly expanded so much more work can be done in house. The advantages of doing work in house are obvious, including control over timing and quality. Bud's only farms out specialty work such as chrome plating to Graves in Alabama. Prefabricated sewn leather seat covers and heat welded door panels come from various suppliers who specialize in this type of work.

I am very familiar with Billy Thomson's White Post Restorations shop in Virginia. The level of restoration activity at Bud does appear to me to be approaching White Post. White Post, of course, is widely known for restoring numerous kinds of cars for more than 50 years. David Latham has been an important supporter of MB events including our own Gemutlichkeit for many years. I strongly suggest that you consider

Bud's Benz for your restoration projects. David has a transporter that is used to pick up and deliver project cars. In fact the next day that we were there, he was on his way to Fort Myers to pick up a car. After leaving Bud's Benz we spent the night in Helen, GA, high in the Georgia mountains.

Helen is a touristic Swiss-German style village that was getting ready for its annual October Fest celebration.

Upcoming events

- Auto Show – With your reservations you will receive tickets and may attend the show that day at any time. We will gather at MB venue for dinner and program.
- Spread Eagle Brunch/Ice Cream Social – Brunch is enjoyed at the historic tavern in Hanover, Ohio and ice cream social, boat rides, tire kicking and lots of camaraderie will continue at Guilford Lake.
- Old Car Fun Days – Very informal gathering of older model MB's where you have an opportunity to share ideas on restoration, upkeep, etc. New car owners welcome also.
- Crawford Auto Museum Restoration Center in Macedonia - a day learn about restoring cars..

A good time was had by all at the Holiday Part

The quaint, cozy atmosphere of the Aurora Inn was the setting for the Western Reserve Section's Holiday Party on January 5. Sixty three members and guests enjoyed dinner, dance music and the camaraderie the season brings. It is always great to visit and catch up with old and new friends. In fact, people were still visiting long after the music stopped.

Anniversary pins in five year increments are awarded at two events during the year: The Spread Eagle Tavern event in July and the Holiday Party in January. Members must be present at one of the events to receive their pins. Pins were awarded to the following individuals:



- 5 years **Don Brehm, Trevor Bussell, Elmer Henry, Kurt Von Leyser**
- 10 years **Fred Abraham**
- 20 years **Frank Cozza, Leonard Scharfeld**
- 25 years **Ted Gottfried**

Joining us from other sections were **Paul Bailey**, Indianapolis; **Terry Kiwala**, Chicago; **Eric Goodrich**, Cincinnati and **Ed Yungbluth** and **Bev Deinhart** from Buffalo. Paul, Terry and Eric hold dual membership with their home section and the Western Reserve Section. It is always great to have friends from other sections join us and share their ideas as well. Everyone went home with a goody bag along with many door prizes.



l-r Fared and Laura Siddiq, Kim Michaels, Brant & Valerie Schnackenberg attending the Holiday Party for their first event

Forty three members enjoyed a buffet breakfast courtesy of the club prior to the Section's January meeting. At that meeting new ideas and suggestions were presented and were much appreciated by the board. We hope to include some of these in our calendar.

And the winner is...

One unsuspecting guest at the Holiday Party was the winner of a ladies 14 karat gold, hand crafted pearl and ruby ring valued at \$1230. **Anneliese Nefos** of Medina Gem generously donated the ring. President, **Gary Goodman**, drew the winning ticket early in the evening before any door prizes had been awarded, so that everyone had a chance at winning the ring. No one was aware of this exceptional prize, until the last ticket had been drawn for the door prizes. At that time, the winning ticket number was announced and **Kayle Targove** was the lucky winner. THANK YOU ANNELIESE FOR A VERY GENEROUS DONATION.



Kayle Targove wins the grand prize

How can defensive driving save your life?

By **Mary Alice Cozza**



Mary Alice heading out to the auto cours

Defensive driving is a low speed, simulations of a variety of highway driving situations. It gives the participant the opportunity to add other alternative maneuvers to their driving knowledge when an emergency situation occurs. It is knowing what your car

can do and knowing what you can do with your car. Accidents happen in a split second. Defensive driving may help the driver gain an additional second in reaction time in that emergency situation and that second may just save their life. In an emergency, every second counts. You can't stop as fast as you can avoid, and the best accident is the accident you avoid.

I credit this defensive driving class with saving my life a few years ago. In a near head-on collision, I remembered what my instructor kept saying to me, "Look where you want to go." Prior to taking defensive driving class; I would probably have looked directly at the car, screamed and hit the brakes"—all the wrong things to do in this situation. If I would have done that, the car would have hit me head-on. In a panic situation, the information from DD class came back to me and saved my life. Accidents happen in split seconds, we can provide you with information that will give you that split second to get out of the way, and, consequently, prevent an accident. We are firm believers that every driver from your teenager to grandma and everyone in between should take this class. If you drive on the highway, this class can make you more aware as well as help you realize the capability of your car and yourself in an emergency situation.

In the morning, participants will take defensive driving from in-car instructors. The class begins with a 20 minute outdoor classroom instruction, where participants will learn proper seat and mirror adjustment, steering techniques, braking, foot position, tire patch theory and car dynamics. Then participants will drive through the various stations we have set up in a parking lot, with an instructor at their side at all times. We will have them practice avoiding an obstacle in the road, proper hard braking technique and steering through slalom to feel the cars dynamics. They will also experience the feel and sounds of their ABS brakes. We will



Will this driver be able to maneuver around the cones?

take them through several times until they feel confident or when we feel they have successfully completed the course. This is a low speed maneuver. This is not a class for us to criticize the participant's driving, it is to help them stay alive by learning how to drive more defensively At the

conclusion, each participant will receive a Certificate of Completion, which with some insurance companies and in some states entitles them to a discount on their car insurance.

We want people to bring the CAR THEY DRIVE EVERY DAY (it does not have to be a Mercedes). Especially licensed Teenagers, we want them to bring the vehicle they drive not mom and dads car. It is important that people learn to feel confident in their every day driver. The training is very basic, but full of hands on knowledge on what you can do and what you can do with your car. If you have ever seen a multiple car pile up on the highway, defensive drivers can help avoid that pile up. Never look at what it is you don't want to hit. Past participants have come to us and said, "I used it, it works. It all came "back to me when I needed it."

Viewing the fall foliage by car and train

By **Dick Gortz**

The leaf color was at its peak when 75 Western Reserve members and their families gathered one Sunday morning in October in a park east of Cleveland. We shared gallons of local cider and dozens of donuts while kicking tires on more than 40 beautiful Mercedes-Benzes reflecting the canopy of colorful sugar maples and oaks. Nearby, a brook and waterfall provided the background music. New members **Jim and Barbara Tullis** pitched right in and helped serve.

Although it was a bit cool for tops down, our caravan wound through the tree-lined Cleveland Metroparks drive to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park where we boarded a

reserved car for a two-hour train trip alongside the restored Ohio-Erie Canal. Along the way, event organizer, **Dick Gortz**, pulled a pop-quiz on our members with little known facts about our favorite car brand.



Dick and Toni Gortz enjoying the train ride through the Ohio-Erie Canal

At trip's end, we drove a short way to Quaker Steak and Lube, a 50's car-themed restaurant with full-sized cars hung from the ceiling and mounted on the walls. "What a great way to end a great autumn day," said **John and Gerry Kropolinsky**, who

were attending their first event with the section. They'll be back next year!

Glenmoor Gathering of Significant Automobiles

On the sunny, crisp morning of Sept. 16 about 30 Mercedes gathered on the front lawn of the Glenmoor Country Club in Canton for the annual "Glenmoor Gathering of Significant Automobiles." This prestigious car show which is approaching the caliber of Amelia Island is held on the grounds of the country club, and the Mercedes club was invited to park their cars on the front lawn leading to the building. As we lined the grassy area with our cars, we had a great opportunity to visit and admire each others cars. One of the highlights as people got off the shuttle bus, was facing our banner with the pink Mercedes SL peddle car belonging to **Brianna DiPasquale**. Brianna, the daughter of **Brian and Tracy DiPasquale**, was gracious enough to put her car at the entrance along with our banner. It became a photo op for many as children spotted it and parents admired it!



Brian, Tracy and Brianna DiPasquale pose with Brianna's Mercedes pedal car at the Glenmoor Gathering

Then it only got better from there. Entering the country club, which had at one time been a monastery, was like entering another world. What a beautiful facility! This is where our ticket provided a gourmet lunch. On the golf course behind the mansion, was an array of collector cars and motorcycles that left enthusiasts drooling for hours.

The weather was perfect for strolling the grounds and enjoying the sights. Also on display, were several experimental cars from The Ohio State. The highlight of the day was during the trophy awarding. The winning cars were driven to the judge's tent to

receive their trophies. It was a parade of beautiful autos not often seen in other venues. Thanks to **Don French** for arranging for our participation.

Member of the year

Each year nominations are accepted for the Member of the Year Award which is given to an individual who has contributed to the success of the club.

This year's winner became a member of the Western Reserve Section in 1998 and later joined the board.

He, along with his wife, **Lucy**, chaired the Holiday party at Sawmill Creek in Huron. He has worked on Gemutlichkeits and Starfest '04, organizing and running the autocross. He was also responsible for the very successful Defensive Driving and Autocross that was held last May in Sandusky, and is planning a repeat again this spring on May 18. Lucy also has been involved in Starfest, presenting a flower arranging seminar for the non drivers and designed MBCA hats.

Member of the year for 2007, **Fred Gesell**, has owned several Mercedes-Benz automobiles through the years, including his Concours award winning 1988 560SL. He is currently driving a C280 Sport. Thanks, Fred and congratulations.



Fred Gesell wins Member of the Year Award

"The Mistress"

We asked **Judy** and **Don Brehm** what got them involved with the Mercedes Club, and this was their reply:

In 1997, she arrived from Naples, Florida. Don's dad sent her up here for Don to restore. He wanted to make her perfect for his Dad to be proud of. It took 6 years for the complete restoration. This is why she is called the Mistress. In 2002, Don's dad had some health problems and to our SURPRISE we received the title to ownership and a paid membership for the MBCA.

Her mileage is 22,292. "GOD Bless Dad"



Don Brehm driving the Mistress

A wedding in the section...

Western Reserve Section board member, **Bill VerDuin** and fiancé, **Cynthia Hatfield** were unable to attend the club's Holiday party on January 5, as they were busy preparing for their wedding on Sunday, January 6.

Nine members of the Western Reserve Section attended the ceremony held at The Federated Church in Chagrin Falls. What a perfect ceremony for two special people from our section!



Cynthia Hatfield weds Bill VerDuin

Bill created and worked on "The Old Car Event" the section hosted the past two years. Cynthia worked hard at the Gemutlichkeit Autocross both days.

Our Congratulations to the bride and groom. We wish you many years of happiness.

Welcome new members

September– December

David Gentzler
William Hutcherson
Andrew McGarry
Rafael Oletta
Vassie Scott
Brant Shcnackenberg
Leonard Strnad
Victor Vertes, MD
Mario Weiss
James Bergstrom
James Hogle

Bob Rose
Jerry Vanaskey
James Feher
David Kling
Martin Lansky
Conley Powell, Jr.
Randal Snook
Andrew Blackley
Stephan Kamrass
Jack Kline

MBCA WESTERN RESERVE SECTION 2008 CALENDAR

Feb. 23	Cleveland Auto Show & dinner	IX Center
May 18	Coppus Motors Defensive Driving & Autocross	Sandusky High School
June 15	Stan Hywet Car Show	Akron, Ohio
July 27	Spread Eagle Tavern Brunch & Ice Cream Social	Hanoverton, Ohio
August TBD	Old Car Event	
Sept. 26-Oct 1	Starfest	San Francisco, Ca.
October TBD	Fall Leaf Tour/Clambake	
October 6-13	Lake Michigan Tour	
October TBD	Tri-o-rama	
January TBD	Holiday Party	

Red denotes a non-club event

Black denotes a National event

Blue denotes a Western Reserve Section event

Green denotes Regional event

TBD = To be Determined

You will receive a flyer for each event with complete information.

Check out the Western Reserve Section website at benzclub.org

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BUD'S BENZ, HERITAGE WOODWORKS, AND TAIL OF THE DRAGON.

The next day we went up into the mountains of N. Carolina to Andrews, home of Heritage Woodworks.

HERITAGE WOODWORKS, ANDREWS, NORTH CAROLINA

Drew Tibcken, owner, has a huge reputation in the Mercedes Club. (He's also a huge guy with a fabulous personality.) Drew has made numerous Star Tech wood finishing presentation for more than 20 years. Drew and I became friends going to the annual Carlisle Import Car flea market back in the 1980s but I had never seen his shop. Drew seldom sees 95% of his customers and rarely sees the finished project with the new or refinished wood installed. Promises are made, but rarely kept. However, his woodworking is of the highest quality and is pretty much the "Gold Standard" for woodworking. Almost all his work is earned through Drew's reputation and handled through the respective shipping companies, UPS, DHL, etc. Drew's wife, Dad and sister work with Drew. For a "Mom and Pop" operation, quality is obvious. Repairing and refinishing is the main business activity, but design and fabrication are part of the business for older or unique wood application.

The temperature, humidity factor in the mountains is very important. In an earlier location, closer to the Carolina coast, Drew experienced less satisfactory results due to higher humidity at the lower altitude. Proprietary woods, methods, techniques, stains, and finishes make Drew's business entirely unique. The finish is sourced in Italy and many other supplies come from Europe. However, southern Indiana and Northern Kentucky are areas of the U.S. where various hardwoods and veneers are sourced. Some so called "modern" U.S. veneers are more original looking than some older European veneers. Drew has a tremendous inventory of used components covering many antique and vintage cars. These parts can be used to replace parts of wood sets that are too damaged to save. Making frequent trips to Europe, Drew is able to locate new sources of materials for his business. For example, he recently found brand new 113 body style wood being produced in Germany. This wood is much better than the solid wood replacement being offered by U.S. suppliers. Leaving Heritage Woodwork, we headed North to one of the world's best sports car roads, Tail of the Dragon.

**THIS IS THE ARTICLE FOR
NEXT TIME**

TAIL OF THE DRAGON.

Route 129, from Robbinsville, N. Carolina, to Knoxville, Tenn. includes a stretch of highway thru Deal's Gap, N. Carolina that is only 11 miles long that has 318 turns. This sports car stretch is fantastic!

This is the second time that I have driven the Tail of the Dragon. I recommend it highly. Check it out on www.tailofthedragon.com

You can even get your picture taken by some local sports car enthusiasts if you're lucky and see it online. Good motoring.