



# Western Reserve Section

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA

Crier - Issue 4 - 2020

## Tech Corner

By: Ted Gottfried

This Quarter's Technical Article features President Rod Thompson's 1969 280SL convertible top replacement. The original OE soft top was replaced in 1976 at an upholstery shop in California that specialized in British cars. The British dark green vinyl material was not used by Mercedes. Unfortunately this fall Rod raised the top from its storage well behind the package shelf and discovered that mice had chewed a good sized hole in the top. Rod discussed the situation with me and instead of trying to repair the hole we agreed to install a complete new top. We obtained samples from GAHH Upholstery in California and Rod chose a dark green exterior color, black interior colored top. This top is specifically fabricated to fit the folding aluminum alloy frame exactly. No sewing is required by the installer, only gluing and screwing to fit precise rubber seal rails is necessary. This article highlights the procedure for installing the new top. The steps are also included in a series of photos which I will write about below.

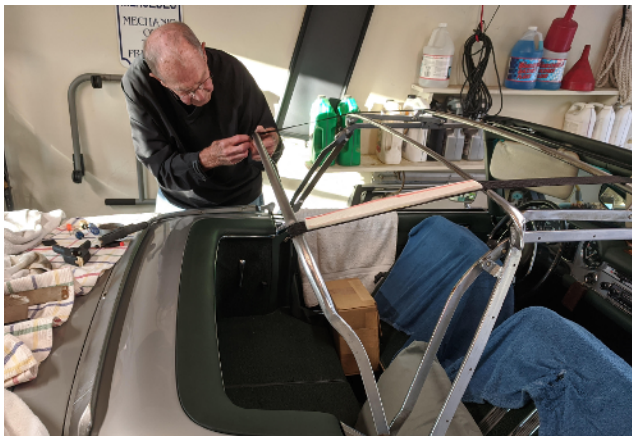
### Preparation:

Order new top, Order replacement rubber seals. All rubber was replaced on this project because of the pristine condition of the vehicle overall. All required materials are still available. Source replacement nylon binding strips in black to strengthen fabric between the respective cross ribs. Includes proper rivets, insulating foam, and strong elastic strips to assist accordion folding of the fabric when the top is lowered for storage. Once the material list has been prepared, material availability is determined and ordered, then disassembly can begin.

### Disassembly:

Essentially all old components are removed and laid out in order as they are removed from the frame. The frame does not necessarily have to come off the car. In principle all metal screws and chromed steel rails go back on the main frame in the same order as they come off. Each screw back in the same hole. Fit is very critical. Either it fits or something is wrong with the frame or the installer. The frame is next completely stripped of old glue and inspected for proper operation. The frame on Rod's car was basically perfect and

lubrication of the hinges was the only major job at this stage. Because the top frame has not been extensively used over the 50 plus years of its life it is still quite rigid. No frame adjustments or tightening was required. Excellent centering of all cross headers and ribs was verified by exact measurements.



The article continues on page 6.

## National News

The fall raffle is underway. Sign up to try to win a Pagoda. Information has come to you via email, is in the STAR, and also on the national website: [www.mbca.org](http://www.mbca.org) Good luck!

The national website has some videos of various interests to watch. These can be found at [www.mbca.org](http://www.mbca.org) Choose the "Community" pull down, and videos are in the list. Also, continue watching your inbox for virtual car shows and tech sessions. The national club is trying hard to help us in this difficult time. Maybe that will help carry you over until we can again have in-person events.

Our section has a new Regional Director, Rodd Masteller, chose not to run again, and Jason Bogart was elected to the position. Jason has served as President of the Three Rivers Section and should be an asset to the club and to our section.

# Mercedes-AMG - 2020 Formula 1 Constructor's World Champions!

By: Jan Pesta



The Mercedes-AMG team has clinched its 7th straight Formula 1 Constructor's Championship title.

The team has been the F1 Constructor's Champions in 2014-15-16-17-18-19. Now with the 2020 win the team will hold the all time record for winning the title in consecutive years.

Today, the terms Constructor, Team and Entrant essentially mean the same thing under FIA rules. FIA, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, is a global governing body for automobile competitive events. For multi-named teams the first name is the chassis builder, the second is the engine provider. Mercedes-AMG means the chassis is provided



by Mercedes and the engine is provided by AMG.

The previous record for consecutive F1 Constructor's Champion wins was held by Ferrari with 6 from 1999 through 2004. This is not to denigrate Ferrari. Ferrari deserves a great deal of respect and admiration for its accomplishments since 1950. However, Ferrari has 70 F1 seasons under its belt while Mercedes has just 13; 1954-55 and 2010 through 2020.

In 2020 there are 10 constructor teams fielding 2 cars per team. As of the 13th race on November 1st, with

4 races left in the 2020 F1 17 race season, Mercedes-AMG has accumulated 479 points. The F1 team in second place, Red Bull Racing (Honda) has 226 points. Even if Red Bull took 1st (25 points.) and 2nd (18 points.) and also scored the fastest lap (1point) in the remaining 4 races, and Mercedes-AMG scored zero points for the balance of the season, the score would be Mercedes-AMG 479, Red Bull 402.

The race cars in and of themselves are phenomenal but they have to be driven. The teams behind the cars and drivers also have to be world class. There is engineering, building, testing, race strategy, pit crew and so on. The whole Mercedes-AMG team is fantastic and consistent. (see tire change link below)

The reality is that the popular press headlines focus on the drivers. The drivers are Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton. Hamilton calls his team mate Bottas 'amazing'. In 2013, Bottas started with Williams and was a 'points machine' there. In 2017 he moved to Mercedes-AMG and tied Hamilton and Vettel with 13 podiums. In 2019 Bottas was second in driver points and had 4 victories. Yes, Hamilton is the driver Bottas is chasing. Hamilton has entered 263 Grand Prix, been on the podium 162 times, won 93 races and has 6 world championships.

As of November 1, 2020 the driver points are, Hamilton with 282 points, Bottas with 197, in 3rd is Max Verstappen (Red Bull) with 162. The combination of Hamilton and Bottas's points yields Mercedes-AMG its 429 constructor points.

Hamilton has surpassed Michael Schumacher's record of 91 race wins and has 93 wins to his credit. If he wins the driver championship in 2020 he will tie Schumacher's record of 7. A 2020 championship for Hamilton will tie Fangio and Vettel's records of 4 consecutive. Schumacher's record of 5 consecutive driver championships from 2000 through 2004 is tops in the consecutive category.

But wait.

Continues on Page 6.



The Mercedes-AMG Team following the November 1, 2020 win at the Gran Premio Dell'emilia Romagna



# What's on Your Plate? *By: Jan Pesta*

Here is a little license plate trivia to start.

- "License plates have been around about as long as cars." Although I can't find one on the Benz Bertha first took a drive in or should I say on.
- **1893** – "France became the first country to issue 'number plates' to vehicles."
- **1901** – "New York mandated license plates for vehicles, but car owners were expected to produce their own until 1909. These early plates were usually leather pads or felt metal plates with attached letters indicating the initials of the car's owner."
- **1903** – "Massachusetts became the first to provide state-issued porcelain license plates. The very first, featuring the number "1," was issued to Frederick Tudor. (One of his relatives still holds an active registration on the plate.)"
- **1931** – "Pennsylvania became the first state to issue customized license plates, which were limited to a driver's initials."
- **1965** – "The "vanity plate" was born when states began allowing drivers to customize their plates with letters and numbers."
- The source of the quoted trivia above is, and more trivia can be found at <https://www.historicvehicle.org/license-plates-a-timeline/>

Focusing on Ohio personalized/historical automobile license plates we'll provide you with a quick overview and links so you can maintain appropriate social distance and get information on the plate of your dreams. The types of vehicle plates are numerous. The links will be for vanity and historical automobile license plates only.

**Vanity Plates** are the easiest so we'll start with them. Surely, you've sat behind a car at a stoplight and translated the jumble of letters and numbers to figure out its meaning. At times you may have said to yourself 'what does that mean'? I confess the first time I saw the Morrison's vanity plate I decided it was in German. So my mind wandered off through my extensive German vocabulary gained from a 45 minute German for Travelers CD to no avail. Then later in the evening the epiphany came while out with the dog encouraging him to do his duty, which is when most epiphanies occur. It's in English dummy and says "Go Benzing"! A friend's double edged plate is one of my all time favorites "WHOS". The obvious is whose car is it? But better when you know his initials are WHO. Now that my allocation of useless characters is spent let's look at getting vanity plates. Assuming your car is titled, registered and E-Checked required for 7 Ohio counties you can go directly to - <https://services.dps.ohio.gov/BMVOnlineServices/VR/Availability/Passenger/Check> - and see if your combination of letters and numbers is available. If a plate is available the website will show you the plate and you can submit the information to exchange your current plate. Fill in the requested information pay the fees and wait for your dream vanity plates to arrive. Your request will be reviewed so that the plate message can't be taken as offensive. The cost? As an example in Medina county ours worked out to be the information in the tables on page 5. So what combination of characters can a devious mind use to get its vanity plate message across? A personalized plate must contain at least four and less than eight characters. Dashes, symbols and punctuation marks cannot be used. So you have to get creative with no more than 7 numbers and English letters. There also are organizational, collegiate and company logo plates available. There is a drop down box with information about other specialized plates at -

<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/vr-sp-geninfo.aspx#gsc.tab=0> At the link is also information about "**Disability Plates**" which eliminates the need for a rear view mirror placard. Disability license plates and placards permit vehicles to park in parking spaces marked with the international symbol of access for persons with disabilities. There is NO additional fee for disability plates.

**Historical Plates** – can be a time and money saving option for cars older than 25 years, if you do not choose to have personalized historical license plates. Information about historical plates can be found at - <https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/vr-sp-historical.aspx#gsc.tab=0> However, a copy of the BMV text below explains things clearly and concisely.

"Historical Plates A person who owns a motor vehicle that is more than twenty-five years old and that is owned solely as a collector's item used for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, parades, and similar uses may apply to the Registrar of motor vehicles for registration of the vehicle and issuance of a [Historical license plate](#). Historical license plates are valid (without renewal) for the life of the vehicle, unless they are [Initial Reserve](#), [Personalized](#), or if there is a change in the vehicle's ownership. OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS: A historical motor vehicle shall not be used for general transportation, but may be operated on the public roads and highways to and from a location where maintenance is performed on the vehicle.

## Historical Model Year Plates

Customers with a valid Historical license plate registration may display a Model Year license plate by completing a Historical Model Year License Plate Affidavit ([form BMV 4853](#)). The Model Year license plate is displayed on the vehicle instead of the Historical license plate. The customer must provide his/her own plate(s) which must be serviceable, legible, issued by Ohio, and inscribed with the same year when the vehicle was manufactured. The valid Historical license plate and registration shall be stored in the vehicle so that they are readily available upon request by a law enforcement officer." Key Points from the Above Text:

- The car is at least 25 years old
- It is Not a daily driver or used for general transportation
- The registration fee is paid once. NO annual renewal fee (If sold new owner must register)
- Instead of the black on white historical plate you can put a "serviceable" plate from the same year as the car and keep the historical plate and registration in the vehicle
- There will be an annual fee if you choose 'Specialized Interest' AKA vanity historical plates (The 2009 initial cost of my vanity historical plates was \$112.12, 2020 renewal was \$66.41.)

There are 2 forms for historical plates (links below are repeated from above) First, there is the "APPLICATION AND AFFIDAVIT FOR HISTORICAL LICENSE PLATES" along with "DEFINITION AND INSTRUCTIONS HISTORICAL VEHICLES OHIO REVISED CODE (R.C.)4503.181" at - <https://publicsafety.ohio.gov/static/bmv4806.pdf>. "THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE HISTORICAL LICENSE PLATES.

1. Total amount due. Make check or money order payable to: Ohio Treasurer of State
2. Current OHIO vehicle registration card (if vehicle displays an Ohio license plate) or original Certificate of Title/Memorandum of title (if vehicle does not display an Ohio license plate). You may take these documents to any Deputy Registrar agency to be verified for a fee of \$5.00. The deputy may process the request for license plates as well
3. Affidavit must be completed and notarized
4. Completed and signed application"

Second, if you will be using a Model Year license plate the "HISTORICAL "MODEL-YEAR" PLATE INFORMATION" and "HISTORICAL "MODEL YEAR" LICENSE PLATE AFFIDAVIT" is at - <https://publicsafety.ohio.gov/static/bmv4853.pdf>

An edited version for Model Year plates text is:

- The vehicle must be registered with regular historical plates
- Those who desire to display a model-year plate will locate and obtain a suitable plate by their own means
- Submit a copy of the model-year license plate and a copy of the historical license registration card.
- Complete and have notarized the model-year affidavit.

Early on this article said 'quick overview' and by now you are undoubtedly tired of reading my gibberish. So when Spring arrives, tulips are in bloom, the virus subsided and you are cleaning that beautiful classic, take a break, saunter on down to your local registrars office with documents in hand and apply for your historical plates.

**New Member  
9-26-20 to  
11-22-20**

Welcome!

Dean Babbaro

Daniel  
Sneddon

Blain Bafus

John Palozzo

Debbie  
Landon

Katherine  
Ferguson

Chandra  
Johnson

Gregory  
Brown

Joycelin  
Canavan

John Skweres

**Renewals  
9-26-20 to  
11-22-20**

Thank you for  
staying with  
us!

Albert Jackson

Mary Mewald

James  
Berstrom

R. Black

Frank  
Huemmer

Lewis Sawizke

Richard Self

Joseph  
Groscoast

Ronald  
Marthaller

Tom Danko

Drew  
Schneider

DB  
Zimmerman

Raymond  
Hensel

Karen Carson

Michael Spena

Joe Oberle

Charles Hearn

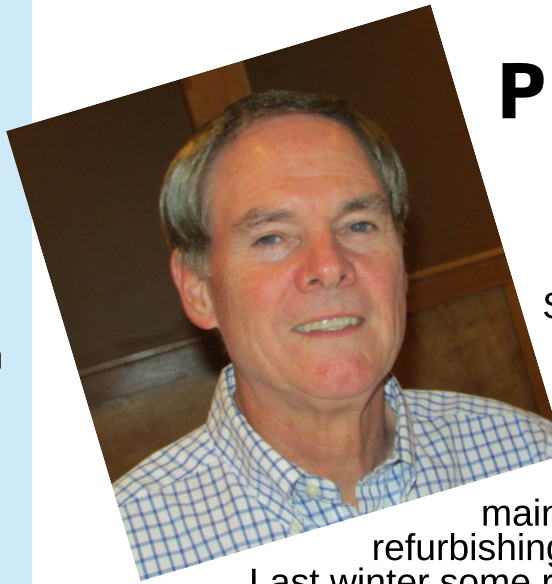
Anneliese  
Nefos

Jerry  
Vanaskey

Tim Conway

Michael  
Hamed

Judith Caruso



# President's Letter

*By: Rod Thompson*

Since the covid pandemic continues to limit my social life, I have been spending significant time on maintaining and refurbishing my 1969 280SL.

Last winter some rodents decided to make a nest inside my closed convertible top. They chewed a nine inch by four inch hole in the top as bedding material. I was able to order a newly sewn top from GAHH made of Haartz polyester material that matched the original dark green canvas material that was originally fitted. However, mounting the top to the frame and replacing all the rubber parts can take many manhours of painstaking work and requires past experience to get right. Luckily, board member and technical advisor Ted Gottfried has replaced many ragtops on all Mercedes SL models, and offered me his assistance. Ted has written an article on the replacing of my top later in this Crier.

After finishing the top, I am replacing all the fluids and brake pads. We decided to replace the four brake hoses as well, as they are twelve years old. As soon as the hoses arrive from Germany we will be done, and the car ready for its winter slumber.

As an update on Board Activities, both the members of the 2020 Board and our Officers have been reelected and will serve again for 2021. Board Member Kieran Mulhausen has accepted my appointment as Membership Chairperson.

The club's last event for 2020 was our Fall Leaf Tour on October 17th, and our board has decided to refrain from any indoor events until the pandemic recedes. I am hoping that we can have a spring tech session at some local venue in March or April. In the meantime I miss seeing all of you in person and will look forward to enjoying our cars next year.

Healthy Holidays!

# Fall Leaf Tour



On Saturday, October 17th our club set out from Streetsboro on our annual Fall Leaf Tour. It was a gorgeous clear autumn day and the fall colors were at their peak. Board members Barb and Jim Tullis led the caravan of Mercedes (initially six cars with two more added in Canton) along the Lincoln National Scenic Byway to Canton where we toured the President McKinley Memorial and enjoyed a private tour of the cavernous Presidential Library. Our docent was a longtime MBCA member and the Library was almost empty except for our twelve club members, so social distancing was not a problem. The Library is far more than a library, with rooms filled with mementos of the settlement history and industrial history of northeastern Ohio, as well as a natural history museum for children.

After the visit to Canton, we proceeded east to Robertsville where we drove on one of the remaining brick sections of the original Lincoln National Highway. We continued to Minerva and ended our drive at the parking lot of Grinders Restaurant. Since this was a drive only tour, most of us brought our own food or returned home, but a few of us dined at the restaurant which is a Minerva landmark.

Thank you Barb and Jim for a lovely autumn drive!

## Tables From 'What's on Your Plate?'

	Initial		Annual
State License Fee	\$39.25	New Plate (optional)	\$8.25
Service Fee	\$3.50	Special Plate	\$50.00
Personalized Fee	\$50.00	State License	\$31.00
Local County Tax	\$20.00	Local County Tax	\$20.00
Postage	\$3.02	Service Fee	\$5.00
Credit card	\$2.32	Postage Fee (new plate)	\$3.03
Total	\$118.09	Total	\$117.28



No. of characters	Type of Plate	Spaces Permitted (uniform spacing)
4	Personalized	Up to 3
5	Personalized	Up to 3
6	Personalized	Up to 3
7	Personalized	Up to 2

## Board of Directors

Rod Thompson, President  
 renold.thompson@clevelandship.com  
 216-374-6419

Paul Bailey, Vice President  
 paulbailey@neo.rr.com  
 317-502-8595

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

John Morrison, Treasurer  
 gobenzing@aol.com

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

Gary Goodman, Webmaster  
 ggood100167@aol.com  
 440-670-4203

Jan Pesta  
 jnkpst@gmail.com  
 330-659-4956

Dr. Bill Mulhausen  
 drbillmulhausens@outlook.com  
 440-899-1570

Kieran Mulhausen,  
 Membership Chair  
 kieranann@aol.com  
 440-899-1570

Jim Tullis, Past President  
 jtullis@roadrunner.com  
 330-656-1453

Mary Alice Cozza  
 macozza7@neo.rr.com  
 330-222-1106

Allan B. Pintner  
 abpintner@mhmltd.com  
 216-548-9077

Joanne Hovanic  
 330-332-1576

Rodd Masteller  
 Great Lakes Regional Director  
 mbca.glrld@gmail.com  
 614-266-3383

Crier Editors: Bryce Hasman, Sue Morrison, and Allan B. Pintner



# Tech Corner cont.

## Installation Procedures.

First step is to lay out the new top upside down and verify that the distance between the ribs concurs with the distance between the sewn seams and their anchoring strips on the top. Correct binding strip length is critical for the fit of the ribs. New binding, elastic, and foam is then installed on the frame. Next the top fabric unit is loosely laid on top of the frame right side up. At this point insulating rubber seals have been glued to the edge of the top insulating two new wire tension cables to tighten the installed top above each side window. GAHH sews in exact centering points on both the front and rear seams. Centering is most critical when the assembly is made. At this point, if all preparatory steps have been done correctly, assembly consists of gluing the front and rear headers to the fabric. Chromed sealing rails are used as guides and assist greatly in making sure that a correct tight fit is completed. Mercedes used to sell an extremely expensive glue that had to be shipped by ground, not air. Because of environmental contamination this high temperature product is no longer made. We used Weldwood contact cement available at Ace Hardware. A rail is screwed onto the frame at all critical stress points thereby encapsulating the fabric. This results in a taunt snug fit. Especially critical is the B pillar anchoring on the rearward side of each side roll up window. On this project a slight rippling is barely discernible equally on each side. We may attempt to put slightly more tension on the two side cables after winter storage. The front floating rib, and the following three ribs are glued onto the top via sewn in fabric strips. These four ribs are the only spots where the metal folding frame is used for anchoring the fabric tight. Barbed metal clips fit into each of the rubber sealing rails. Three rails, six clips, and two A pillar rails, four clips and an abundance of contact cement insure a snug fit around each side window.

**Follow up in the Spring:** The polyester based construction of this soft top is a big improvement from the original OE cotton based tops from the previous century. This top will certainly have a very long service life. A very sharp knife has to be used to trim anchored fabric from next to the anchoring rails. Fitting the completed unit onto the car body required maximum effort with precision. This is basically a three layered construction. Outer for strength and weather resistance. Inner for beauty and middle for water repellency. Hopefully some stretch will occur over the next six months to permit easier raising and lowering of the unit. Otherwise an adjustment of the rear hold down bracket might be necessary for a more manageable easy operation. Rod has earned my deepest appreciation for doing all of the donkey work on this project. I am glad I could stand back many times and let him do it. Nothing beats pride of ownership when you work on your own vehicle!



## Mercedes-AMG - 2020 Formula 1 Constructor's World Champions! cont.

The above was 2 weeks ago and the Turkish Grand Prix has been run. Now the question batted around in the press is, does Mercedes-AMG have a GOAT on its 2020 Formula 1 Team? That is the 'Greatest Of All Time' F1 driver. Yes, Lewis Hamilton won the Turkish Grand Prix and clinched the 2020 Driver Championship for 2020! As in any sport the question of who is the 'greatest of all time' is an unanswerable question. Equipment changes as do the rules, styles and strategies, so the question will always be could the greatest be as great in a different era. It comes down to opinion in my estimation. But one can still have their favorite. At minimum one is forced to admit that Hamilton is the greatest of all time 3 pointed star F1 drivers and always gives the team loads of credit and praise for a F1 win.

As of 11/15/2020, Hamilton has 94 F1 race wins and 7 Drivers Championships. This puts Hamilton 1st in F1 race wins, tied for the number driver championships with Schumacher, and 2nd for the number of consecutive driver championships tied with Fangio and Vettel.

Corrections and comments are encouraged since the writer is not an F1 aficionado. One can expect the next Star Magazine will cover the F1 teams accomplishments. A great F1 season thus far for the Mercedes-AMG Team with 3 more races to go, don't you agree?

(For a pit crew example you can watch a video of the Red Bull team change 4 tires during the Brazilian Grand Prix in 1.82 seconds, no 1.82seconds is not a typo, the video is at <https://www.roadandtrack.com/motorsports/news/a29666/fastest-f1-pit-stop/> )

### Reference and Further Information links:

Mercedes-AMG F1 ~ <https://www.mercedesamgf1.com/en/>

Formula 1 ~ <https://www.formula1.com/>

2020 Constructor Standings ~ <https://www.formula1.com/en/results.html/2020/team.html>

2020 Driver Standings ~ <https://www.formula1.com/en/results.html/2020/drivers.html>

List of Formula One constructor records ~ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Formula\\_One\\_constructor\\_records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Formula_One_constructor_records)

List of Formula One driver records ~ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Formula\\_One\\_driver\\_records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Formula_One_driver_records)

Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile - FIA ~ <https://www.fia.com/>

# Quarterly Feature - Ted Gottfried



I, Ted Gottfried, was born February 14, 1940 in Bucyrus, Ohio. Upper Sandusky, home of my parents, did not have a hospital then. Neil Armstrong, a junior high student of my school teacher father was one of my early baby sitters. It's been all downhill ever since. I graduated from Elyria High School in 1958 pursuing a college prep curriculum.

In 1952 I purchased my first car, a 1949 2 door Chevy. Following natural instincts I started to take it apart. My father, by then Superintendent of Elyria Schools, was not mechanically inclined. He did know that education was required for any pursuit. He paid the high school shop teacher out of his own pocket to feed my passion of learning auto mechanics and my life long interest was born. Truly one of the greatest gifts any father can give his son is to feed his passion for a lifetime of fulfillment. I graduated from Brown University in 1962 with a BA in Political Science. My priorities were cars, basketball, girls, and education further down the list. The plan was to go to law school until I found out it was a three year program at Harvard. I chose Northwestern to compliment the East with a Midwestern followup and a two year graduate program. I graduated from Northwestern University in 1964 with an MBA in Finance. I elected

finance because of the obvious. Money. I interviewed many banks and other financial institutions. One day in New York a pigeon shot on my Chesterfield top coat shoulder and my city banking career was finished. Following my short banking career I wanted a job where I could see the world. Because of a shorter training period I chose Goodyear in Akron. My entire working career from June 22, 1964 until February 14, 2005 was with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.

Following 15 months of training at numerous US facilities, I went to South Africa in September 1965, France in 1967, Mexico in 1969, Zaire in 1972, Indonesia in 1975, Chile in 1977, Venezuela in 1978, Mexico for the second time in 1979 and Germany in 1980. I worked basically in tire production plant management with different job titles consistent with combining men, materials, machines, methods, and money profitability. Brigitte and I were married in Mexico City on May 9, 1970. Both of our children were born in France where Brigitte would return between my assignments. Our son liked to relate that he was almost born in Zaire and might have been African-American. Anyway... On Halloween 1983, Brigitte and I came to Hudson, Ohio with an 11 year old daughter and an 8 year old son, bought our first home (Goodyear provided homes previously) and recently celebrated 50 years of marriage. Both kids graduated from Hudson High School and went on to college. Our daughter has lived in Costa Rica for 24 years, is married to a Costa Rican man, she is a school teacher and is the mother of a 21 year old US Marine and a high school senior daughter who is becoming proficient studying French with her Nana Brigitte. Our Marine Nico is also a diesel wrench who has been taught mechanical skills by the Marines. We maintain ongoing dialogue on mechanical stuff. His uncle, our son also a Marine, was Nico's role model. Unfortunately for our family our son Philippe passed away from brain cancer in 2018. For an International career, language ability is very important. I learned French in High School and College and have numerous French family members who are not multilingual.

I began German in 1967 during my initial assignment on a German plant start up. Intensive German language study was pursued for three months nonstop in 1980 at Inlingua in Heidelberg. I began intensive 5 nights a week Spanish in Mexico in 1969. Going back I became very dangerous speaking Afrikaans in 1967. Lessons with a College professor and playing on many sports teams with native speakers also helped a lot. When I went to Indonesia in 1975 the local Indonesia CEO of their TV network came to my office early each morning. After several years of practice I became fluent enough to address the work force on the reasons we were all at the Goodyear Plant. During my tenure there the plant became one of Goodyear's most productive world wide. Language among other things played a key role. In short, my languages include English, French, German, Spanish, Afrikaans and Bahasa Indonesian. Most recently a Club Member from Akron originally from Malaysia and I were able to babble a bit in Bahasa. But like everything else, if you don't use it you lose it. Practice, practice and more practice is fundamental. We returned to Akron on Halloween 1983. I went to Geller Mercedes in Akron and found that Al Calandra was a local MBCA contact. On November 11, 1983 I attended my first club meeting at the Silver Pheasant Restaurant in Lakewood. John Grm was then the President, he and other members welcomed Brigitte, our children and me. They made us feel most welcome. I have remained active since that date.

Before long club members found out that I could help them maintain their cars and many friendships have developed over the years. I have also been fortunate in developing friendships with Mercedes enthusiasts at dealerships as well as independent shops both locally and nationally by attending regional and national club events. Because my main interest in Mercedes concerns mechanical perfection and performance I have performed technical inspection and technical concourse judging at numerous events. At the very first Star Fest in 1988 held in Washington, DC I was paired with George Murphy, a retired Nuclear Power Plant Engineer originally from Montana. We judged some very expensive high end cars for engine compartments and under carriages under the direction of Frank King, the Technical Director of the Star Magazine at that time. George and I had such a great time working together that we became friends for life. Several years ago he came to Ohio to help us with some local activities. George came to our home for dinner and we sat out on our porch together. He paid me one of the greatest compliments ever by telling me how much he has enjoyed our friendship over the years and his admiration for my skills in pursuing the same passions as his. Offices I have held in the Club have been in response to the particular needs at a given time. For example Peter Lesler, Hank Spritzer, and I pretty much handled club activities by ourselves at one time. Not much to argue about when three men decide who is going to do what to keep the wheels rolling.

Peter and I attended numerous events together. Many members were truly taken back when we showed up with wives. Who woulda thought? The four of us were together for a week this summer at Put-In-Bay. Virus be damned. I have friends and contacts throughout the US as a result of MBCA activities. I have attended National Board meetings in Colorado Springs, Denver, Indianapolis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Williamsburg, Birmingham, and Savannah. I have attended and participated in Star Tech meetings in many many cities as well. Attending these National and Regional events has been most helpful. In 2015 Jon Bernardi and I presented the restoration details of my 1958 190SL at Star Tech in Cincinnati. In 2016 my 190SL won first place at the Arthritis Foundation Event in Dublin Ohio. 1253 cars participated in that event. My 190SL has more than 10,000 miles on the clock. Driven, never trailered, to events in Cincinnati, Detroit, Columbus, and Pittsburgh. Today my Mercedes fleet includes: 1958 190SL, 1975 280SL, 1986 190 2.3 16 Valve Cosworth and a 2005 E320 CDI. I have owned other MB's, A 1959 Corvette in Mexico, a 1969 Dodge Dart GTS Muscle Car in Mexico, a 1976 Toyota Super Saloon (Cressida) in Indonesia, and numerous other Toyota's in other countries. In both Venezuela and Mexico I had Ford LTD's. Brigitte had a 1978 Monte Carlo with numerous anti-theft systems in Venezuela. Still the stereo systems from both her car and my LTD were stolen too often to count. Who knows where the market is for hot stereos.

For recruitment of new members I found many years ago that the secret is personal contact one on one to meet a prospective member's needs. In my case I have been fortunate to recruit many members because of my intense interest in maintaining MB's the way they were designed. If a problem exists, then let's rectify it. There are no short cuts to quality.

**Western Reserve Section  
CRIER**

Mercedes-Benz Club of America  
7783 Diagonal Road Kent, Ohio 44240



## **Western Reserve Section of MBCA Schedule of Events**

### **Board and Membership Meetings—First Tuesday of each month**

As social distancing and limited group size continues, our board meetings have been held on Zoom on our regular dates (first Tuesday of the month). If you wish to be included in these meetings, contact Rod Thompson at: [renold.thompson@clevelandship.com](mailto:renold.thompson@clevelandship.com) and he will send you the Zoom invitation. We always welcome all members and guests and look forward to your input. Watch our website for notifications of our return to Brewster's for our meetings and for date changes.

Please note the suggestions of videos mentioned in the national news.

**Happy Holidays to everyone from your Western Reserve Board! And a safe, healthy New Year!**