



Western Reserve Section

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA

Crier - Winter 2023-2024

The President's Letter

Our club started 2024 with our annual Holiday Party on Saturday, January 6th. Blue Canyon did a fine job of serving our members promptly with delicious entrees in a beautifully decorated room. Mary Alice Cozza presented anniversary pins to longtime members and gifts to our newest members. We thank Mary Alice and Sue Morrison for their hard work in selecting and preparing this successful event.

Matt Harwood has invited us to attend a tech session on Saturday, **February 24th**, from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm at Harwood Motors. There will be a presentation on antique automotive electrical systems. He requests RSVP's so he will have enough seats and donuts.



I know many of us are concerned about the latest COVID variant spreading through the country, so I am looking forward to springtime when we can have outdoor events. On Saturday, **May 11th**, our club is invited to attend the German car show at Zoar Maifest, in Zoar, Ohio. Our club is also planning to attend an evening tribute concert to Neil Diamond at E.J. Thomas Hall in Akron on Thursday, **May 16th**.

The national club will be sponsoring a Performance Driving Event at Watkins Glen on Wednesday, **May 29th**, for those of us who desire some track time with our cars. We are also hoping to schedule a tech session with Doug Tabbutt's Switch-cars during the springtime. We are also considering a joint car meet with the local Porsche and Corvette clubs. Hope to see you soon!

Brigitte Gottfried, the wife of our longtime board member, Ted Gottfried, passed away on December 16th. Brigitte fought a brave fight against cancer for two years with dignity and courage.

-Rod Thompson

Gervasi Cruise In - Mark your Calendars!

The MBCA Western Reserve Section is the featured car club on Wednesday July 24th from 5-8 PM (weather permitting) for the weekly cruise in at one of Ohio's top destinations – Gervasi Vineyard Resort & Spa (700 55th Street NE, Canton, OH 44721). This show will feature our cars in the Vineyard parking lot. Come and enjoy Gervasi's outdoor patio dining, and the other luxury accommodation options, including their three restaurants and coffee house featuring their award-winning wines and distillery offering bourbon, gin, and vodka.



Admission is free—but pre-registration is highly recommended so that we can reserve enough parking spaces--contact MBCA member Richard Self (selfrich@sssnet.com or 330-546-5764) with the year and model of Mercedes-Benz(s) that you will be displaying. This allows Richard to plan the display in advance. We would like you to be there by 4:30 on that Wednesday.

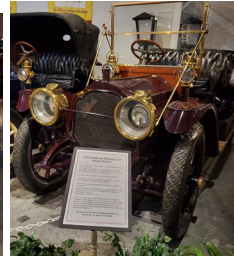
Fall Leaf Tour



The 2023 Fall Leaf Tour with kicked off with a luncheon and refreshments at the home of Nicko Koutavas. Pictured are some of his fang-tastic halloween decorations.



At the end of the scenic route, Western Reserve Section members were invited to participate in docent led tours at the National Packard Museum.



1951 PACKARD PAN AMERICAN

Designed by Richard Arbib and built by the Henney Motor Company from a 1951 "250" convertible, this show car headlined the Packard exhibit at the 1952 New York International Motors Sports Show and won the show's top award. "The Gold Trophy" was presented for outstanding design and engineering achievement.

Five more Pan Americans were built and displayed at various shows for several years, and the design inspired the 1953 Caribbean. This one was driven by Edward Macauley, Packard's chief stylist, for a time and restyled from its original 1952 appearance with 1955 styling and instrumentation by Packard.

A gift from J. Bell Moran on loan from
The Detroit Historical Museum



1903 Model F Runabout "Old Pacific II"

Packard left its mark on history during its years in Warren. "Old Pacific" completed its transcontinental run and the legendary "Gray Wolf" made its racing debut.

Packard touted proof of the 1903 Model F's superiority, including 100 miles without a stop on less than four gallons of gas, 244 miles in 13 hours without stopping the engine, nine first place finishes in various 500 mile endurance runs, 2,500 miles with absolutely no repairs or adjustments and 16,000 miles without a major repair!

The original owner of this car is unknown. The earliest surviving records suggest that Standard Oil of New Jersey used its engine for testing. Terry Martin bought the engine in 1970 from Packard collector Howard Henry who acquired it from the widow of the test engineer. Terry restored the car in 1983 and drove it cross-country recreating Old Pacific's 1903 run.

Special Features:

Engine: 12 HP, single cylinder; Displacement: 183.8 cu. in.; Bore & Stroke: 6 x 6.5"; Radiator Capacity: 5 gallons

Transmission: Sliding gear w/3 forward speeds, center chain drive, spur gear differential

Chassis Refinements: Wheels: wood artillery, 34x4 tires;

Wheelbase: 84"

Body Refinements: Standard fittings: oil side lights & bulb horn. Body types: 5-passenger rear entrance tonneau, removable to form 2-

passenger roadster.

Produced by: Packard Motor Car Company, Warren, Ohio

Engine Number: F387

Total Production: 244

Price: \$2,500



A Generous Gift from
Packard Electric Division
of General Motors



1937 Packard Business Coupe Model 115 C (#1088)

The Model 115 C is a two seater business coupe with a six cylinder, 100 horsepower engine. It is on a 115" wheelbase, and would have sold for \$795 dollars. There were 6,783 of this model produced in 1937 only 4 are known to have survived.

This Packard Business Coupe came into the possession of Jim Economos in 1975. A relative who was in the antique business found the car in Youngtown and ask if he was interested in a Packard. Jim and his brother-in-law went to see the car right away. It looked good to them and they paid \$1,000 for the car, put in some gas, checked the oil, jumped the battery and drove back to Warren, Ohio at 60 mph like it was a new car. Over the years some work has been done to the car including new paint, chrome and mechanical help from his friend John Faur. The interior is next. Like most Packards it is still a work in progress.

On Loan from Jim Economos
Warren, Ohio



We're happy you renewed:

Lewis Sawitz	Forrest Scott	Richard Bird
Ray McCarthy	Brinkley	Michael Hamed
Anthony Psoto	Jeff Misko	Richard Self
Mary Mehwald	Tyler Rice	Lin Baker
Fredric Gwinn	Norman Foraker	Tom Danko
Errol Bellon	Mike Morris	Charles Hearn
Douglas McDonald	Karen Carson	John Buckingham
Jon Elsasser	Jonathan Veres	Joe Werheim
Gary Goodman	James Tullis	
Leon Wieber	DB Zimmerman	

Welcome New Members!

10-2-23 to 2-1-24

Patricia Westover
Frank Dowling
Lyle Schulte
Cameron Elliott

The History of Vanity License Plates

The phrase “vanity license plate” is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as, “a license plate bearing letters and/or number designations by the owner of the vehicle.” Vanity license plates are available today in all states and Canadian provinces, and some of them are quite clever. As a license plate collector since the mid 1940’s, I have been collecting vanity license plates to add to my collection since they became common in the past several years. Automobile owners, when registration of them became common, sought out a unique license plate in the format of a low number as perhaps a sign of their importance, or vanity. Registrations early on began as a series of numbers, beginning with the number one and progressed upward. The length of the number in most cases determined the physical length of the license plate.



In the early 1930’s, the standard Ohio license plate had become an embossed metal plate that was fourteen inches long and six inches wide. The plate displayed a total combination of five embossed characters. For example, “AZ-999. To address the growing number of “vain car owners”, in the 1930’s the Ohio Legislature passed a section of Chapter 4503 of the Ohio Revised Code, “Licensing of Motor Vehicles”, that created the “Reserved License Plate Series” that had to be requested from, and was only issued by, the Ohio Register of Motor Vehicles in Columbus at an increased registration fee and they essentially become the original Ohio vanity license plates. The original reserved license plate series provided the automobile owner the ability to apply and receive a license plate in a special series of the numbers 1 to 999, single letters A to Z, or two letters AA to ZZ, followed by the numbers 1 to 51, or the reverse. These license plates also were issued on a shorter embossed metal plate that added a unique “vanity feature” to their appearance!

In 1950, after some other states began offering optional all-letter license plates, Ohio finally offered three letter combinations as a part of the reserved number license plate series, ultimately expanding that series by adding the numbers 1 to 5 and then preceding the three letters with numbers 1 to 5.

In 1960, Ohio finally added the availability of four-letter plates, ultimately expanding the availability to a total of seven letters, or a combination of letters and numbers. These combinations are creating some very interesting vanity license plates and it should be noted that all applications are reviewed at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles in Columbus to assure their integrity!

Pictured is a display of the Ohio Reserved License Plate series I created several years ago for an Auto License Plate Collector’s Convention that illustrates some of the options available from its inception in the 1930’s to the present. Note that the Ohio plate “VANITY” was on my 1971 Mercedes 280SL from 1980 to 2020, when I sold the car. I have also attached a display of some of the vanity license plates from other states and provinces that I have collected while attending various auto swap meets, including the annual AACA Hershey Swap Meet and Car Show.

-Morgan B Taft

SOME VANITY LICENSE PLATES



FROM THE M. B. TAFT LICENSE PLATE COLLECTION

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

N.B. More events could be added, and specific details will be updated when they are available. Check you inbox and the website often for further updates. We are hoping to add some tech sessions and a dealership meeting. **Remember, we will not be sending flyers in the US mail!**

February 24

Harwood Motors
Macedonia, Ohio

*Antique Electrial Systems RSVP Required

July 24

Gervasi Cruise-In
Canton, Ohio

Mercedes-Benz Featured Club

May 11

Maifest Festival & German Car Show
Zoar, Ohio

July 28

Spread Eagle Brunch & Ice Cream Social
Hanoverton, Ohio

May 16

“So Good!” The Neil Diamond Experience
E.J. Thomas Hall, The University of Akron

August 3

European Car Show
Ursuline College
Pepper Pike, Ohio

May 29

Performance Driving School
Watkins Glen International, New York
N.B. See article in this edition

August 17

Old Car Fun Days
Hunting Valley, Ohio

June 15

Lady Caroline Luncheon Cruise
Cleveland, Ohio

September 15

Clambake & Car Show
DTJ Taborville
Auburn Township, Ohio

June 16

Stan Hywet Father’s Day Car Show
Akron, Ohio

October TBA

Fall Leaf Tour

*Not an official MBCA Event

Western Reserve Section Board Meetings at Brewster’s

Our MCBA Western Reserve Section board meets the first Tuesday of each month at Brewster’s Café Bistro Pub, 2681 Creekside Dr. Twinsburg 44087. We meet at 7:00 pm and welcome all members to join us. We’d love your input! More events could be added, and specific details will be updated when they are available.

*March 5 *April 2 *May 7 *June 4 *July 2

*August 8 *September 3 *October 1 *November 5

High Performance Driver Education

Exciting, Exhilarating, and Fun! Wouldn't you just love to drive your Mercedes on the racetrack? How about at one of the most iconic and storied tracks in the country – Watkins Glen International in the Finger Lakes Region of New York State? MBCA is teaming up with Lotus Ltd to put on a High Performance Driver Education (HPDE) event at Watkins Glen on Wednesday, **May 29th**. A combination of classroom and in-car instruction will teach you how to negotiate challenging turns safely, smoothly, and quickly. The result – you'll understand your car's handling, you'll become a safer driver, and you'll have fun doing it!

So, what is HPDE? It's not racing, and it's not competition. We don't time the laps and we don't give out awards. We do start with the basics, from driving position, terminology, and how to smoothly drive a corner, then proceed to more advanced concepts like analyzing a turn and weight transfer. We never push you to drive any faster than you're comfortable. Cars of all makes are welcome, and you don't have to be an MBCA member.

MBCA Performance Driving Committee Chair, Gary Edwards, comments, "I've attended this Watkins Glen event for the last two years and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's 865 miles from my home and worth the trip. Folks often ask about performance modifications for their car, but for most of us, investing in improving our driving skills will provide vastly greater payoff. But I warn you – HPDE is addictive! I attended my first HPDE event 35 years ago, immediately built a race car, and went racing for the next decade or so." The price is \$495 (\$95 for instructors) and registration will be at <https://clubregistration.net>, log in and search for Watkins Glen May 29th.

Along with the fun at the track, the Finger Lakes region itself is just spectacular! While you are in the area you may want to take advantage of the Corning Glass Center in Corning, NY or the Glenn Curtiss Museum in Hammondsport, NY, as well as the National Soaring Museum in Elmira, NY. Since this is the Wednesday after the Memorial Day Weekend, make it a long weekend and enjoy all that the region has to offer.

If Watkins Glen on May 29th doesn't match your schedule, Alabama/NW Florida and Peachtree Sections are teaming up to return to Talladega Gran Prix Raceway on Saturday, **April 20th**. Not the NASCAR oval track, this is a fun, nearly flat 1.4 mile road course in Munford, Alabama with plenty of run-off, easy enough for a novice to learn, but subtly challenging enough for experienced drivers to enjoy. We're going to limit this event to only 30 drivers, so sign up now! Cost is \$300 (instructors drive for free); for details/registration:

<http://msreg.com/aprilhpdetgpr>

For both events, we'll offer Performance Driving Experience (PDE), which allows you to get a taste of the track at lower speed and lower cost (\$100). This includes all the classroom instruction of HPDE, and two sessions on the track, one ride-along with an instructor and one with you driving your car at highway speeds with an instructor. If you're not quite ready for HPDE, this is a good way to see if it's for you. Edwards sums it up like this, "Track driving makes you realize how much safer racetracks are than public roads. On the track, no one is texting. You don't have trees alongside the roadway. You don't have carspassing within feet of you, going in the opposite direction. It's riskier driving to the track than driving on the track. When I started driving fast on the track, I started driving slower on the street." -Gary Edwards

**Celebrate the
Coming of Spring at
Historic Zoar Village**



MAIFEST

Friday, May 10 | 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m.
Saturday, May 11 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

- Live music: *Down Und Kraut and Gemütlichkeit Cleveländer Musikanten*
- Craft beers: *Lockport, Woolly Pig and Maize Valley*
- Traditional German brats, roasted chicken and more
- German Car Show Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Village tours



For information: (330)-874-3011
historiczoarvillage.com
zoarinfo@zca.org





Annual Holiday Party



Good weather, good friends, good food, and beautiful surroundings for the annual holiday party—who could ask for more? The venue this year was the Blue Canyon Kitchen and Tavern in Twinsburg. The evening started with appetizers and conversation as we mingled. Our menus were at our places, and the made-to-order meals were delivered smoothly and to each diner’s choice. The delicious meal was finished with a Chocolate Bomb. During the dessert and into the evening, entertainer Dan Elish sang a variety of songs familiar to most of us.

As is our tradition at the holiday party and the Spread Eagle Brunch, longevity membership pins were given in increments of five years. Those receiving pins at this holiday party were: Bill Mulhausen, 10 years, Robert Sloan, 15 years, Kurt von Leyser, 20 years, and Terry Kiwala, 30 years. Mercedes-Benz glasses were awarded to Keith Gecking, Nancy Gecking, and Adam Bernard.

One of the highlights each year at the holiday party is the presentation of the Member of the Year Award. This year’s honoree is Gary Goodman, our current Treasurer. When our previous treasurer, John Morrison, died, Gary stepped in and took over those duties, in addition to being our webmaster and working a full-time job. Gary took over just as the annual report was due to the National Board Office. That is a time-consuming report and was complicated by having to do it from someone else’s notes and records. Gary has also served for many years as the webmaster, again a time-consuming position. We are so fortunate to have Gary on our board and to have someone willing to take on such responsibilities.

Our special guest was Jeffrey Hirst, our Great Lakes Regional Director, who drove in from Canonsburg, PA through a few miles of snow squalls and brought a bag of Pittsburgh goodies for one of the door prizes. A thank you to him and to Mercedes-Benz Akron (Ganley M-B) who gave us a stipend that covered the appetizers, and thank you to Bill Mulhausen for suggesting our entertainer. And lastly, thank you to Sue Morrison and Mary Alice Cozza for organizing such a spectacular night! After door prizes were distributed, Dan Ellish continued entertaining us with his voice and nostalgic songs to help us close out a very enjoyable holiday gathering!



Greetings From the Great Lakes Regional Director



Where did 2023 go? It seems like yesterday I was just making plans to attend MBCA events in the region – from The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, to Mercedes Grande in Indianapolis, to the Spread-Eagle Brunch and Ice Cream Social in Hanoverton, Ohio. As you have been reading in The Star, 2023 has had its share of challenges for the MBCA, with both declining memberships and revenue. My message has been consistent when communicating with the leadership at national, regional, and sectional events – this club's success is about its members and their enjoyment of Mercedes-Benz

vehicles – both the classics and the modern vehicles – in support of each other and in collaboration with the dealers.

From my previous articles, you probably know that I have an interest in the classics – specifically the cars designed by Bruno Sacco. The idea of cup holders, Apple Carplay, apps, and other modern conveniences are future innovations years down the road from my drives in my A124 or 'newer' R129. I always admired the modern Benzes but never considered driving one, for I usually drove different makes when it came to my daily driver. A deer leaping onto a major highway and then into me one recent November evening put an end to my daily driver rather quickly, and left me without a car. Thankfully, I was not injured, but the car was totaled. Without a car, I scoured numerous websites and walked many car lots looking for my next daily driver, but to no avail. Then, I thought maybe I should look at a used Mercedes for my next daily driver. Through the many friends that I have made in the Great Lakes Region, I found my way to Denis Hernandez and Doug Kimble at Fred Martin Mercedes-Benz in Youngstown, Ohio. I had first met Denis and Doug at the Brunch and Ice Cream Social in August, as the dealership was gracious enough to attend and support the event. After a few conversations with Denis and Doug, Susan and I made the trip to Fred Martin to pick up our 2021 A220 4Matic.

Doug was very patient as he answered our many questions on the MBUX multimedia system, Mercedes me and apps, as well as how to change gears with the seven-speed dual clutch transmission. I was struggling to find any commonalities with my classics other than the star on the grille – and I do believe that the memory seat adjustment looks very similar.

Now, with a few weeks of ownership, there is much that I still need to learn about this modern Mercedes, but that is the great thing about being a member of the MBCA. Regardless of whether it is a classic or modern Mercedes, there is a community of members willing to go the extra mile to support each other.

In this first quarter of 2024, it is a good time to thank you for being a member of the MBCA and all that you do to support your section. May you have a Happy and Healthy 2024. I hope to see you at an upcoming MBCA event.

If you have a question or just want to chat about Benzes, please contact me at MBCAGreatLakesRD@gmail.com.

Godspeed,

Jeff Hirst

Zoar Maifest All-Marques German Car Show

Historic Zoar Village in Zoar, Ohio will host its sixth annual "All-Marques German Car Show" at the Zoar Maifest on Saturday, **May 11, 2024**. The car show will run from 10:30am to 2:00pm at the lot on the corner of Main (SR212) and 5th streets. All German auto marques and vehicles are welcome. Prizes will be awarded for "People's Choice", "People's Choice Runner-Up, Participants' Choice, Oldest Car, and Newest Car. Registration is just \$10 with registrants receiving a free bratwurst sandwich at the German food and brew hall as well as free admission to Maifest. Proceeds benefit preservation and educational activities at Historic Zoar Village. The car show is part of Zoar's annual Maifest which includes a German food and brew hall with German-style craft beers from three regional breweries. Entertainment will include accordion music and traditional German music by the Gemütlichkeit Clevländer Musikanten group from Cleveland. This year will also feature a German beer stein exhibit, sales and appraisals. For more information call **330-874-3011** or visit our website (www.historiczoarvillage.com) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/historiczoarvillage).

-Jon Elsasser

Formula 1 -Jan Pesta

The big news regarding the Mercedes F1 team is that Louis Hamilton has signed a contract to drive for Ferrari in 2025. Hamilton will be driving for Mercedes in 2024, per his current contract, and says he will give his best in the current season. In an interview, Mercedes team principal, Toto Wolff, said he was surprised by the move but that he and Louis have developed a good friendship over the years and remain on good terms. Following the F1 car rule changes for 2022 and 2023, the Mercedes design has not been able to produce the necessary pace to compete with the Red Bull car. Neither have any of the other F1 teams been able to field a car capable of consistently challenging the Red Bull car. Despite Red Bull's dominance, Mercedes was able to place in the top 3 2023 and have a place on the podium for both constructor and driver. We will see what 2024 brings beginning February 21-23 at Sakhir, the first of 24 scheduled races of the 2024 F1 season.

The Constructor standings for 2023 were:

Pos	Team	PTS
1	Red Bull Racing Honda RBPT	860
2	Mercedes	409
3	Ferrari	406
4	McLaren Mercedes	302
5	Aston Martin Aramco Mercedes	280
6	Alpine Renault	120
7	Williams Mercedes	28
8	AlphaTauri Honda RBPT	25
9	Alfa Romeo Ferrari	16
10	Haas Ferrari	12

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