

MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

River City Star



MBCA Memphis Section Newsletter July/August 2024

President's Message

Mike McMann

June 20th was summer solstice. This marks the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere, caused by the earth's angle to the sun. It's the earliest solstice in 228 years and we're seeing double the number usual solar flares which means we'll have a long hot summer. The higher temperature causes people to be more irritable and can show up in their driving behavior. It's best to take it easy and try to be tolerant toward other drivers on the road.

Last week we saw 2 car jackings of motorists in Memphis. One driver died and the second driver, who was one of our club members, experienced minor injuries. We wish him well and a quick recovery. The United States averages

38,000 car jackings annually. What to do? Stay calm, make eye contact and say ***I'm not resisting and I'm getting out of the car and I'm removing the children from the back***

seat. Unfortunately, there are occasions where you may have to fight, to avoid a kidnapping, for instance. To minimize the risk of carjacking, keep doors locked and windows up, be attentive to your surroundings and stay off the cell phone. If you look attentive and alert, you'll be



less of a target than someone who's obviously distracted.

My name is Mike McHann. I'm the newly elected president of the Memphis Section of the MBCA. My membership in the club spans over thirty years. I've owned 12 Mercedes and have driven 2 "E" series over 200,000 miles. I'm a Mechanical Engineer and have restored cars since I was 14 years old, beginning with my father's 54 Buick Coupe. Previously, I was a member of the Lotus Club, the Alfa Romeo Club and the Porsche Club, but I've found the Mercedes Club to be the most active and engaging car club. Since its inception in the fifties, the Mercedes Club has been a resource for those who love their cars and want to know more about their car and the Grand Marque.

Eight years ago, I became a member of the Board, wanting to be more engaged and make a contribution. I felt a

little intimidated initially but was roundly welcomed by the other Board members and soon fell in step, finding I was indeed able to contribute to the section's operations and planning. So, if you have the time, I hope you'll consider volunteering as a Board Member. You can do as little or as much as you want. I'm sure you have the talent that can make a difference and we need you.

As President, I'm here to represent you and am available to help with any issue you have from dealership problems to car problems. Please feel free to reach out to me. I welcome your comments and questions.

Take a look at our upcoming events and make plans to attend!

Mike McHann
President
901-299-6341

2024 Events Calendar

Date	Event	Location
July 6	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
July 13	Marshall's Steak House	2379 Highway 178, Holly Springs, MS
August 3	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
August 17	Tour, Edge Motor Museum Lunch, TBD	645 Marshall Ave., Memphis
Sept. 7	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
Sept. 14	Carrabba's Italian Grill	4600 Merchants Park Circle Collierville
Sept. 28	Memphis Eurofest	Memphis
Oct. 5	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
Oct. 4-5	Eurofest (MS Section)	Ridgeland, MS
Oct. 19	Safari Park, Lunch TBD	Como, MS
Nov. 2	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
Dec. 7	Cars & Carbs	Panera Bread, Germantown
Dec. 7	Germantown Holiday Parade	Germantown, TN
Dec. 14	Holiday Party	TBD



Dinner at Marciano

By Mike McHann

On June 15th the club held it's 2nd 2024 quarterly dinner at Marciano Restaurant. Marciano is a past favorite and never disappoints, featuring upscale Italian cuisine. It was a great success. We planned for 15 members and were pleasantly surprised when 20 decided to come. Lynn Jones had just returned from a Mercedes Tour in Europe and brought back several door prizes for the guests. If you haven't attended one of our dinners, I would recommend it for a very enjoyable evening.



(Upper left) Janet and Lynn Jones (bottom left) Doris Fast (middle) Lynn displaying the door prize tickets passed out to the attending members (right) Christopher and Dale Sorenson



(above) Kathy and Frank Adams, Suzanne and Andy Cunningham

Members and Their Cars

MEMORIES OF ROLF PLUDRA HOBBIES AND INTEREST OF THE MERCEDES CARS

By Linda Pludra - wife of Rolf Pludra

You might say Rolf Pludra was a collector. He enjoyed many hobbies and these hobbies turned into big collections. One of his hobbies was the Mercedes Benz car and this is the hobby I shall write about. You might ask *why Rolf was so interested in Mercedes*. Well, he wasn't always!

Let me begin with a little history. Rolf was born and raised in Germany where the Mercedes originated. He came to the United States in 1965 at the age of nineteen and his desire was to own an American car. He was fascinated with all the U.S. made cars. Rolf had Mustangs, Lincolns, Thunderbirds, Cadillacs, and Corvettes but one day about 1980 Rolf came home with a Mercedes and, from that day forward, it started his love for the Mercedes that he remembered from growing up in Germany.



Rolf found a junk yard here in Memphis called J. Wileys that bought wrecked and used Mercedes and took them apart to redistribute and sell. This place caught Rolf's interest and you could find him there on his days off wandering through this junk yard. He would spot a car that looked good and he would make an offer for it. According to Rolf, he always got a good deal. Not all his cars came from J.Wileys, but I believe several did. He purchased the 600 from a collector in Memphis who was selling off some of his collection and Rolf couldn't pass up that opportunity.



After a few years, Rolf had amassed several Mercedes. He had to build a separate garage at our home to accommodate these cars along with all the car parts he purchased from this junk yard. Rolf took pride in owning his fleet and kept them shined up and running. He lined them up each week in front of our home and drove them around the neighborhood. It was like a car show and many kids and neighbors made a special

effort to be there when he did this.

In the late 80's Rolf joined or formed the MBCA of Germantown/Memphis. I have a plaque showing him as Vice President, then later as President. During this time, he held monthly dinners at various restaurants, but not the fancy ones as we do now. Rolf arranged to have car shows at the shopping center where our Barbershop was located and there was always a big turnout for these events. He gave trophies for the different classes of Mercedes and always a ribbon of participation to each entrant. Rolf enjoyed

doing this for many years. Later, MBCA needed to evolve, so Rolf gave this up and MBCA became a new type club with even more exciting events.

When Rolf passed away 8/05/23, he had ten Mercedes which were mostly antiques, including 1967 MB 600... 1970 MB 280 SEL... 1972 MB 480 SL... 1972 MB 280 SE... 1973 MB 450 SLC... 1975 MB 450 SL... 1976 MB 280... 1983 MB 500 SEL... 1998 MB SLK... 2013 MB 250.



His favorite car in this collection was the red 1976 MB 280 that he drove most of the time. Rolf was always being spotted around town in this car because it stood out; everyone knew it was Rolf passing by. Also, when this bright red Mercedes was parked outside at our shop, customers knew he

was open for business. This particular car actually became Rolf's trademark.

I sold the red 1976 MB 280 to Rolf's best friend and I drove the 2013 MB 250 for awhile and recently traded it for a 2023 MB GLA 250. After much painful thought, I decided to consign Rolf's remaining cars to ART AND SPEED in Collierville, TN who will market and sell them for me. The memories of Rolf's collection and his enjoyment of these beautiful Mercedes will be cherished by me forever, and I hope they are bought by individuals who will love them as much as Rolf did.



Rolf's Cars can be seen at Art & Speed, 141 Eastley St, Collierville, TN 901-850-0507 ask for Kevin

Want an MBCA Name Tag? Here's How To Purchase

Name tags with the MBCA logo are great ways to identify yourself at MBCA Sectional, Regional, or National events and help build camaraderie. These personalized badges are now available through a new feature launched in June 2024 on the MBCA website called ProShop. Assuming that you have already set up your account on the MBCA website, you can start by logging in at <https://www.mbca.org>. Once logged in, click on the "Members Only" button and then click on "MBCA Store". This brings

up the ProShop login page. (Never mind that it doesn't say ProShop and only says "Mercedes-Benz Club of America", it's still ProShop.) ProShop is a separate entity from MBCA so you need to sign in and create an account here. Your MBCA.org login/password won't get you in. Once you are into ProShop, the name tags are the first thing you see. The Memphis Section has always preferred the navy-colored plastic badges, but ProShop gives you a choice of three formats. Get recognized! Get a name tag!

HOW DOES A WEEK OF *ALL-THINGS-MERCEDES* SOUND – IN GERMANY? PART 1 OF 2

by Lynn Jones

If a week of all things Mercedes-Benz – in Stuttgart, Germany no less - sounds good to you, then here's a report of just such a trip to whet your appetite and maybe help you actually consider taking advantage of this great experience open to all MBCA members.

With COVID over and a three-year hiatus, the Mercedes-Benz Club of America has restarted their twice-yearly trips to Stuttgart, Germany and all the sites and experiences this motor city has to offer, especially from Mercedes-Benz. These trips have been an MBCA institution since 2006 and it is estimated that a thousand members have enjoyed the experience, some more than once. I participated in the June 2024 trip, which has been described as an exclusive opportunity to experience a first-class European vacation with guided VIP tours that place you at the center of Mercedes-Benz history and production.



This AMG GT 43 was to be delivered to a customer later in the day we visited the AMG plant in Affalterbach.

After a travel, check-in and welcoming dinner day on Monday, we started our touring on Tuesday with plenty of eye candy at the AMG plant in Affalterbach, outside of Stuttgart. Not very big, but with exceptional examples of many Mercedes-AMG models in every parking slot, we toured the famous “One man, one engine” assembly hall and were close enough to have to move aside as engines under construction were pushed by their builder to the next parts stations. A second floor that housed a newly built line where parts are moved and the builder stays in one place was quiet that day with the exception of one corner of the hall. Here we encountered the single station where all current V12 engines are assembled by one man. The lone V12 builder was there that day. Michael Kubler has an Instagram following of almost a quarter million fans (@f1mike28).



Attractive station wagons were everywhere on our trip including this E 53 at the AMG plant. Many comments about hoping to see more of them in the US market were made by our group members.

The afternoon was taken up with MB early history and a visit to Gottlieb Daimler's birth-place and the property in the Stuttgart suburb of Bad Cannstatt where Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach perfected their engine in great secrecy in a greenhouse in the garden. This visit put an emphasis on the role played by the gifted engineer Maybach in automobile engine development, and why Daimler-Benz top models are called Maybach (pronounced “Mybock”).

Wednesday's main attraction was the fabulous Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart built around a large four-story central atrium. The tour starts with an elevator ride to the top and circles on down through history, not only MB history, but world history via historical photos on the outer walls of the building to show the context of vehicle evolution. The collection of Mercedes vehicles along the way is most complete. From buses, to racing cars, to utility vehicles, to exotic and iconic models recognized around the world, the collection contains pristine examples of almost every age from 1886 to the present. Not to miss a marketing opportunity, there is a dealership attached to the Museum where you can indulge your desires right now, including a 293 K Euro Maybach limo. Also located in the base of the Museum is one of the few MB flagship stores where you can be sure that all the gear is genuine Mercedes-Benz and MB quality.



The Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart is a handsome building that lets in lots of natural light to show off the history of Mercedes and Daimler-Benz since 1886.



We saw several of these 500K Special Roadsters – this is a 1936 – at museums and they always get attention.

The afternoon was capped off with a visit to the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach, a town east of Stuttgart. Here, exact replication of what came off the assembly lines in earlier years is the goal, and the results are beautiful. If I'd thought ahead I could have contacted the Fellbach Classic Center prior to the trip about a new brake master cylinder for my 1960 Ponton sedan and brought one home. That would have made so much better story than ordering from the US Classic Center in Long Beach, CA. Our group was particularly interested in where the Center got the myriad of parts that go into all those models produced over a 130 year time-span. Asked if they ever go to the internet, they indicated, yes, as a last resort. Their showroom included a mid-1950's 300 SL Gullwing in very used condition that they had bought from the US and were going to keep as a "before" example. Many "after" examples were either waiting on customer delivery or available for sale in their main showroom.

A big part of the experience is listening to the car stories of your fellow travelers. Some with long family histories of Mercedes-Benz cars, and others with very unique stories of single cars that were rescued, rebuilt, restored and survived. Many had an MB SUV at home, but those didn't get talked about as much as the SL's or the special sedans that were owned.

The Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach, a town east of Stuttgart. Here, exact replication of what came off the assembly lines in earlier years is the goal, and the results are beautiful. If I'd thought ahead I could have contacted the Fellbach Classic Center prior to the trip about a new brake master cylinder for my 1960 Ponton sedan and brought one home. That would have made so much better story than ordering from the US Classic Center in Long Beach, CA. Our group was particularly interested in where the Center got the myriad of parts that go into all those models produced over a 130 year time-span. Asked if they ever go to the internet, they indicated, yes, as a last resort. Their showroom included a mid-1950's 300 SL Gullwing in very used condition that they had bought from the US and were going to keep as a "before" example. Many "after" examples were either waiting on customer delivery or available for sale in their main showroom.



While at the Mercedes-Benz Museum, I needed a picture of the car dear to my heart, the workhorse "ponton" with models built from 1953-1962, that helped establish MB as a worldwide brand. I visited the Mercedes Sindelfingen plant in 1976 when I drove my 1960 190b ponton sedan through Germany.

Being able to sit down at many of the delicious and special meals offered on the trip and spend time talking about MB cars made for fascinating conversations.

One trip participant was on his second MBCA Germany trip in as many years, this time convincing a family member to come along. He pointed out that where else can you get a week's vacation in Europe where the hotel is first class, all the meals are provided and are excellent, the program provides a tour bus with experienced knowledgeable guides, the group is a manageable size, and all this for a most reasonable cost, and the subject is something you have always been interested in!

Our trip's MBCA volunteer guide, Chuck Stanford, and his wife Ava, deserve a big shout out of thanks for the time and effort put into arranging this trip and then keeping the schedule going in Germany. Likewise, the Mercedes-Benz representative who accompanied us the whole week, Milan Chudoba, deserves a round of thanks for his good spirit, wealth of knowledge and ability to add context to every stop on the tour. Milan says he is with the MB "department of wining and dining" of which we did plenty.

In the next Section Newsletter, I will report on two more days of touring and visits to more MB-focused sites, including some fascinating MB resto-mods that make gear-heads drool and purists shudder. How about a Pagoda SL with an AMG 63 engine?



The Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL 6.3 built from 1968-1972 was a high-water mark for classic luxury sedans – with power! Variations on this model were seen at many of the museums

Memphis Membership Matters

Mike McHann (Membership Chairman)

We're very excited to welcome our newest members Mike & Julie Walker, Tonya Taylor, Kyeanna Jones, William Mclean and Doris Fast. This brings our current membership to 84, an increase of 5 new members, 2 members were lost through attrition. Remember to promote the club to your Mercedes friends, especially the many benefits which include:

1. 10 - 15% discount on parts & labor at Mercedes of Memphis, Mercedes of Collierville and Smith Imports.
2. Membership in the national club with national events, car shows and car raffles.
3. Bi-Monthly STAR magazine
4. Local club dinners, parades, car shows, etc.
5. Local newsletter
6. Technical help for your Mercedes from local club members.

I'm very encouraged about the changes coming from the National Club which promise to promote our local club membership. Until now, we depended on the STAR Magazine to communicate with our Mercedes community, but now we're switching to a web-based system to communicate online... moving from printed media to digital media. I'm already seeing the benefits of the new system with increased membership the past couple of months.

If you haven't done it yet, you need to login to the new website.

- <https://www.mbca.org/>
- At the upper, right side of the page select Register.
- Enter your email address and assign a new password

- If the system doesn't recognize your email, let me know, we've seen a few errors in the new system.
- If you have problems, contact me mike@eccotek.com and I'll help you get on.

Once you've created a profile you may proceed the MBCA Site by switching from "Memphis" to "Mercedes Benz Club of America" . On the left side of the page you will find your profile and short cuts to MBCA, STAR Interest Groups, STAR Marketplace, and STAR Tech. Of particular interest is STAR Marketplace. This replaces the classifieds that were once in the STAR Magazine. You'll find Mercedes for sale, with a big improvement. The classifieds now have extensive write-ups and multiple photos of Mercedes for sale by our members.

I'd appreciate your feedback regarding your experience with the new website.

And finally, I need your old copies of the Star for our Dealer Displays. To donate, let me know and I'll come by and pick them up.

Mike McHann
Membership Chairman
901-299-6341

Technical Tips and Tricks (TTT)

by Henry Kinler

Cleaning Mass Air Flow Sensor (Do's & Don'ts)

As our classic Mercedes age, we try to keep them running in tip top shape. One of the maintenance items is your Mass Air Flow Sensor (MAF). This is a vital input to your car's computer and the readings from your MAF go into the calculation to determine how rich or lean the fuel mixture should be in your engine. There are 3 key components to the calculation: airflow, fuel demand and air temperature and these are measured by the throttle body, MAF sensor and air temperature sensor. In cleaning my MAF, I made a rookie mistake and hope now that you're reading this you don't repeat my mistake.

My car is now 27 years old and I decided to clean my MAF instead of replacing it. With the engine at a smooth idle, I sprayed the MAF cleaner. The check engine light came on and my handheld diagnostic tool revealed several error codes. I cleared the error codes once

the engine was running smoothly, but the next day the car idled rough (but without error codes) and I realized I had to replace my MAF sensor. With electrical power running through the MAF sensor, the liquid cleaner had created a short circuit and damaged the MAF.

MAF Cleaning Tips

- 1 Spray MAF cleaner only when the engine is OFF and key is out of



the ignition.

- 2 Use an MAF cleaner that won't leave a residue that can damage or affect the MAF readings.
- 3 Don't remove the MAF Body Housing to clean your sensor.
- 4 Spray cleaner down the MAF Body Housing, allowing it to dry well for 30 minutes before starting the engine to avoid a short circuit.
- 5 Be careful with the electrical connectors to the temperature sensor and MAF sensor as the plastic is brittle.

MAF Replacement Tips

- 1 If you must replace your MAF sensor, you should also replace the MAF Body Housing and temperature sensor. The MAF sensor is engineered to match the MAF body size for air flow and, since you're changing the MAF sensor, you should also change the temperature sensor.
- 2 Consider ordering the MAF from Bosch instead of Mercedes. Image 1 shows two numbers, the Mercedes part number and the Bosch part number. Since many of

the parts in my engine come from Bosch as an OEM, it was less expensive to order the MAF from Bosch (\$250) vs Mercedes (\$500). The temperature sensor from Mercedes was inexpensive from Mercedes at \$33



3. The Image above shows the Thottle Body Boot which attaches the Body Housing to the throttle body. Some instructions say to loosen the bottom screw clamp of the throttle body before removing the MAF, but it is very hard to get to this scew. Instead, I found it easier to lift the MAF to access the screw and this saved me a lot of time. Reinstall the boot with a little silicone lubrcant to help the boot slide into the throttle body.

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Formula 1 Update

by Bill Sudekum



The most recent Formula 1 races were held in Canada (Circuit Gilles Villeneuve) and Spain (Circuit de Catalunya). In Canada, Lewis Hamilton finally made it to the podium with a solid 3rd place finish, followed closely by his teammate George Russell in 4th on a very wet track.

The team continued its success in Spain as they again finished in 3rd and 4th on a very challenging track. It appears that the engineers may have finally gotten the M15's chassis to behave itself. I heard no complaints of vibrations in these races. Now if they can just get the engines to produce a little more power to catch Red Bull.

The next three races are on June 30th (Austria), July 7th (Great Britain), and July 21st (Hungary). Check your television service provider for the correct time and channel.