



Peachtree Section

STARS IN GEORGIA

December 2023



Graphic by
Doug Geganto



Volume 45 - Vol 6 | December 2023



View Through The Star

by Rubin Howard, President

I have high hopes and aspirations for 2024. I believe that this will be MBCA Peachtree's greatest year yet. We have an incredible roster of board members and directors from all backgrounds who provide excellent value to our organization. We are all excited to help create a fantastic variety of events for our membership in 2024.

I would like to introduce Eastern Region MBCA Peachtree's inaugural "**Star Summit**" regional event; a weekend full of festivities for Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts. This four night long-weekend event will consist of a Track Day at Atlanta Motorsports Park, Mountain Drive, Concours d'Elegance, several back-to-back tech sessions, a Concours d'Elegance Eve cocktail reception, as well as an awards dinner. We are excited to work with many of our great sponsors to make this event happen. We anticipate attendees within a 600 mile radius of the greater Atlanta area, although everyone is welcome. For MBCA Peachtree members, consider this event to be the beginning to what could become a highly focused enthusiast festival weekend. The event is

scheduled for **October 3rd through October 7th**. The itinerary is as follows:

- Thursday October 3rd: Welcome Reception at partner hotel
- Friday October 4th: AM Cars & Coffee, mid-day tech sessions, PM Concours d'Elegance cocktail reception on the show field.
- Saturday October 5th: Concours d'Elegance, mid-day tech session, PM Concours d'Elegance Awards Ceremony
- Sunday October 6th: AM Winery destination Mountain Drive in North Georgia
- Monday October 7th: Track Day at Atlanta Motorsports Park

[Read More](#)

The Event Rundown

January

- 1/6 | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
1/13 | Winter Drive | [watch for details](#)
1/24 | M117 Engine Challenges | [register](#) ! ZOOM

February

- 2/3 | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
2/10 | Mountain Drive | [watch for details](#)
2/16 - 18 | Carolinas Charleston "Sprint into the Past" | [register](#) | [map](#)
2/17 | PCA Track Day | [watch for details](#)

March

- 3/2 | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
3/9 | Drive to Savoy Museum | [watch for details](#)
3/23 - 24 | PCA HPDE Barber Motorsports Park | watch for details | [map](#)

April

- 4/6 | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
4/6 | Tour the Monastery of the Holy Spirit | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
4/13 | Tech Event DC Motorwerks | [watch for details](#)
4/20 | Talladega Grand Prix Track Day | [watch for details](#) | [map](#)
4/25-28 | Low Country Spring Fling | [Interest Survey](#) | [Mt Pleasant SC](#)

[FULL EVENT SCHEDULE 2024](#)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - STEVE MUECKE



At our September Concours show at Halcyon, we had a unique entry – a **2002 Mercedes-Benz Panzer** owned by **Stephen Muecke**.

This 2002 Mercedes-Benz S-500 was finished in black (040) over matching Charcoal Nappa leather and powered by a 5.0-liter V8 paired with a five-speed automatic transmission. The

M113 5.0-liter V8 was factory-rated at 302 horsepower and 339 lb-ft of torque.

Its equipment includes the M-B Guard Special Protection Vehicle package, which added ballistics-grade polycarbonate glass and high-strength steel body components, B4 certified (up to a .44 Magnum) occupant protection, an armored floor, roof and firewall, and a self-sealing fuel tank. Additional equipment consists of a two-way intercom system, heated and power-adjustable front and rear seats, dual-zone automatic climate control, rear window shades, Parktronic, and an upgraded audio system. This W220 has 27k miles, its service records, factory literature, and the original window sticker (original retail price of \$177,470). [Read More](#)

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MEMBERSHIP



Peachtree
Section

***Welcome our
Newest Members***

- Chris Bradley
- John Clifton
- Scott Krause
- Amy Maillho
- Charles Mays
- Michael Miller
- Boris Sidow
- Joshua Smith
- Rebecca Williford

***Thanks to our
Renewing Members***

- Tiffany Adams
- Erkin Akbiyik
- Jason Anthoine
- Howard Austin
- Brian Borek
- Neal Caudle
- Danai
Chompoonich
- Donald Connell
- Neil Cornelssen
- Eduardo Cortez
- John Darnall
- Daniel
DerVartanian
- Stephen Du
- Charles Ellis
- Timothy Fike
- John Floore
- Nancy Harris
- Rubin Howard
- Arnon Isaacson
- Zackary Johnson
- D Joyner

by Reijo Haarla, Membership Director

At the end of October 2023 Peachtree Section of the MBCA has 477 members. We have experienced some decrease in the numbers of the Peachtree membership during the past few months. You can renew your membership online at mbca.org, or you can call the MBCA National Business Office at 719.633.6427 Tues-Thurs 9 am – 3 pm MT to renew over the phone. You can also select an Auto-Renewal to ensure your membership stays active.

Peachtree Section is one of the most active sections within the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. We organize a large variety of events members can participate. There are still many interesting events scheduled for the rest of the year and the next year's events are already marked on the calendar.

Please check the event calendar in this Newsletter and register to attend for an upcoming event. Attending club events is the best way to meet members that share your interest in Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

In addition to recognizing new members who joined recently the Mercedes Benz Club of America, we are honored to announce MBCA membership Anniversaries for 2023 in this Newsletter issue. .

40 year Anniversary:

Patsy Benson – Jasper, GA

Carl D Smith – Stone Mountain, GA

- Sam Kamber
- Cody Laird
- Michael Leigh
- Derek Lukaschus
- Gerhard Mayrhofer
- James Miller
- Mike Partain
- Douglas Porter
- Edmon Sayed
- Kenneth Sidwell
- John Sparling
- Carl Steiger
- Bill Sullivan
- Claude Thomas

35 year Anniversary:

Walter Darmetko – Woodstock, GA
 John Everage – Marietta, GA
 Mary Jones – Duluth, GA
 Raymond McFadden – Covington, GA

30 year Anniversary:

Herbert Jesswein – Roswell, GA
 Ernest Smallman – Canton, GA
 Michael McHann – Memphis, TN
 Christoph Von Der Osten – Hoschton, GA

[See All of the Anniversaries](#)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CARS & COFFEE

HALCYON

Cars and Coffee at Halcyon Continues in 2024

Join us for our monthly Cars & Coffee sponsored by RBM's Mercedes-Benz Experience at Halcyon. Please arrive by 9:30 am, we'll begin at approximately 10 a.m. when everyone has finished prepping their cars. The **Fuel** coffee shop is ready to serve up a hot cup of coffee to enjoy while chatting with fellow members.

Here is our upcoming dates:

- 1/6** | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon
 - 2/3** | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon
 - 3/2** | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon
 - 4/6** | Cars and Coffee at Halcyon
-



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**M117 Engine Challenges Tech Session
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 7:00 p.m.
via ZOOM**

Gary Edwards, Presenter



Gary will discuss what he's learned about the M117 engine while working to fix an irritating drivability problem with a new to him 1973 450SL. This was a car that was rescued by one of our members from sitting outside ignored for many years, and so had no service records and even the mileage was unknown.

Gary comments, "I learned a whole bunch about this engine that I never really wanted to know, but what I learned can be useful to anyone with a car having an M116 or M117 engine, used in many V-8 Mercedes cars from the late '60s until the early 90's. There is a specific set of failures that can cause engine destruction that anyone with one of these engines needs to be aware of." There will be plenty of time for questions and off topic Mercedes technical questions will be fine, though Gary isn't certain that he will have all the answers.....

This is a repeat of a tech session from March of 2020 which will allow us to record it and get it up on our YouTube channel, MBCA Peachtube.

The tech session will be conducted via Zoom VTC.

[REGISTER](#)

PERFORMANCE DRIVING 2024



by **Gary Edwards**

Now that I'm no longer President, I intend to spend more time on the performance driving program and I wanted to give you a heads up on what to expect for 2024. In short, I want to spin all the plates of performance driving, from defensive driving skills (Safe Driver Safe Family, Urban Survival), karting, autocross, and High Performance Driver Education (HPDE).

For HPDE, we plan a combination of our own events and high-quality events

of partner organizations. We are working on two of our own events this year, one in the Spring probably in April at Talladega Grand Prix Raceway (TGPR) and one on October 7th at Atlanta Motorsports Park (AMP) in conjunction with our multi-event weekend. I also encourage you to put May 29th on your schedule for a one-day event at Watkins Glen in association with the Lotus club. This is a long way to go, but it's worth it – Watkins Glen is an iconic track and I've gone to this one for the last two years. We'll also plan to go to the local Porsche Club of America (PCA) events at AMP (February 17th), and Road Atlanta (June 1/2 and September 27/29). We'll also look at going to a Turn One Performance Driving event at Carolina Motorsports Park – most of their events are on Fridays so we'll try to pick one that makes sense.

As soon as we get the PCA autocross schedule we'll post it on our website events listing and we'll plan to take a groups of Mercedes – we went to a bunch of these several years ago and had great fun. I've been wanting to get back to these; it's a great opportunity to learn low and medium speed car handling skills with low risk.

I'm working on scheduling 3 or 4 karting events at Lanier for 2024 as well. These have been fun and generally well attended. We provide training on how to drive then do four sessions on the track, followed by lunch. This allows wheel to wheel activity that you can't do in any other type of performance driving other than racing.

We also want to do either the AMP Urban Survival Training or the equivalent MBCA event called Safe Driver, Safe Families. I would rather do the Safe Driver Safe Family type event because we can do it ourselves with our own instructors (probably me and Jim Roberts, along with any others we can recruit) and offer it at a much more reasonable price than the AMP Urban Survival Training. The AMP Urban Survival Training has gotten so expensive that I think the price has deterred attendance and last time we didn't have enough participants to meet the minimum for the event. The challenge for the Safe Driver Safe Family event is finding a large enough parking lot at a reasonable price to make it financially viable – we'd like to offer this at a \$50 - \$75 price point. We need about a 200 foot by 300 foot paved area without obstacles to put this on. Let me know if you know of an appropriate parking lot we could use.

This will keep us pretty busy this year, and folks that participate will not only have a lot of fun, they'll learn how to get the most out of their Mercedes and will also become safer drivers! I love to introduce people to performance driving, but I warn you – it's addictive! After one HPDE, I built a race car and spent a decade racing - it just might happen to you....

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**Low Country Spring Fling
Charleston, SC
April 25-28, 2024**



Doug Geganto, Event Planner

Enjoy spring in the Low Country. Join us for a weekend in the beautiful Charleston South Carolina area. Plans are in progress but not everything has been finalized. **Let us know if you're interested in attending this weekend event so we can gauge interest. Please complete the Survey by January 21st.**

LOW COUNTRY WEEKEND SURVEY

Preliminary agenda for the weekend:

Thursday April 25 - Travel Day for On Your Own

Friday April 26 – Travel Day For Saturday Guided Tours.

Hotel to be determined.

Friday April 26th Explore Charleston on your own.

1. Magnolia Plantation (Plan 4-5 Hours)
2. Fort Moultrie – Sullivans Island (Admission Fee No Cash)
3. Visit the Hunley Submarine (Admission Fee)
4. Visit the Magnolia Cemetery to pay respects to the three crews of the Hunley.
5. Patriots Point (Parking Fee and Admission Fee)
 - a. Yorktown aircraft carrier “*The Fighting Lady*” from WW II
 - b. Destroyer USS Laffey – “*The Ship That Would Not Die*”
 - c. *Vietnam Basecamp*
6. Charleston Museum (Admission Fee)
7. Charleston Aquarium (Admission Fee)
8. Dinner on your own

Saturday April 27 – Charleston Adventures Guided Tours

1. Guided Tour to include:
 - a. The Angel Oak
 - b. Downtown Charleston
 - c. Straw Market (Shopping and Lunch Time)
 - d. Fort Sumpter
2. Group Dinner TBD

Sunday April 27 – Travel day back home or continue to explore Charleston.

1. Magnolia Plantation (Plan 4-5 Hours)
 2. Fort Moultrie – Sullivans Island) (Admission Fee No Cash)
 3. Visit the Hunley Submarine (Admission Fee)
 4. Visit the Magnolia Cemetery to pay respects to the three crews of the Hunley.
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-

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TECHNICAL DIGEST

R320 (W251) Front End Fun

On the way back from a recent MBCA event, I thought the 2008 R320 CDI 4matic felt a little funny. The car just didn't



feel as solid and secure on the interstate as usual. When we got home, I jacked up the front wheels, checked for play, and finding none, I did a visual inspection of the front shock absorbers. The right front shock showed some fluid leakage, so I ordered a set of shocks. I had earlier detected a CV boot leak on the left front driveshaft, so I had a new driveshaft on hand too and I figured I would address

both concurrently.

I put this job off for quite a while because of the amount of disassembly required to get the strut off the car. When I finally got around to starting, I immediately found the real problem. I was checking on the jack placement when I noticed the left front tire had failed. The inner edge of the tread had cracked, and you could see the steel belt in the cracks. I was lucky that the tire didn't blow up on the interstate. The failure was only apparent on the inner edge of the tire, so I had not noticed it previously when I inspected the tires and suspension. [Read more](#)

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EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

CAROLINAS CHARLESTON WEEKEND
A Sprint into the Past – A journey in time!

February 16-18, 2024



Michele Stine, MBCA Carolinas Ambassador, Event Planner

The Hilton Garden Inn in Summerville, SC has several rooms reserved for the **Sprint into the Past – A Journey in Time Weekend**. On Friday, Feb. 16th a Meet and Greet organized by the MBCA Charleston Ambassador, Michele Stine will start at 5 p.m. Dinner is on your own, but we encourage dining at the hotel's full-service restaurant based on the great menu! Please make your hotel reservations for one or two evenings before January 10, 2024. (Cost is \$169.00 plus taxes) and use the following link:

<https://group.hiltongardeninn.com/mqp1ql>

After a breakfast on the 17th, we will take a 3-minute walk to the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Van Dealership for a visit.

The Middleton Place Restaurant for lunch is available (at your cost) before your tour. General admission is included in the cost of this event for an outdoor self-tour. Other tours are available at your cost. Middleton Place is a quintessential American experience offering a historic home, enslaved stories, gardens and grounds. Find tranquility in these gorgeous, landscaped gardens.

A dinner on Saturday evening will be at Laura's Restaurant in Old Town Summerville. Chef Nico Romo, a Charleston area favorite for his French fare at Bistronomy and seafood offerings at Nico Oysters + Seafood, honors his Italian roots this time at this handsome Summerville restaurant, serving a minestrone-to-saltimbocca menu inspired by his grandmother's home cooking.

Questions? Contact Michele Stine, MBCA Carolinas Ambassador at 914.924.7948.

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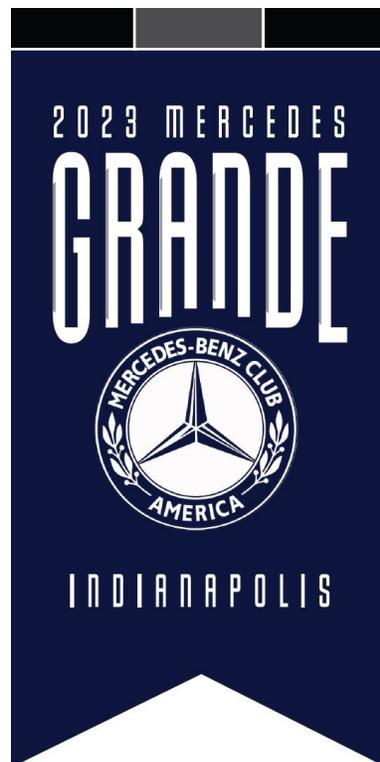
POST-EVENTS

MERCEDES GRANDE 2023

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Watch all of the fun that was had at the Mercedes Grande 2023 event.



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DRAWING DATE:
Thursday, December 7th
10:30AM (EST)

For tickets visit:

MBCA.ouraffle.org

Or email at Raffle@mbca.org

Tickets: **\$50/ea**

Last purchase date is December 1st



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For complete details visit MBCA.ouraffle.org

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Peachtree
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If you haven't already, Join our Facebook group [MBCAPeachtree](#) . Keep up to date with the latest events, chat with members, and make the most of your membership with our Facebook group. As well, follow us on Instagram @MBCAPeachtree. Our Youtube Channel [MBCA Peachtube](#) is full of excellent resources for club members. We feature videos such as technical sessions, concours judging schools, Rally schools, as well as features from events.

Facebook Group link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mbcapeachtree>

Instagram link <https://www.instagram.com/mbcapeachtree/following/>

MBCA PeachTube link: [MBCA Peach Tube](#)

Peachtree Section Officers

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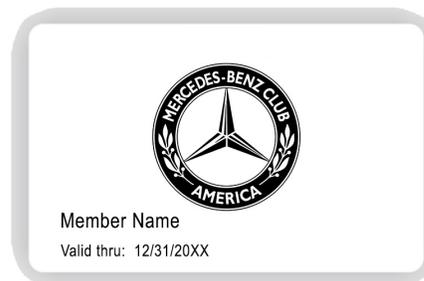
Jim Fekete

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- Log into MBCA (www.mbca.org) with your username/password
- Click on **My Membership** from the menu on the left
- Click **Print Member Card**
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TIP: Take a screen shot of your membership
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