



The Bluegrass Star

A Publication of the Bluegrass Stars Section
Mercedes-Benz Club of America

Winter 2019

DECEMBER 7TH S HOLIDAY DINNER D 5:30 PM E THE EIDERDOWN

President's Message

It is my pleasure to begin this President's Message with a thank you to the Bluegrass Stars leadership team for making 2019 a very good year. With their assistance and leadership, we had an increase in membership, we had a blend of interesting events, experienced varied dining and tours, and, even more important, we welcomed new members and renewed old friendships. Job well done, THANKS!

We had our annual board meeting on November 20 and after a short business discussion, we spent most of our time reviewing all the 2019 events and used what we learned through the year to create the events list for 2020.

Our goal for 2020 is to try some new things, repeat several of the events that were widely enjoyed and, as one leader said, repeat those that have become a tradition. Here is the tentative list for 2020:

Jan: Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky

Feb: Claudia Sanders in Shelbyville, Kentucky dinner

Mar: Steamboat Museum in Jeffersonville, Indiana tour and lunch

Apr: Key West Shrimp House in Madison, Indiana lunch

May: Auto museum or new car manufacturing plant tour

Jun: German-American Club, Louisville, Kentucky dinner

Jul: Keeneland Concours, Lexington, Kentucky

Aug: Science Fair Award Ceremony (will likely be earlier in the year)

Sep: Bats game, Louisville, Kentucky

Oct: Schnitzelbank Restaurant, Jasper, Indiana dinner

Nov: Open, event with Cincinnati section?

Dec: The Eiderdown in Louisville or Gasthaus Zum Deutschen Eck in Radcliff, Kentucky

On behalf of your Bluegrass Stars leadership team, HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy Motoring!

Gary Rumrill
Bluegrass Stars President

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome new members to the Bluegrass Stars Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. The success of our club depends on the participation of all members in our scheduled activities.

Editor's Message

We have heard from reliable sources that Rick Siefert presented Gary Rumrill the 2019 Section Member of the Year plaque at the final banquet of the Central Regional Event in French Lick, Indiana. This was in recognition of his successful efforts in revitalizing our club. Congratulations, Gary!

Obituary

We are sorry to report that after a brief illness, we have lost a tremendous resource here in Kentucky, club member and friend **Gary Ensor**, of SilverStar Motowerks fame. Many club members with older MB's will remember him as a master of diesels, but he could also tame both the nightmarishly complex 1960/70's air suspensions and the massive M100 engine. To quote a friend, David Pienkowski:

"Gary's shop held a bountiful supply of parts for vehicles that were long out of production. His mind contained an even larger trove of information (typically available right off the cuff) that was otherwise lost to the pages of obscurity."

Louisville Bats Night



Keeneland Concours D'Elegance



David Rosenberg, Steve Loboyko and Gary Rumrill

Key West Shrimp House



German American Club



We found a diamond right in our own backyard!

Our outing on November 9th was to the German American Club in Louisville. The group's attendance was good and we all had a great time, with excellent food.

The president of the German American Club, Mr. Bill Willinger, is on the right side with the black rimmed glasses. He seemed pleased that we were there and wanted us to return.

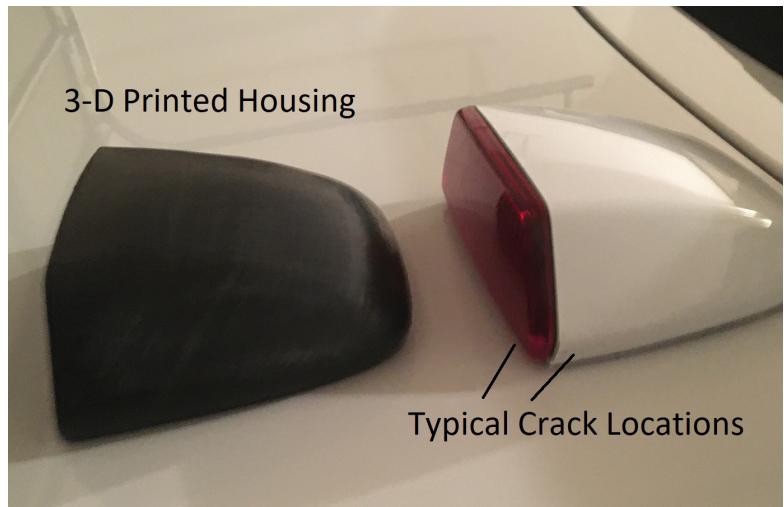
The W107 Corner

By Steve Loboyko

Here are a few interesting projects I'll be working on with my 560SL this year:

1. 3D-Printed 86-87 Third Brake Light Housing

If you are an 86-87 560SL owner, you may have had an unfortunate experience with your 86-87 third brake light (also known as "the lump"), in that the housing cracks and disintegrates. It is made of some type of plastic that in my experience doesn't lend itself well to repair, and the fundamental design puts a lot of stress on the corners and bottom with very little reinforcement.



The worst thing that can happen is that the unit cracks, the lens falls out on the road (it's a friction fit), and then you are left with an undrivable car that can't be easily repaired!

As of this writing, replacements from MB have not been available for several years, and obtaining a used assembly isn't really a solution either even if by some miracle you can obtain a "mint" unit because they ALL will crack. Going with an unoriginal to the car 88/89 unit (available, but not inexpensive) will involve some serious trunk metalwork and repainting to cut a new hole and plug the 86/87 hole at the light had been relocated between these years. So, this is a significant expense and you are left with a non-original car.

A company in Florida is selling a 3-D printed replacement for the housing, which I believe was done in ABS plastic. I paid around \$100 for an unpainted version. It can be painted by them for about \$100 more. You need to put your lights "guts" (i.e., the wiring, the lamp, the lens/gasket, and the support) into the replacement housing. This is a fairly simple process that can be done with a deepwell 1/4" socket set, an extension, and a minimal amount of mechanical skill in about an hour.

I bought the "unpainted" version. My initial take on this unit is that it shows the present limitations of 3-D printing with layering artifacts. It also may or may not be satisfactory to purists because it may be lacking some detail line near the bottom. I had intended to finish/paint it myself (I need to get some paint for other reasons), but between the thick primer/filler, sanding, and work that it would require (this is "NOT "ready to paint"), I really can't justify doing it myself (and I can't paint in the winter). So, I'm sending it back to them to finish it. Because the supplier is a body shop, I expect the results to be very good. I'll report later on how this goes.

2. "Euro" Bumpers



As most W107 owner know, our US cars are saddled with the "park bench" bumpers, installed by MB for 74-89 W107's in order to meet US bumper regulations. In my opinion, they detract from the originally intended lines of the car. (Shown are "US" vs Euro bumpers. The Euro bumper car also has Euro headlights - but that's another article.) Because I basically only drive my 560 to and from shows or the dog park these days, I'd like to return the car to its originally intended appearance. Buying parts from MB (in the US, for the 1973-only car, which is slightly different) for the conversion is VERY expensive.

(continued on page 5)

There is a supplier providing stainless steel “euro” bumpers and all of the rubber and hardware needed at less than 50% of the present MB costs. Experience that others have had with these bumpers has been fairly good, although the rubber components are not quite the finish or fitment of the original parts (the original MB rubber will fit, but, again, it’s very expensive). I like that they used stainless because although stainless will scratch much more easily than chrome, it can be buffed back to a mirror finish with very little effort, whereas virtually any significant scratch on chrome can’t be fixed without rechroming. So, I’m putting an order in for these by the end of the year and we will see how this goes next year.

Modern Connectivity for Older MB Radios

By Steve Loboyko

I've been asked, "how do I connect my older radio to my phone or MP3 player?"

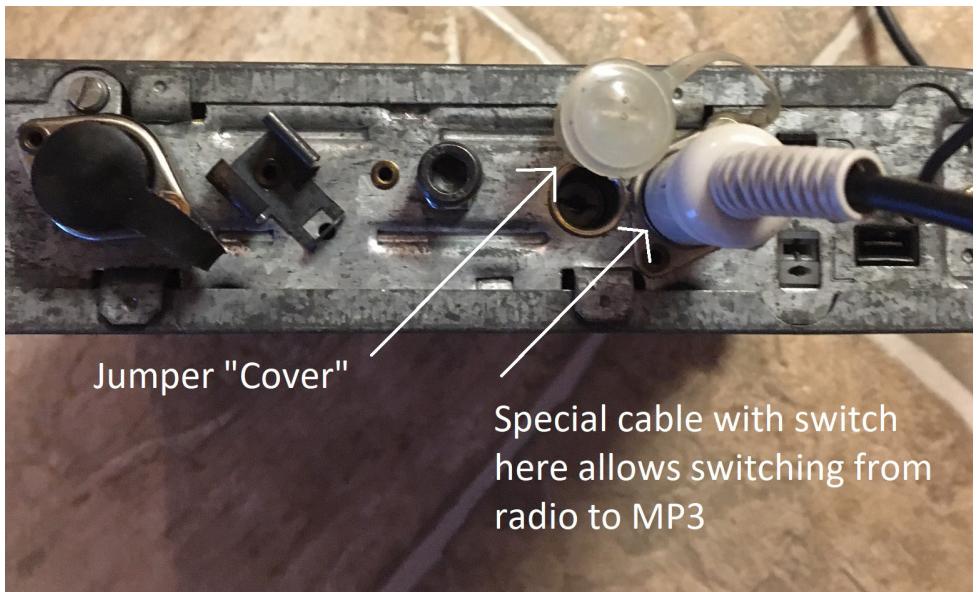
Well, there are several ways that this can be done, ranging to inexpensive to fairly expensive/laborious.

Quality of sound is a complex subject in autos. Firstly, the radios from the 60's and 70's had very weak (perhaps 3-4 watts) of power and rather high distortion at those power levels. The "noise" in the circuitry was simply awful by today's standards. So, playing your phone or MP3 player through these units will not magically improve their sound or output. But most people don't want to stick a modern stereo into their classic car. A no-wiring option would be a cigarette-lighter socket powered bluetooth receiver/FM transmitter, that receives the bluetooth from your phone and rebroadcasts the sound to an unused FM station for the radio. Because of the conversions involved, sound is not great, but it is a fairly small investment (15-30\$). These are available on eBay or Amazon (a small, inexpensive fairly-well-rated Clydek shown).

If you are willing to connect your phone/MP3 player directly to the radio (if the phone has a jack, of course), it is possible to obtain a cable from Becker autosound in the US that will connect older Becker radios (Europa, Europa II, etc) with a 3.5" plug/jack. This will deliver better sound than the above, but remember that the limitations of the original 1960's/70's amplifier in the radio will still be there.

IF you are willing to spend more time and money, it is possible to install a Bluetooth module into or behind an older radio, for a true original look with no wires or visible modern technology. Several services on the Internet can do this for you but of course you need to remove the radio and be without it for some time.

The photo to the right shows the “jumper cover” removed from a 1970's Becker radio and a cable inserted. This allows (with a switch) transferring audio into the amplifier section of the radio from the radio tuner to MP3. Unfortunately, the proper DIN connector can be very difficult to find.



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The Trading Post: Cars, Parts, and Accessories

If you have a Mercedes-Benz or significant M-B part that you would like to buy, sell, or trade, just submit your ad to the Editor, *The Bluegrass Star*. All ads must follow the submission rules and the suggested format as found in the back of *The Star* magazine. They will be listed at no charge to a section member; no commercial ads will be accepted without prior arrangement for payment. Your ad will appear in the next issue of *The Bluegrass Star*.

Engine stand with storage box

The legs fold up for easy storage and the entire stand fits in a custom-made storage box. Almost new condition.

Engine hoist with aluminum track

The hoist is rated for 1/2 ton and is ideal for garages with low ceilings.

The aluminum track is 7 feet long and the mounting holes are drilled on 16 inch centers for 3/8 inch lag bolts.

Price is \$200 OBO for everything. Photos on request.

Contact Gary Rumrill, (502) 592-7736 cell

Polished valve covers for 116/117 engines, old and new styles, with or without caps. \$80 or best offer.

Contact Steve Loboyko, 560mbsl@gmail.com

Discounted Parts

The following dealerships and shops have agreed to reduce by ten percent (10%) the total price of parts purchased by a Mercedes-Benz Club member with a current MBCA membership card. Restrictions apply; call for details.

MERCEDES BENZ OF LOUISVILLE

2520 Terra Crossing Blvd
Louisville, KY 40245
(502) 565-4410

AUTOBAHN MOTORS LLC

1403 Hugh Ave
Louisville, KY 40213
(502) 473-7858, See Don

JAMES MOTOR COMPANY

2440 Richmond Road
Lexington, KY 40502-1301
(859) 268-1150

Website

Don't forget to check our website for late-breaking news:

bluegrasstars.mbc.org

Facebook

Special thanks to Nancy Rece for keeping our Internet presence up to date!



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NOTE: If you would prefer to receive the newsletter/event reminders via email instead of snail mail, contact Membership Chairman David Rosenberg at mb.bs.membership@gmail.com to opt out of the mailings. Of course, check that your email address is up to date on the MBCA national website first! (www.mbc.org)