



The Bluegrass Star

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

Fall/Winter 2013

ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER AT ERIKA'S! Tuesday, December 10, 2013 @ 7:00 PM

President's Message

It is with bittersweet feelings that I must tell you that I will not be running for re election as your section president. When Nat had to resign due to health problems I never imagined that would be filling the position for the next 4 years! I love the club and have enjoyed being your president, but with retirement coming soon there will be a lot of transitions (which may involve moving) and I don't feel that I can adequately do the job.

I'd like to thank Larry, Steve and Nancy for their help (actually they did most of the work!) and I'd like to thank all of you for your support. It's been a great ride!

We still have two activities coming up in December, our annual holiday dinner at Erika's and an invitation from the MBCA Cincinnati Chapter to meet at Mercedes-Benz of Fort Mitchell, Kentucky (2100 Dixie highway) for their grand opening tour. There will be refreshments at Fort Mitchell and they have asked us to email pictures of our cars because they want to have them displayed out front for customers to see. The tour and show will be on December 7th at 10:00 am at Mercedes-Benz of Fort Mitchell and if you want to go they request an RSVP so they can let the dealer know how many to expect and what models of cars they will have on display. Contact the section President, Pamela Zelman at either templehill1840@hotmail.com or call 513-382-6195. I have a concert that day and will not be able to attend but it would be great if we could get a good turnout!

The holiday dinner will be at Erika's German Restaurant on Hurstbourne Lane at 7:00 pm on December 10th. It will be family style (If we have at least 30 members attend) and will cost \$25 per person. Checks need to be sent to Larry and your check is your RSVP. We will be electing a new president and will have a few door prizes for those in attendance.

Again I want to thank you all for four memorable years and I look forward to seeing you one last time as your president on the 10th.

Dana

Editor's Message

Due to increasing demands from my job, it has become very difficult, if not impossible, to give the newsletter and the club the attention that it deserves. I ask that someone please volunteer to take my place as Editor during the next meeting's elections. If you have any questions, please call me at (859) 2835-7397.

Thank you!

Steve

Upcoming Events

Dealership Grand Opening

As Dana mentioned, the grand opening of a new MB dealership in northern Kentucky is big news. I hope we can be out there on December 7th to show our support. Again, please contact the section President, Pamela Zelman at either templehill1840@hotmail.com or call 513-382-6195 for more information and to RSVP.

Holiday Dinner

Our Holiday Dinner is December 10th at 7:00 at Erika's. This has always been a good meal, and we especially hope to see you all there because we will be electing new officers including a new president. It would be great if members could arrive a bit early so that we can discuss the direction of your club and ideas for new events next year! The cost is \$25.00 per person; please send a check to Larry Gettleman; 1461 South Fourth Street, Louisville, KY 40208-2118. Please attend!



Keeneland Concours d'Elegance, July 20th

We had a great time at the Keeneland Concours. Wells Fargo Advisors generously provided the club paid-for passes and a great meal. Unlike previous years, the temperatures were not unbearable in the afternoon. Turnout was excellent; as I had mentioned to a co-worker whose husband is one of the organizers of the Concours, the rains seem to hold off until the evening for this annual event. Except for a brief, slight mist several years, ago, I have never been rained on at this show!



Photo Credits: Seth Burr, Steve Loboyko

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome new members to the Bluegrass Stars Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. We are happy to have you join our club. The success of our club depends on the participation of all members in our scheduled activities. Your comments on how we can improve or add more interesting events to our activities are very important to us.

“Free” Electronic Parts Catalog Access

If you perform any work on your Mercedes, you will find one of the most indispensable tools available free for US-based users, at <http://epc.startekinfo.com/epc/login.jsp>. You will need a major credit card to prove your location but it is not charged if all you need is access to the US parts catalog. This is essentially the same catalog that the dealer uses. It includes many exploded diagrams and also running parts change information, where different parts may be used depending on the VIN of your car.

A Big Project:Worth It? Well... We Shall See

Steve Loboyko

I have two SL's, an '85 380SL, that I drive everyday (even in winter), and a 560SL, that is in much nicer condition, and I intend to keep it that way - by not driving it much! This may seem a bit excessive, but every car that I've owned that I really enjoyed, I destroyed - through wear, tear, and rust. The 560SL was purchased as a "creampuff", and was priced as such; the 380SL had some serious problems that I addressed as sort of a "rolling restoration". It had 95K miles on it when I bought it, seven years ago. Since then, I have put about 90K miles on it since then, and maintained it; I've repaired the rust on it to the point that I honestly believe that if the car was dropped in the North Atlantic ocean, the only parts left after five years would be the parts that I had rustproofed and the plastic!

But recently, the drivetrain was showing signs of miles and age. As purchased, it had a flattened camshaft, which I replaced, along with a full timing chain/tuneup and so on. The recent Star article concerning how to get an older Mercedes into "trustable, baseline" condition just about covers all of the work that I had done. But the weak point of the 70's/80's V-8 engines - the valve guides and valves - were starting to wear.

I got lucky and purchased a used 380SL drivetrain locally from a rusted-out car. So, I embarked on rebuilding the engine and transmission. The only experience that I had at this level of repair was replacing the heads on a small block Chevrolet engine 30 years earlier, an engine so simple that with a \$15.00 socket and no torque wrench(!), I drove the car for 60K miles after that and sold it with a good conscience. Obviously, the 380 engine is not so simple.

I started with the transmission. I understood how they worked in principle, but I had never rebuilt one before. Armed with the MB shop manual and some aftermarket guides, I embarked upon disassembly. I didn't want to spend the (considerable) money on a stand, so I made one designed to connect to an inexpensive engine stand. With the money saved, I bought a proper tool set specific to the MB transmissions of the early 80's and 90's. A shop owner well-known to the club laughed at me, because he made his own tools! Without the experience and ingenuity, I took the safe route here.

The M116 block (the internal MB designation for this type of engine) is aluminum, and I had to install special coil inserts into the block for the head bolts. The original threads for the heads tend to pull out after holding torque for decades. The well-respected Haas Machine in Louisville rebuilt the heads, installing all new oversize valve guides and performing a multi-angle "valve job".



In the photos, you might notice that the engine looks suspiciously shiny. Original? No... I like the look of polished aluminum, so on-and-off for the last year or two I had been collecting parts and grinding/polishing them. This was dirty and laborious work!

The engine should perform a bit better than stock, because I installed a set of European cams and polished/shaped the heads internally in a manner similar to what the then-independently owned AMG did in the 80's. All the rubber, fuel injectors, and so on are new. The on-order fuel distributor will be professionally rebuilt. I took special care to thoroughly seal the engine. At almost 30 years and 200K miles, my present engine leaks more than it burns, to the point that I believe that it has effectively rustproofed the entire undercarriage of the car.

There is an enormous number of "while you are in there" things to do and to replace, and just the parts alone to do these things add up. But I shopped carefully, taking advantage of the Mercedes EPC and the MBCA discount.

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Will I get my money out of this? Of course not. This was not a worthwhile car to restore to this level, with so many reasonably-priced examples still available. Will I be able to use my newly-developed skills in my next career as a service technician? Probably not. But it was an adventure and a learning experience. All I have to do at this point is to bolt-on a few parts, join the engine and transmission, and remove/reinstall the assemblies. Will it work? Well...I hope that my present drivetrain (and the driver!) hold out until the spring.

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*.

For Sale

- Four wheels, 8x16in, with tires; fits the 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$125each.
- Four door pull closer handles: fits the 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$50 each.
- Grille, fits the 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$225.
- W220 Tail lamp assembly, fits the 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$125.
- Cup holder, center armrest (leather), fits the 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$150.
- Four-piece air vent for dash of 2000 S500 Mercedes; \$225.

Contact Nat Williams (see Section Officers)

- Four 14" Bundt alloy wheels, nearly new, \$25 each (price lowered).
- Half-shafts for rear suspension R107, W115, W123 & others, used, \$100 each (price lowered).

Contact Larry Gettleman for details.

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.

TAFEL MOTORS
4156 Shelbyville Road
Louisville, KY 40207
(502) 896-4411

**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:
www.mbca.org/bluegrass_stars