



## Vancouver Island Section

April, 2014

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### Coming Events - Mark your calendar now!

**May 11: New models and technology**, Three Point Motors annual demonstration of what’s new in the world of Mercedes-Benz. Depending on stock, the vehicles could include the CLA and the new S-class. BBQ lunch and a chance to drive the new models included. Organizers are Hazel and Dennis Ostrowerka.

**May 26: Executive Meeting** at Three Point Motors, 5 PM. These meetings are open to members who have something to share or are just curious about this inner society.

**Jun 6-8: Lake Crescent:** MBCA Seattle Section Section weekend event, organizers Brown and Sara Maloney. Join the group heading down from Vancouver Island (four cars so far). Lake Crescent is in Olympic National Park about 17 miles west of Port Angeles and easily reachable via the Coho ferry crossing. Full details are in Bob’s message of Feb. 6 or [here](#) on the internet. We’ll meet in the Coho ferry parking lot 90 minutes before the 10:30 am sailing time and walk across the street for breakfast in the Days Inn.

**Jun 14: Summer BBQ.** This will be a full-day, Saturday event because of the ferry schedule. Ron and Donna Drane will host this year’s BBQ on their private island off Saturna. We’ll also have an impressive photo

### Section Officers

President: [Bob Wilson](#)

Vice President: vacant

Secretary: [Hazel Ostrowerka](#)

Treasurer: [Rob Watson](#)

Membership: [Jeff Cohen](#)

Director at large: [Dennis Ostrowerka](#)

Newsletter: [Bob Wilson](#)

Hon. Vice President: Peter Trzewik

Past President: [Barry Patchett](#)



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## Welcome New Members!

*Jim Peters – 85 380SL*

*David Rabii*

## Renewing Members!

*Kevin Carle – 80 300SD, 88 300CE*

*Bjorn Collin*

*John & Cordelia McIntosh – 93 500SEL*

*Jon Mills*

*Terry Peace – 05 C55 AMG, 02 SLK32 AMG*

*Tim Schober*

**Thank you!**

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opportunity at Saturna's heritage Fog Alarm Building, where Ron has arranged with the park to get our cars on a field by the water with a scenic backdrop.

Look for details in the next newsletter.

**Jul 17: Driver training** event organized by GAIN-Vancouver Island and courteously extended to the Club. This afternoon event will be held at Western Speedway. Please note that the date is a Thursday. Attendance opportunities are limited and pre-registration is required.

**Jul 25-27: Regional Leavenworth weekend**, BC Stars Section event, organized by Joseph Anthony. Leavenworth is a delightfully Bavarian-themed town on the east slope of the Cascades and a favourite destination for car clubs. The return journey on the North

Cascades Highway offers one of our region's most enjoyable and scenic routes.

**Aug 24: Motorcar Gathering**, the annual show 'n shine in the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital, organized by GAIN-VI with a section of the grounds set aside for the MBCA.

**Sep 7: Camano Island Beach**, Seattle Section drive organized by Bob Willits; Bob is also a Vancouver Island member. Camano Island is most easily reached from the mainland by turning west to the south of Mount Vernon. The tour ends at the Willits' beachfront property, which has a large grass area for MB parking a stone's-throw from the water, and a private boat ramp.

**Sep 14: Tech event**, Mercedes-Benz Nanaimo; details later

**Sep 28: Rally/tour**: Details forthcoming later.

**Oct 18: Annual Meeting**, the Club's one and only business meeting of the year for the general membership.

**Nov 16: Morning coffee**, locations TBA.

## New Vancouver Island Section Website

After discussion in the executive last year, starting a Section website became an agenda item for the 2013 Annual Meeting. There it was agreed to investigate further, and a small committee was struck to undertake the work.

The committee, headed by Barry Patchett, is pleased to report that a Section website has been established through the support of the NBO's webmaster, Hauss Cartwright. You can see the results at [vancouverisland.mbca.org](http://vancouverisland.mbca.org).



The website provides another vehicle for the Executive to keep members informed, and opens a new door to tell non-members about us. The Executive is looking for a volunteer to keep this site up to date, with material provided. The task should take less than an hour a month, unless you want to get very creative, and comes with an optional Free! Free! membership on the Executive. If you'd be interested, please let me know.

## Chemainus Theatre



A small group of MB fans gathered at the Chemainus theatre last weekend for a live performance of *Jeeves in Bloom*, a comedy drawn from the work of the British author P.G. Wodehouse. Familiar to most of the audience through the TV series with Hugh Laurie, Bertie and Jeeves romped through a romantic misadventure with Madeline Bassett and Gussie Fignottle in the garden of Bertie's aunt. The witty dialogue and amazing footwork of the actors made this a memorable and very enjoyable performance.

Thanks to Barry Patchett for making the arrangements.

## Stargazing

### Backing Up

A report from US highway safety authorities identifies carelessness and poor rear visibility as the primary causes of reversing accidents, many of which take place in parking lots. A study released last month looked at the effect of a backup camera, proximity sensors (Parktronic in MB's lingo) and the two combined in reducing the rate of collisions while a vehicle was reversing. Somewhat counter-intuitively, a backup camera alone was more effective than the two combined, but either alternative was better than nothing. US authorities say 18,000 people are injured and 300 killed each year in back-over collisions.

In the face of opposition by some manufacturers, the American government has several times put off finalizing a rule that would require some kind of backup safety device (*October 2013 issue*, which you can view on the new website), but appears to be on track again to introduce such a requirement in early 2015. The cost to manufacturers for adding a backup camera has been estimated as \$58 to \$203 per vehicle. In the meantime, several makers, such as Honda, have made back-up cameras part of the standard equipment across their model range. A backup camera with wide-angle lens is part of MB's Intelligent Drive technology but it requires the COMAND telematics display and is not standard across the range.



## Hooking Up

MB has an array of solutions for connecting various input devices to the Audio 20 radio-CD that's been part of the standard specification for many years. Connection options for smartphones, MP3 players and other mobile devices can be retrofitted to vehicles made since 2002. To see what might be possible, go to <http://www.mercedes-benz.com/connect> and select your vehicle.

## Changing Lanes

I'm continually non-plussed by the number of people who mention that they have a blind spot behind them. I think every MB sold in Canada since the 1960's has come with three rear-view mirrors: one inside the car and another mounted to the front windshield pillar (called the A-pillar) on each side. Properly adjusted, these three mirrors should effectively eliminate any blind spot.

Setting the inside mirror is easy. MB has been particularly good about equipping their vehicles with rear view mirrors that just frame the view out the back window from their perch at the top of the windshield. Set so all four edges of the back window can be seen, the rear view mirror provides an excellent view of traffic in the lane behind, and of traffic in adjacent lanes some distance to the rear.

Properly set, the two mirrors on the A-pillars should reflect a vehicle in the lane next-adjacent, beginning just before the point where it disappears from the rear-view mirror, and including it to the point where the vehicle's front corner enters your peripheral vision. The side mirrors are not intended to be another way to look at traffic in the lane behind you.

The basic adjustment for the side mirrors is called the BGE system (Blind spot and Glare Elimination). Here's how to do it. Lean your head against the left window and adjust the left mirror so you can barely see the left side of your car. Then, lean to the right, to about the middle of your dash, and adjust the right mirror until you can just barely see the right side. The result might still leave a small blind spot behind your peripheral vision—it doesn't on my car—but it should not be large enough to hide a whole car or motorcycle.

Lots of people know something about the BGE system but have forgotten the part about leaning. As a result, they have significant blind spots on each rear quarter. You may even want to tweak the basic setting further outwards, depending on how far forward you position your seat and the exact mirrors on your car. It's easy to check the setting while you're waiting at a traffic light.

Current model MBs compensate for lateral blind spots using (optional) technology called Active Blind Spot Assist. This system indicates in the exterior mirror when cars or motorcycles are located in the blind spot and takes evasive action automatically in the event of danger, for example during an unsafe lane change. Even so, setting the outside mirrors correctly helps a driver stay aware of who is in your neighbourhood, and that's a very important part of active safety technology.

## Sebes, Romania

A transmission plant in Sebes, Romania, is part of Daimler's manufacturing juggernaut. The plant currently makes the 7G-DCT dual-clutch transmission found in some of the current model range. That's the electronically shifted automatic that has many of the features of a manual gearbox. This month, a phalanx of VIPs gathered in Sebes to break ground for a new assembly facility at Sebes for the 9G-Tronic, the automatic which enters the market this year attached to the E 350 (*August, 2013 issue*, available on our new website). That's Victor Ponta, the Prime Minister of Romania, taking centre-stage in the photo below.



Daimler will keep building the 9G-Tronic at Unterturkheim, Germany even after the new facility in Sebes comes on-stream in 2016. The added capacity in Romania will, presumably, signal the end of the current 7-speed box.



*Daimler photo*

### **Distraction Defined**

Distracted driving is now illegal in every province in Canada, but what is it that constitutes distraction? Interestingly, the regulations in BC and other provinces don't mention distraction but do focus on the use of hand-held electronic devices. Here, courtesy of the Globe & Mail, is a list of things you can and can't do.

#### Prohibited:

- Use hand-held wireless communication devices like cell phones, iPhones or Blackberrys;
- Text or e-mail manually;
- Use hand-held electronic entertainment devices, like iPods or other portable MP3 players and GameBoys;
- View display screens unrelated to driving on devices like laptops, tablets and DVD players;
- Program a GPS device, other than by voice commands.

#### Allowed:

- Use hands-free wireless communications devices with an earpiece, lapel button or Bluetooth device;
- View the display screens of GPS units that are integrated into the vehicle or mounted on a dashboard and not obscuring the driver's view; programming them while underway is illegal unless done by voice command;
- Use portable MP3 players hands-free, as long as they're secured in or mounted to the vehicle and the sound comes from the vehicles speakers;
- Call 911

Alberta is the only province to ban distractions that don't involve electronic devices. In Alberta you can't read, write, make sketches(!) or engage in grooming activities such as applying makeup or shaving. No mention is made in any province's regulations about distracting pedestrians of the opposite sex.





BC's regulations are explained on the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles website ([click](#)). The fine for contravention is \$167, with (currently) no points assessed on the driver's license for all but novices. My reading is that it is technically unacceptable to have a GPS unit affixed to your center windshield but, given the number of those I see, you'd be really unlucky to get a ticket for it.

To follow up on the ticket issued to that unlucky California motorist last year for using Google Glass (*November 2013 issue*), the charge was dismissed in court. The wearer/driver claimed the device wasn't turned on, and no evidence to the contrary was presented. Here in Victoria, where I have yet to recognize one in public use, wearable computers appear to fit in a regulatory grey zone similar to California's.

## The Back End

Purists are less than thrilled with AMG's conversion of 11 300SL classics into 'restomod' cars.

<http://www.autoweek.com/article/20140318/CARNEWS01/140319798>

Edmunds dyno-tests their long-term 2005 CL 65: 12 cylinders, 24 spark plugs, 528 hp and 674 lb-ft at the rear wheels (link shortened): <http://edmu.in/1gn5VIX>

Driving-dot-ca likes the E350 coupe:

<http://driving.ca/mercedes-benz/e-class/reviews/road-test/2014-e-350-sleek-new-coupe-good-has-style/>

Auto123 takes the new C-class for a spin in France. They like it:

<http://www.auto123.com/en/mercedes/c-class/2015/review?carid=1154000801&artid=166145>



Gas-sniffing spiders—the weirdest auto recall ever (but no MB content):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-26921734>

*This month's hat-tip is to the 1924 Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio supercharged racing car, a winner 90 year ago. Christian Werner used this car to win the Targa and Coppa Florio road races, 27 April 1924. Five laps for the*



*1924 Coppa Florio, 108 km per lap; 37 starters, 16 finishers. First organized in 1906, the Targa Florio morphed from a race to a rally, with the last traditional event being held in 1977. Today it has been reinvented as a rally for vintage and modern cars, each May in Sicily. Daimler photo.*

