

The SILVER STAR



Mercedes-Benz Club of America • Sierra Nevada Section • January 2024



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ITALIAN DINNER

JANUARY 10, 2024

(SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS)



Photos courtesy of Carol Ross.

Christmas Party

Beautiful Holiday Dinner at The Club at ArrowCreek

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

In December, a record breaking 50 members of the Sierra Nevada Section of the Mercedes®-Benz Club of America gathered at The Club at ArrowCreek for the Annual Holiday Party. This event was held in the cozy, back room of the private dining room at the exclusive country club. Overlooking the golf course, the room was dazzlingly beautiful, with white and silver accents. The fireplace was roaring, adding to the cozy, holiday am-

biance. With many compliments about the venue and the food, the evening was a resounding success.

Along one wall was a fully stocked bar and a tableside cheese display. Guests were able to snack on brie, bleu, goat, smoked gouda, asiago, aged cheddar, fruit spreads, honey-grain mustard, crostini, and sliced breads. Waiters circulated around the room prior to the seated dinner with trays of appetizers. These options included strawberry, ri-

(Continued on Page 4)

PRESIDENT'S EXHAUST



Happy New Year!

An Exciting Year is Ahead for the Mercedes Club

Happy New Year to all of my friends in the Sierra Nevada Section of the Mercedes®-Benz Club of America. The past year was spectacular for my family, and I hope that you can all say the same. The holiday season was bursting with festivities and friends, including our very own Annual Christmas Party. Did you make a New Year's resolution? Mine is to spend even more time with my friends at all of our club dinners and drives in 2024.

This year, we switched locations and held our Annual Christmas Party at The Club at ArrowCreek in Reno. Wow, this was a beautiful venue, and everyone had a wonderful time. Mercedes-Benz of Reno donated the wine for the event, and we are always so grateful for the dealership's generosity and support. The Annual Christmas Party is always a fantastic event to celebrate each other

and look back on the amazing year we had as a club. Every year, our club's events get bigger and better, and I'm so grateful to have been along for the ride.

Is there a particular restaurant, drive, or event you'd like to see on our 2024 calendar? If so, reach out to a board member and let us know. We can help you host it, or we can try to get it on the calendar.

In a couple days, Vencil and I are hosting the Mercedes Dinner at Pietro's Famiglia in Sparks. Please contact me at blackswan342@gmail.com or (307) 763-1701 if you'd like to attend. As always, stay up to date on club events and news by following us on Facebook @SierraNevadaMBCA. I truly hope that all of you had a wonderful Christmas and have a Happy New Year.

Gail V. Wells

Gail Wells
President



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Sherry Avilla • 2014
Don Williams • 2015 & 2016
Gary Dyer • 2017
Bill Shepherd • 2018 & 2019

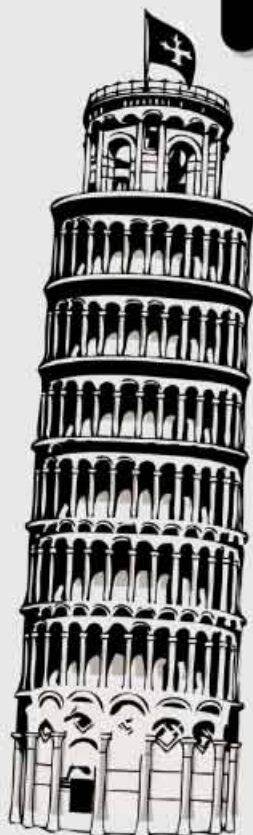
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Rome



ITALIAN DINNER

Presented by the Sierra Nevada Mercedes-Benz Club



**Wednesday Dinner
January 10 at 5:30
Pietro's Famiglia
Restaurant**

**834 Victorian Ave.
Suite 200
in Downtown Sparks
order off the menu
separate checks**



Hosted by Gail & Vence Wells • head-count needed for restaurant

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Christmas Party

(Continued from Page 1)

cotta, and basil on crostini, as well as grilled lamb chops with a minted demiglace. Club members mingled and enjoyed the beginning of the evening.

Complimentary glasses of champagne were passed around before dinner and Gail Wells, President, gave a speech and thanked everyone for coming. After the speech, everyone raised their glasses to toast the well being of the club for the coming year. Dinner options were divine, including a

salad that was made up of roasted tomatoes, shaved baby carrots, sliced cucumber, and balsamic vinaigrette. Guests were able to choose between two entrees, which were grilled filet mignon topped with red onion marmalade and cinnamon-infused sweet potato mash, or pan-seared salmon with soy orange reduction and steamed rice. A plated



RAY RICH DRAWING A NAME FOR THE GIFT GIVEAWAY.

tiramisu dessert was the perfect end to the elegant dinner.

Ray Rich drew names and gave out gift cards to steakhouse in Northern Nevada. Thank you to Christy and Marcus Dodson for purchasing the gifts for the party, and also providing fabulous party favors which were waiting for everyone at their seats at the dining tables.

Mercedes-Benz of Reno provided the wine again at this year's party, and the guests appreciated the generous donation. Christy Dodson distributed elegant name placards, made by Judy Covert, that indicated to the wait staff which dinner you had selected. Special guest Steve Ross, the National Vice President of the Mercedes-Benz Club of

(Continued on Page 5)





GAIL WELLS RECEIVING AN AWARD FROM STEVE ROSS.

Christmas Party

(Continued from Page 4)

America, was in attendance, and he presented the Regional Officer of the Year Award for the entire Western Region to Gail Wells for her dedication to the club and her ability to keep members involved.

If you're interested in hosting a drive or event in 2024, please reach out to Gail Wells at blackswan342@gmail.com or (307) 763-1701 for help and to pick a date. Stay up to

date on future club events by searching for @SierraNevadaMBCA on Facebook.



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Mercedes-Benz SL 63 S E

Newest Performance SL Release has Technology from F1 Cars

by Camille Dodson, reporter for the automotive industry

Mercedes-Benz® AMG presents the new SL 63 S E PERFORMANCE. The roadster's hand-crafted AMG 4.0L V8 Biturbo engine and AMG Electric Drive Unit produce an 805 hp combined output

and up to 1,047 lb-ft combined torque. This makes the new E PERFORMANCE model the most powerful SL to date.

The immediate response of the electric drive on the rear axle, rapid torque build-up, and linear power delivery enable impressive statistics. Performance

claims include a sprint to 60 mph from rest in 2.8 seconds and a governed top speed of 196 mph. The numbers are impressive given the likely weight of the car. The V8 only SL 63 already weighs 4,343 pounds. Add the electric motor, battery, and other hybrid hardware and the weight will probably be close to 4,800 pounds or more. A hybrid by name, but not exactly a hybrid by nature, the electric motor is only capable of around eight miles of emissions-free motoring, as it has been designed as a performance-enhancing feature, rather than something to save the planet.

"The SL has always been an icon in the Mercedes-Benz portfolio. The latest version of the legendary roadster transfers this status into the future. First and foremost is the new SL 63 S E PERFORMANCE, which, with its innovative

(Continued on Page 9)





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THE NEW SL 63 S E HAS ACTIVE RIDE CONTROL TO REDUCE BODY ROLL, AS WELL AS SEVEN PRE-DEFINED DRIVING MODES.



SL 63 S E

(Continued from Page 7)

technology, is the most powerful member of the SL family. With this unique concept, we offer our customers not only superior performance but also the option of all-electric driving. Extensive equipment options and the high-quality

materials used also make the SL one of the most exclusive roadsters on the market, a real dream car," said Michael Schiebe, CEO of Mercedes-AMG GmbH and Head of Mercedes-Benz G-Class and Mercedes Maybach divisions.

In the SL 63 S E PERFORMANCE, the engine is combined with an electric drive unit on the rear axle. This compact design has numerous advantages. Our contact at Mercedes-Benz claims

(Continued on Page 10)

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SL 63 S E

(Continued from Page 9)

that the technology used in the new SL is heavily influenced from the designs of the Mercedes-Benz Formula 1 team's race cars. Peak power is delivered to all four wheels, while rear-axle steering assists handling at speeds of over 60mph, as well as making low-speed maneuvers a breeze. Additionally, the car has Active Ride Control to reduce body roll, as well as seven pre-defined driving modes to cater to all moods and tastes.

The electric motor acts directly on the rear axle and can therefore convert its power more directly into propulsion, for that extra boost when starting off from a standstill, accelerating, or overtaking. If wheel slip occurs at the rear axle, the drive power of the electric motor is also transferred to the front wheels as needed for more traction. The mechanical connection of the AMG Performance 4MATIC+ fully variable all-wheel drive makes this possible via



the driveshaft and drive axles of the front wheels. The positioning at the rear axle improves the weight and axle load distribution and forms the basis for dynamic handling.

As the range-topping model, the SL 63 S E PERFORMANCE comes with many of the SL's available features as standard. Standard items include electrically adjustable heated and cooled sport seats with leather trim and a mas-

sage function, an AMG Performance steering wheel, a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster, and an 11.9-inch infotainment screen with a tilt function to improve visibility when there's glare. Arriving to dealerships in the United States sometime in 2024, pricing information on the new car has not been released yet, but hopefully news will come out soon on what's needed to take one of these speedy new cars home. 🏁

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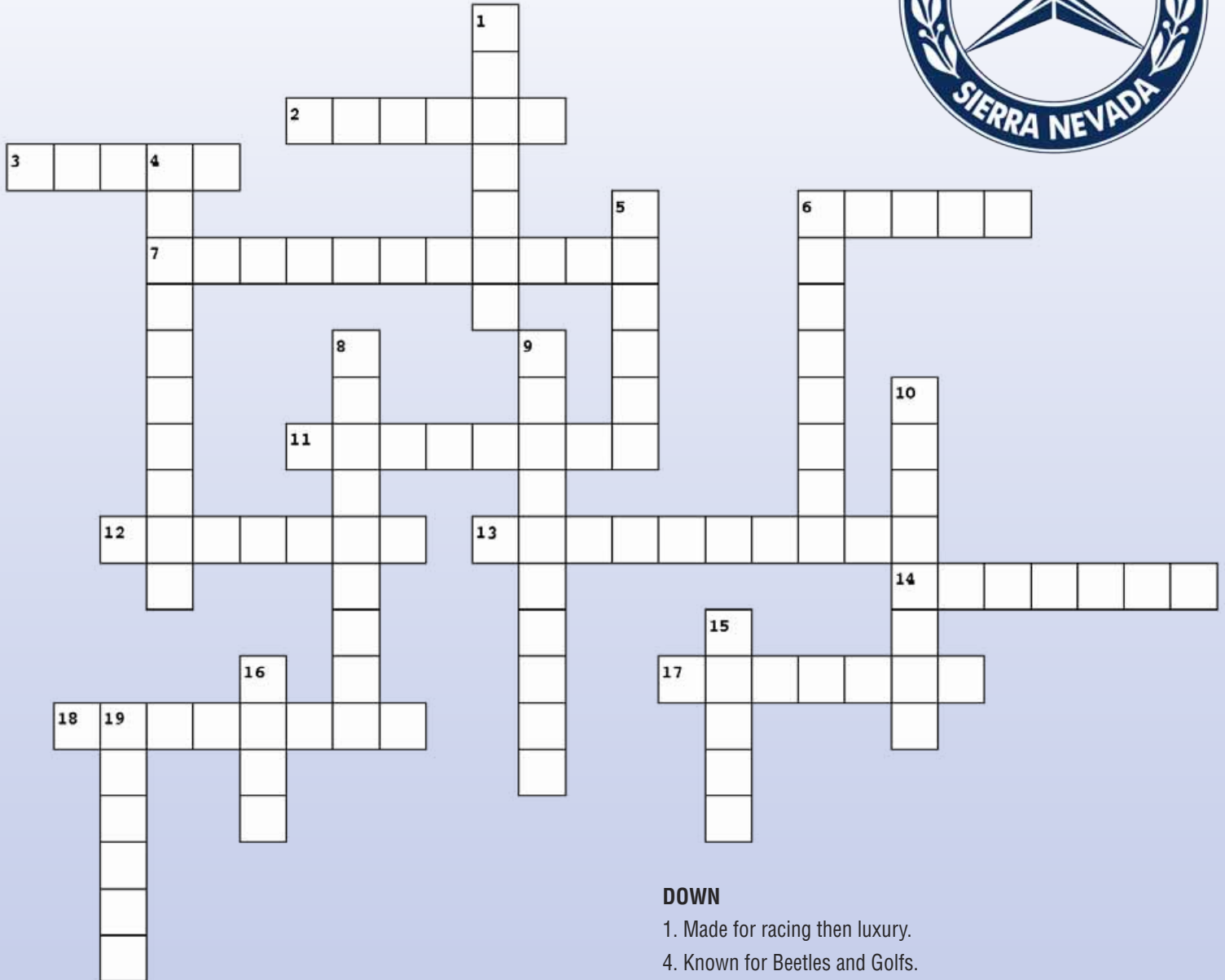
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Sierra Nevada Section Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. One of multiple brands known for rally.
3. A popular Swedish company.
6. Made the Miata.
7. Famous for Gallardos.
11. Known for Back to the Future.
12. Known expensive exotic Italian car company.
13. An almost forgotten company known for JDM cars.
14. Known for making the Continental.
17. Made the legendary Firebird.
18. Named after the rock the boats landed at in the US.

DOWN

1. Made for racing then luxury.
4. Known for Beetles and Golfs.
5. Known for making drifters.
6. Known for their Benzs and an amazing car club.
8. Known for Corvettes and Camaros.
9. Makes cars that look like VW bugs but is a supercar company.
10. Used to be known as luxury but now it's considered muscle.
15. Makes Civics.
16. Used a lot in Jurassic Park movies.
19. Known for originally making rally, then supercars.

*Puzzle answers can be
found on the following page.*

STEERING FOR THE TRANSPORT VEHICLE
WAS CONTROLLED BY AN EXTENDED
MULTI-SEGMENT RACK THAT TRAVELLED
BACK UNDERNEATH THE COCKPIT.



Blue Wonder

High-Speed Mercedes-Benz Racing Car Transporter

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

Visitors to the Mercedes®-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, Germany, can view more than 160 vehicles of all types throughout the 12-room, 16,500-ft. exhibition space. In Collection Room Two: Gallery of Carriers, a high-speed Mercedes-Benz racing car transporter named Blue Wonder is majestically displayed in all its splendor. The car on display is an authentic reconstruction, or arguably a work of art. Originally, Blue Wonder was built in 1954 in the Mercedes-Benz test workshop for the 1955 racing season. The company had created other transporters, notably between 1920 and 1934, but nothing came close to matching the amazing design of Blue Wonder.

Alfred Neubauer, the racing team manager, initially requested the high-speed car transporter, and it was designed by chief engineer, Rudi Uhlenhaut. Unlike conventional commercial vehicles, there is no separation between the driver's cab and the load platform on Blue Wonder. Instead, the body of the transporter has been cast from a single mold. The front suspension was independent, via coil springs and wishbones, and the back end featured a swing axle. Drum brakes were fitted all around and the steering was controlled by an extended multi-segment rack that travelled back underneath the cockpit.

The engine was also mounted behind the cab, and it was a three-liter straight six with a cast-iron block and aluminum-alloy head. The transmission was a four-speed manual gearbox. The cab is positioned ahead of the front axle, and Blue Wonder exerts a decidedly sporty silhouette. The maximum speed of Blue Wonder would top out at a respectable 105 mph, which was lovingly recorded on the car's paint at the end of the 1955 racing season.

At the museum in Stuttgart, Blue Wonder is on display with a 300 SLR on top of the load platform, clearly displaying the transporter's original mission. During its short lifetime,

(Continued on Page 14)

Crossword Puzzle Answers

Across

2. Subaru
3. Volvo
6. Mazda
7. Lamborghini
11. DeLorean
12. Ferrari
13. Mitsubishi

14. Lincoln
17. Pontiac
18. Plymouth

Down

1. Porsche
4. Volkswagen
5. Nissan
6. Mercedes
8. Chevrolet
9. Koenigsegg
10. Cadillac
15. Honda
16. Ford
19. Lancia



Blue Wonder

(Continued from Page 13)

Blue Wonder's sole purpose was to transport the 300 SLR, the racing sports car that won Mercedes-Benz the World Sportscar Championship in 1955. Blue Wonder helped get these championship-winning cars all over Europe, as well as from the plant in Stuttgart to the race tracks.

While some cars gain fame over the decades, as their vintage appearance is beloved by antique car enthusiasts, Blue Wonder had fans from the beginning. Back in 1955, at its debut, people were delighted by the appearance of the transporter. Blue Wonder stood out from the crowd with its unique look, elegance, and speed. Its Mercedes-Benz Royal Blue paintwork was typical of other service vehicles in the company's fleet.

To craft Blue Wonder, Mercedes engineers used other production vehicles of the time to piece together the high-speed racing car transporter. Engineers and designers pulled numerous components from mid-1950s passenger cars, including the suspension from the 300 S, body parts from the Ponton saloon, the six-cylinder M 198 engine from the 300 SL Gullwing super sports cars, and the radiator grill with the

central star from production sports and racing cars. On Blue Wonder, these various components were blended together to create an impressive, sleek transporter.

Since drivers were taking Blue Wonder on long-distance trips to various race tracks around Europe, the interior of the

(Continued on Page 15)

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Blue Wonder

(Continued from Page 14)

transporter was designed for comfort. The backrest surfaces, seat, and door panels are adorned in the same tartan fabric that was used in the racing and sports cars of the time. The dashboard is trimmed in leather, the center tunnel is trimmed in fabric, and the floor had dark blue carpet. A rev counter and speedometer are positioned in the driver's eyeline behind the large steering wheel.

Blue Wonder stretches out to 6.75 meters long, with a wheelbase of 2.9 meters, and a weight of an estimated 2.5 to 3 tons. Normally, a car transporter could face issues going under low bridges, but Blue Wonder's small stature allowed it to travel under low clearances and along narrow roads with ease. Mercedes engineers used Blue Wonder to try out an early attempt at cruise control. On the transporter, a stick on the driver's right-hand side



could be deployed to keep the throttle held flat to the floor.

Despite the long-distance comfort the driver was given on the interior, when it came time to load and unload race cars, they had to work. There were no mechanical lift aids, but instead it came with four lightweight rails that are stowed on the vehicle behind the guides for the racing car's wheels. These rails could also be used as an improvised workshop ramp, such as at the 1955 Targa Florio in Sicily. After the 1955 season was over, Mercedes-Benz

withdrew from motor racing. Blue Wonder saw some more use for the company's road test department, before being scrapped for good in 1967. Experts were able to use historical documents from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives to recreate Blue Wonder, and the 6,000-hour project was completed in 2001 after years of work. No blueprints or technical drawings exist of Blue Wonder, so it is amazing that archivists and engineers were able to recreate the transporter from historical photos alone.



A close-up photograph of a mechanic's hands wearing green gloves, using a screwdriver to work on a car engine. The engine components are metallic and complex.

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A photograph showing a black oil can pouring yellow motor oil into a car's engine oil filler. The oil is captured mid-pour, creating a dynamic visual.

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ITEMS of INTEREST

Photo of the Month



This odd Russian electric vehicle prototype is called the Amber. According to *The Autopian*, the tragic-looking blob-like machine's design is a product of the "prestigious" Moscow Polytechnic University, which is attempting to build the first Russian electric car. Why is it so freakishly tall with a floor that starts above the wheels and a massive step between the door and the ground? Its two circular headlights give off the vibe that it's surprised to even exist. I feel like if you listen closely, you'll hear it whisper, "kill me now."

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EVENTS

January 10, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA Second Wednesday Dinner, hosted by Gail & Vencil Wells, Pietro's Famiglia, Sparks, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Gail Wells at blackswan342@gmail.com or (307) 763-1701.

February 6, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Gail & Vencil Wells, Chi, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Gail Wells at blackswan342@gmail.com or (307) 763-1701.

February 11, 2024: Superbowl Party, hosted by Marc and Sue Dodson, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Marc Dodson at marc.v.dodson@gmail.com or (775) 771-1080.

March 3, 2024: San Francisco Bay Area MBCA, First Sunday Drive from Concord to the Grand Island Hotel, hosted by Doug Storkovich. To RSVP, contact Doug Storkovich at dstorkovich@hotmail.com.

March 5, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Christy & Marcus Dodson, MiCasa Too, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Marcus Dodson at marcus.c.dodson@gmail.com or (775) 997-9901.

March 24, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA Drive and Tasting, hosted by Linda & Rick Iknoian, Minden Mill Distillery, Minden, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Linda Iknoian at linda_iknoian@comcast.net or (559) 978-6628.

April 2, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Lordita and Erik Nowacki, Napa Sonoma Market, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Erik Nowacki at enowacki@yahoo.com or (619) 300-4359.

April 6, 2024: Cars and Carbs hosted by Erik Nowacki. For more information, contact Erik Nowacki at enowacki@yahoo.com or (619) 300-4359.

May 4, 2024: Cars and Carbs hosted by Erik Nowacki. For more information, contact Erik Nowacki at enowacki@yahoo.com or (619) 300-4359.

May 7, 2024: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Roger Collins and Sharon Heck, Zozo's, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Sharon Heck at hikintahoe@aol.com or (775) 997-4067.

Date Not Yet Announced: Museum and Lunch Event hosted by Patti Lamski, Sparks Train Museum and Great Basin Restaurant, Sparks, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Patti Lamski at topat83@aol.com

IN CLOSING

Tombstone Territory

For Those That Want to be Remembered for Their Last Words

by Marcus Dodson, Sierra Nevada Section Club Newsletter Editor

(Editor's Note: The following story may have absolutely nothing to do with Mercedes or automobiles, but we feel it's interesting nonetheless. If you have a humorous or interesting story you would like to submit for this column, call us at (775) 997-9901.)

Some people always have to have the last word. Some have a sense of humor. And some just want to be remembered. Maybe these folks that shuffled off this planet were a combination of all three. Either way, they went out in style.

