

StarTracks 2013



Volume 9, Issue 5

September-October 2013

Twenty Sixth Annual Regional Picnic

The day started out rather ominously. On the drive to Falkenhorst, John Bleimaier's farm in beautiful Hope-well a large black cloud hung overhead. But those that attended were not to be denied a beautiful day to celebrate the club's 26th annual picnic. The cloud passed over, the sun made its appearance with nary a cloud in sight.

On arrival we were greeted cheerfully by NNJS club president Valerie Cristiano, who was handing out the people's choice concours packets. We looked at each other and just shook our heads. The week had been so hectic we had not had time to wash the car. Some of you may know we also belong to the Porsche club and are regulars on the concours scene. The thought of having a dirty car in a concours is abhorrent to us. Oh well we came to spend time with friends and have a good time.

Pulling into the field we were greeted by Pankaj Dayal, Doug Ochwat, Ken Spingarn and Joe Grattan who were helping the entrants stage their cars. It was wonderful assembly of cars. Everything from Bob Platz's perfect black 1960 190 SL to the new 2014 Mocha Black S 550 Paul La Penta from Mercedes Benz-USA brought for us to feast our eyes on. The S 550 was by far the biggest attention getter on the field.

Once parked it was time to catch up with old friends and make some new ones. We made our way to the front of John's house where we found not only the setup crew, but some of the other early arrivals. Plenty of food, too. After greeting everyone we headed straight for the breakfast goodies. Everything from bagels to salsa and chips. Now the dilemma! What to start with and how to resist eating too much so as not to spoil our appetite for lunch. Meanwhile Loni Spingarn was working the crowd selling tickets for the 50/50. We purchased a strip and Akemi held them. Good luck as she has been on a roll lately, but more on that later.

In John's living room Nora Ochwat was attending to the silent auction. On the way up we were discussing purchasing some Mercedes attire. As soon as we entered the room one of the first items to catch our eye was a brown tee shirt with a Mercedes logo. We immediately

put in a bid and were fortunate to be the winners.

All this time Nick Ford, Rick Luongo, Frank & Lucille Chabala, Ralph Esposito & Don De Rosa were hard at work grilling chicken, hamburgers and hot dogs. When we were called to lunch a fantastic selection of salads, casseroles and various fix-ins were waiting for us.

Members had prepared some very tasty dishes. It was a wonderful treat for foodies like us. Now it was time for a few serious matters to be dealt with. First up was John Bleimaier who welcomed everyone and spoke on some club issues as well as giving his opinion on one or two non-club related subjects. We always enjoy listen to John speak, especially when the subject revolves around motorcars. His knowledge on Mercedes as well as other marques is most incredible. Next up Joe Grattan conducted the business meeting. We had bi-yearly election of officers and then he spoke on some regional issues. It should be noted here that some positions are not yet

filled for the next two year term, so if you are interested in serving on the board contact Joe Grattan or Valerie Cristiano.

Business matters over, we moved on to the 50/50 drawing and People's Choice Concours Awards shown on the next page.



And the 50/50 winner was Akemi Kane. Told you she was on a roll. Now club president Valerie Cristiano announced the concours awards winners and was in the group herself. A lot of smiling faces here! Congratulations to the winners!

With picnic matters completed John Bleimaier invited all to adjoin to his dining room to view pictures he had taken at some very prestigious Concours shows this year including Pebble Beach. Talk about cars to drool over. Looking at the pictures made us wish we were in the financial position to purchase some of these cars when they come to auction. Always nice to dream! As we noted earlier viewing the pictures with John is was so rewarding as his recollection and knowledge of each vehicle is truly amazing.

We would like to thank John and Marina for being such gracious hosts, the crew for all their hard work setting up the event, preparing the food, as well as cleaning up after the event.

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NNJS/SJS Picnic at Falkenhorst 2013

There were 42 cars on the field this year including one very special mocha black 2014 S550 First Edition sporting a 4.6 litre with over 400 horsepower. There are no gauges in this beauty as all information is displayed on a flat screen.

The winners are as follows:

New Sedan (2009 – 2013)

1 st	Joe Grattan	2011	E550
2 nd	Peter Jansen	2013	E 350
3 rd	Jerome Johnson	2009	E350

New Sport (2009 – 2013)

1 st	Don & Jan Boop	2011	E350 cab
2 nd	Fred Marcus	2012	E350 cab

Modern Sedan (1999 – 2008)

1 st	Al Frei	2007	S550
2 nd	Debbie Egolf	2001	E320
3 rd	Joe Mignon	2006	S350

Modern Sport (1999 – 2008)

1 st	Tom Elder	2003	SLK
2 nd	Dave/ Debbie Campagna	1999	SLK 230

Old Sedan (1989 – 1998)

1 st	Valerie Cristiano	1991	420 SEL
2 nd	Doug Ochwat	1993	300 E 4matic
3 rd	Mike Parlato	1989	300 SE

Old Sport (1989 – 1998)

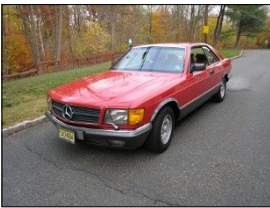
1 st	Robert Keubler	1991	500 SL
2 nd	David Veith	1990	560 SEC

Vintage (pre 1989)

1 st	Chuck Benz	1971	280 SL
2 nd	Bob Platz	1960	190 SL
3 rd	Stephen Knill	1971	280 SL

Many thanks to Murray & Akemi Kane who both wrote the preceding article and to Akemi who took these photos of the 26th Annual NNJS & SJS Picnic. Other members who contributed photos and help were Sean Connor and Joe Cristiano. Thank you to SJS especially for helping make this a "Star Event".





FOR SALE: 1985 500 SEC Rare imperial red, saddle leather interior, A/C, AM-FM-Cassette, Sunroof, 105,000 original miles, Excellent condition, One owner, 25 years from new until May 2010. Original paint, no rust. Drives great. Asking \$10,875 Andrew Permison thepermitage@comcast.net 973-379-7283



FOR SALE: 1998 Mercedes Benz ML320 AWD Black with gray leather interior. Well maintained and mechanically reliable. 248k miles. Mature, original owner & non-smoker. Mobil 1 oil changed every 5k miles. 3.2L V-6. Complete, professional transmission rebuild @ 216k miles in October 2009. High and low range transfer case. Vehicle is loaded including sunroof, tilt wheel, cruise, PW, PDL, OEM Bose AM/FM cassette & 6-disk CD, heated seats, power seat, PS, roof rack, etc. Towing package. Michelin tires. All records since new. \$3,500. Call 908-377-5982 or e-mail kwmccauley@earthlink.net

FOR SALE: Two New Bridgestone Potenza 265/40 R18 97Y MO Spare Tires. Tread wear 140, Traction A, Temperature A. Other numbers: T0150, E050PZ, E4. Originally for 2004 CL 55 AMG. \$200.00 per pair Mike Esposito 908 213 1396 (h) 908 507 7754 (c) mesposito@verizon.net

FOR SALE: 1986 300 SDL Mercedes Benz, 6-Cylinder Turbo diesel. 415k miles. Gold exterior/brown interior. Motor in good mechanical condition, car has some rust spots. Sunroof and a/c don't work. I drive it everyday, gets 27mpg. Good parts car. \$1200 obo. Carl 732-533-8380



FOR SALE: 1985 380SL Red with red hard top, dark brown convertible top, and tan interior. 185,000 miles. Garaged in Morristown, NJ in case you want to check it out. \$9,750. Contact joe.stivaletti@gs.com or 646-245-8926



FOR SALE: 1997 SL 500 with 37,000 miles. Dark blue, tan interior, halogen headlights, heated seats, 1st place at 2012 Jamboree. Original owner, never in a body shop and always garaged. All service records are available. Contact jeromealpart@gmail.com/ 973-226-2281 Asking \$18,000



FOR SALE: 1973 280 SE 4.5 Green with Ivory Interior 117,000 Miles Garage Kept/ Non Smoker. Good Chrome and Glass. Four Extra Wheels and Tires Included.

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FOR SALE: 2007 CLK550 Cabriolet with only 8,000 miles, garaged and covered in winter. Beautiful Storm Red. Driven mostly to Rallies and Car Shows, Concours and Popular Vote Winner.

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Bob Donnelly bobdon1@comcast.net 732-275-1140



Autumn Adventure - Sunday, October 20, 2013

Come join us for what should be a very unique adventure on Sunday, October 20th. We will meet at Jack's Barn www.jacksbarn.com located at 1487 Route 31 in Oxford, NJ 07863 at 11:00 am for coffee and bagels.

Our adventure will begin at noon with directions and a map – no need to figure out clues, but I would suggest bringing a camera. There will be several options for you to choose from – antiquing, sight-seeing, walking explorations, and more on the tour.

After completing our tour, we will gather back at Jack's Barn for a late lunch/early dinner. It will be served buffet style consisting of: a pasta dish; sausage and peppers; chicken dish; salad; soft drinks' coffee/tea; and a light dessert. The cost per person will be \$20. This should be a fabulous day out, just the ride through the scenic countryside is worth the trip to get there. Hope that you will be able to join us for this activity.

Please register with Lucille luluchab@aol.com or 973-731-9133 no later than October 15th as we need to let the caterer know how many to prepare for.

Annual Holiday Party - Sunday, December 1, 2013

Our Annual Holiday Party will be held on Sunday, December 1st at the German American Club in Clark – please don't forget to mark you calendars. More details to follow.

Welcome New Members

Padi Benzing
Ronald Brain
Daniel Fetzer
Mark Hartmann
Maurice Hofmann
Denis Khublall
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Sean Patrick Mulligan
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Ned Visich
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Alexander Zanellato



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From the President Valerie Cristiano



It may officially be Fall as I sit down to write this, it seems more like Summer – the sun is shining and the temperature is going to hit 80 degrees today – a perfect day for a drive with the top down and the wind blowing in your face and hair. But alas, I must face reality and that this weather will not last and that the cooler weather will soon be upon us. Even if the top can't be down, the sunroof can be open, and if it is too chilly for that, why not open the moon-roof and enjoy the view.



Ever since I was a little girl, I enjoyed going for rides in the car. My father would gather the family and we would set off for a ride in the country or down the shore – it was family time. I still do this today with Joe, and even though my parents are long gone, it brings back wonderful memories of time spent together. True, we didn't have a Mercedes growing up, but rather Buicks and Chevrolets – the car may not matter, but the family time is the most important thing and the memories that the rides together will create.

? Did You Know ?

Did you know that the Mercedes Benz Club of America is comprised of 12 regions covering all of North America? Did you know that there are 87 sections in MBCA? Did you know that you can find out what is going on in each section by going to the mbca.org website and going to local sections? Did you know that you can go to an event in any section? Did you know that there are Mercedes Benz Clubs all over the world – Europe, South America, Central America, Australia, Africa, and Asia – and you can participate in any one of them. So, when you travel either at home or abroad – check out what a Mercedes Benz Club has to offer and enjoy!



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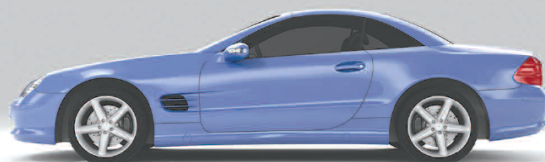
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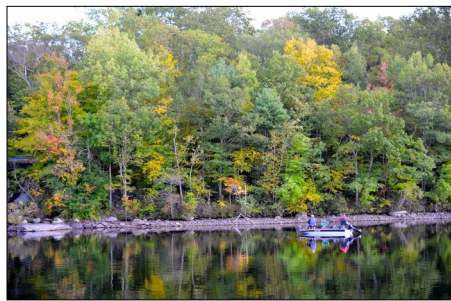


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Movie Night in Warwick, NY

On the lovely evening of 28 September, eleven members of the Northern New Jersey Section and one guest converged on Penning's Farm in Warwick, New York, for our second "Movie Night." Warwick is north of Greenwood Lake in a lovely valley; the Catskills can be glimpsed in the distance. It is home to one of the few drive-in movies left. The game plan--drive up to Penning's (the scenic route is NJ-23 north to Clinton Road east to its end on the Warwick Pike, then left. Just before it reaches NY-94, in a bowl on the right, is the drive-in. On the left, at the intersection with NY-94, is Penning's. Autumn was just beginning to paint the trees, and we stopped along one of the fishing lakes/reservoirs along Clinton Road for a session of picture-taking! Penning's was filled with people. There was a beer tasting option, pony rides, a bungee jump, wood carvings for sale, and produce, preserves, homemade food, and a full bar. Dinner was fun and leisurely, by the time we left to drive home down the Warwick Pike, people were entering the drive-in for the second show. Many thanks to Nick Ford for thinking up this wonderful way to enjoy the changing seasons!



Article & Photos by Carl Ian Schwartz

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Technical Corner

Sean Connor, Technical Advisor



I've been curiously watching the publicity Mercedes-Benz has chosen to release about its new "Illuminated Star" grille insert. The assembly, which uses light emitting diodes (LEDs) to create a glowing Mercedes emblem at night, is a new factory option on "Sport" versions of C- and E-class models, SUVs, and "four door coupe" models such as the CLS and CLA. The company features it most prominently in current television commercials airing - showing a 2014 CLA at speed with one glowing in its grille. These days with every new vehicle from Kias to Jaguars to Teslas featuring what looks like a string of bright Christmas tree lights positioned in their headlight assemblies, the LED look that Audi started in 2008 simply isn't distinctive anymore by itself.

While it's strictly a matter of personal preference, the Illuminated Star comes across as a tasteful way of taking a promising styling queue to the next level and creating something original with it. I maintain it is tastefully done because unlike many of today's LEDs used as daytime running lights, the Illuminated Star is discreetly dim instead of being overly bright. How not bright is it? Unfortunately, isn't possible to quantify. After calling several dealership parts departments and speaking with several folks at M-B USA headquarters, no one was able or prepared to answer how many lumens (a lumen is a measurement of light similar to one candlepower) the Illuminated Star puts out. For reference, LED daytime running lights found within the headlamp assemblies of most modern vehicles have light output of anywhere from 130 to 900 lumens. A typical halogen headlight bulb will put out approximately 1,400 lumens, and a high-intensity (HID) headlight bulb can put up to 3,000 lumens. A 60-watt bulb puts out approximately 800 lumens, but since it is not focused with a parabolic reflector, it does not appear as dazzling to the naked eye. Studying the how the LED strips are arranged inside the Illuminated Star, it becomes clear they are not focused to project light forward either - putting this fabulous option in the realm of ornamental, background lighting. The LEDs used to outline the Mercedes emblem appear completely solid and unbroken, so the whole thing looks clean and orderly - not haphazardly strewn and crude-looking the way some Christmas-tree LED daytime running lights appear.

However great the Illuminated Star may seem, neither you nor I will get to drive though the night with it lit because it does not operate while the vehicle is moving. After reading standard press-kit information on the Illuminated Star, I struggled to understand the logic of why this is so. Because it appears glowing with white light in U.S.-market television commercials, a natural assumption would be that the Illuminated Star functions in synch with headlights - staying lit for the duration the headlights are operated, wherever the vehicle goes. Not so. The star stays lit for 40 seconds upon unlocking the car. When a door is opened, it will remain illuminated for up to five minutes. But if the car is started or the doors are closed, it turns off. After driving and parking, the Star will show itself again for 60 seconds after the engine is switched off. The vehicle headlight switch must be set to Auto, surround lighting must be operational (via the instrument cluster), and it must be dark outside.

After speaking with knowledgeable Parts Department representatives, I was able to confirm the Illuminated Star assembly has its own self-contained smart module. The module senses the amount of light outside, and it also requires data from the vehicle's main computer to determine conditions are right for it to operate. So bypassing it with a hard wire connection to the battery won't do much good. It's hard to say how many customers will opt for this first version of the Illuminated Star when they realize they've been had by the commercial, but it can now be ordered on new C-, E-, GL-, GLK-, M-, CLA-, and CLS-classes as a \$550 option installed. It can be retrofitted to applicable 2008-newer C-Class sedans, 2012-newer C-Class coupes, 2014 E-Class sedans and wagons, 2011-newer E-Class coupes, 2006-newer CLS sedans, and 2010-newer GLK sport utilities. Dealers are expected to charge \$480 for the part plus several hours labor for installation which includes running necessary wiring (control computers already on the vehicle do not need to be reprogrammed though). Illuminated Stars are not compatible with Mercedes Distronic cruise control because that system has radar-based input sensors already located within center star emblem assemblies.

Mercedes-Benz, you've got a potential winning product on your hands - but not in its current form. We can only hope the next generation Illuminated Star you choose to develop is a less compromised unit that will function the way customers truly want it to. And we hope you do it soon because, rest assured, Audi will.

"Illuminated Star" grille inserts





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High Gear

John Kuhn Bleimaier



The blue waters of the Bosphorus join the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, while separating Europe from Asia. Constantinople sits athwart this crossroads and has the fabulous cultural and political heritage which its geographic location rendered inevitable. A couple of weeks back I found myself in this mighty city at the vortex. Of course it is *de rigueur* to visit the architectural shrines of old Byzantium and of the successor conquerors of Asia Minor. Furthermore, it is interesting to study the quirks of history and to contemplate what the world would be like today if the Crimean War had turned out differently in 1856, and if Constantinople was now a Greek city. Ah well, be that as it may.

The highlight of my visit to Constantinople was a day spent at the **M. RAHMI KOÇ MUSEUM OF TECHNOLOGY**. At this institution are assembled a treasure trove of objects documenting man's ingenious efforts to harness the potential energy sources of the natural environment from wind and water power to nuclear fission. Of course, for me the internal combustion engine holds the greatest attraction. This museum's collection includes everything from massive marine Diesel engines as big as a house to thimble size gasoline motors suitable for powering a model airplane. Here, in a historic machine shop in the shadow of the soaring arches of the Hagia Sophia and the minarets of the Blue Mosque, I was in my element.

There are four Mercedes-Benz automobiles in the collection of the museum of technology. They are a 1940 170V cabriolet, a 1966 200c Finback, a 1970 280SL Pagoda and a 2001 C55 Brabus. From a mechanical perspective these motorcars neatly define three distinct epochs in the application of the internal combustion engine to the provision of private transportation. The 170V is powered by a simple, flat head four cylinder engine with side valves and a carriage inspired separate chassis incorporating ash frame elements. The finback and the SL have high revving overhead camshaft engines with aluminum heads located in a monocoque chassis with safety engineered crumple zones. The Brabus tuned C55 is a thoroughly modern, electronically governed supercar capable of maximizing the performance output from the driver's input at the tiller plus three pedals. These Mercedes automobiles represent the pinnacle of automotive engineering for their respective generations. The 280SL deserves special attention because that model series (W113) redefined the concept of the sports car as it transitioned from hairy-chested competition screamer to sybaritic grand turismo. Interestingly, both the Finback and the Pagoda were developed with significant

design contribution from the French fine artist, Paul Braque. I thoroughly approve of this museum's selection of representative starships.

As I contemplated man's mighty technological attainments as documented in this museum of technology located in the world's second eternal city, I was once again tempted to posit, "what if." What would the Mercedes-Benz product line-up be like today if the board of directors in Stuttgart had decided to acquire Brabus rather than AMG back in 1990. While both illustrious tuners managed to extract prodigious numbers of ponies from a given engine displacement, Brabus tended to put more decision-making in the hands of the driver as opposed to the on-board computers. With Brabus as the performance standard-bearer might the silver star front runner today have an extra pedal and two less paddles? Ah well, be that as it may.

Tech Session - Saturday, November 2, 2013

Did you ever want to know what happens to your car when you get in an accident? Bergen Brookside Auto Body and Towing has invited us to come and learn about what happens after your car is involved in an accident. You will learn how the appraisals are done, what it means to "Total Out" your vehicle, and why shops are or are not equipped to work on Mercedes Benz vehicles. There will also be a question and answer period if there are other things that you would like to know. We will meet at 10:00 am on Saturday, November 2 at Bergen Brookside Auto Body and Towing located at 83 Zabriske Street in Hackensack, NJ - 201-342-8253. We will start off with coffee and bagels before we begin our tech session. We will also be giving a \$100 to one lucky winner from our club. As always, there will be no charge for the tech session, however, you **must** register so that we know how many to plan for: Please email or call Lucille by November 1st and let her know that you will be attending. luluchab@aol.com or 973-731-9133.

Several NNJS members traveled to the **Legends of the Autobahn at Old Westbury Gardens in Westbury, NY** and did our section proud. Upon arriving every car had its picture taken and we were presented with the photo as a souvenir at the conclusion of the show. Members showing cars included Don Johnson - 230 SL; Bob & Claire Wegner - E 320; Valerie & Joe Cristiano - 420 SEL; Ralph Esposito & Don DeRosa - 450 SL; Alex Zanellato - 500 SL; and Alvin & Cynthia Martz. Ralph even brought home the Lady's Choice trophy - way to go, Ralph!



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Sunday, December 1, 2013 —

**Annual Holiday Party — German
American Club — Clark, NJ — See
page 4**

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Sunday, October 20, 2013 —

Autumn Adventure —

**Jack's Barn — Oxford, NJ — See
page 4**

Saturday, November 2, 2013 —

**Tech Session — Bergen Brook-
side Auto Body & Towing —
Hackensack, NJ — See page 10**

Moving?

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