



Mercedes-Benz Club of America

Hudson Mohawk Section

FALL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2011

Third Quarter

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Hudson-Mohawk Section Fall Foliage Rally and Tour 2011 September 23, 24, 25



Olympic Training Center

The rally began at the Saratoga Auto Museum in historic Saratoga Springs, New York. From Saratoga we made our way through the Adirondack Mountains with a stop at the Adirondack Museum and then continued on to the Olympic Village of Lake Placid. At the end of the day we had a wonderful reception.

Saturday was spent on a driving tour of the spectacular Adirondacks with stops at various Olympic venues and a drive up the Olympic Mountain, Whiteface. The views and foliage were terrific and will be remembered for years to come. Our tour also took us to the famous James Brown Farm. We

began the tour at 11:00 AM which allowed time for walking through town and a visit to the Olympic Arena. It is next door to the Lake Placid Crowne Plaza, the host hotel. History was made there in 1980 with the "Miracle on Ice".

On Saturday a great evening meal was served. The night ended with an awards ceremony. The rally winners received some very valuable prizes.

The Hudson-Mohawk Section was proud to be the host of a Regional Event and looks forward to seeing and meeting members from other Sections.

Fall Foliage Rally and Tour 2011



President's Message

Dear Members;

As you read this our Section is still cleaning up after the damage and destruction done by Tropical Storm Irene. To that end your Board of Directors has approved a donation which will go to families most in need. We urge all of our members to do what they can to help out our neighbors.

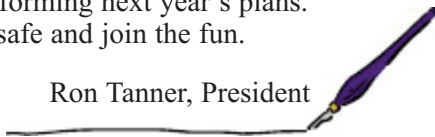
The summer has been busy for many of you who attended the wonderful luncheon at the Rhinecliff Hotel; it was good seeing some new faces. A hearty group met at the Saratoga Race Track on Labor Day for a fun filled afternoon with good food and some wagering, I did not win. Also this summer we had a great time at our annual show which this year was combined with the annual Locust Grove Car Show which drew over 300 cars of all makes. The music was great and the setting was magnificent. We hope to see more of you at upcoming events.

As of this writing we only have seven members running for directorship. This means we will go into our new year without a full Board. After elections we urge you to contact us to sit on this very important Board, we need new faces and ideas, you can help.

Our year ends October 31, 2011. We will finish the year with a strong treasury and membership holding steady. When the new year begins we will begin planning for next year's events and activities. We seek your input, your ideas, where to hold events, what kind of events you would like to see. Please contact me or any Director with your ideas, we would greatly appreciate your help in forming next year's plans.

Happy motoring, be safe and join the fun.

Ron Tanner, President



Lunch at Rhinebeck Manor August 27



On Saturday August 27, some members of HUDMO had a very tasty lunch at the scenic Rhinebeck Manor on the Hudson River. While the day was cloudy and rainy, the camaraderie and conversation was very sunny. We hope to have these lunches more frequently.

Everybody's a Winner



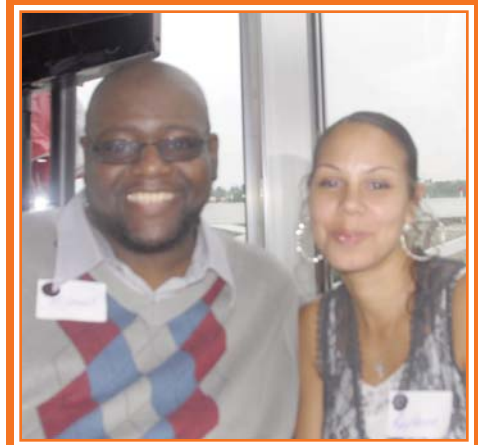
Saratoga Racetrack - Labor Day

The weather may have been cloudy but the spirits were sunny and bright. 33 Mercedes-Benz members and guests ignored the rain to enjoy the 2nd Saratoga Lunch Buffet Day at the Races. Members' travel time varied from 2 hours to 10 minutes but the experience was worth the trip.

Seated in the enclosed tent at the Pavilion by the rails, our group had unobstructed views of the horses' entrance onto the track and their race to the finish line.

Although all the bets didn't provide a payoff, the payoffs came in the form of a variety of tasty foods, the excitement of long shots winning, almost winning and the awarding of door prizes. The coveted racetrack giveaways, Ben and Jerry and Quiznos gift certificates put smiles on participants' faces. Some may have left with lighter wallets but everyone enjoyed a lighthearted day.

The group consensus was that a "Day at the Races" should become an annual event! So mark your calendar for Labor Day 2012.



**Keep the fun going!
Watch for an upcoming survey
on a Holiday Party**

KEELER'S KORNER

Rick Walker, Service Manager for Keeler Motor Car in Latham, New York, gave us this update on what Keeler has to offer.

We are very excited about a few new things coming. We have on the show room floor our brand new CLS featuring an all new direct injected twin turbo charged V8 engine and headlights that are completely LED. The CLS is also now available in all wheel drive and you won't give up performance either with over 400 HP that delivers 0 to 60 mph in 5.2 seconds and 23 mpg! The steering systems are transitioning over to electro-mechanical instead of hydraulic. The list of technological advancements in the driver assistance systems like blind spot assist, lane keeping assist, attention assist, distronic plus cruise control are too long to list.

The all new SLK is also here featuring a 302 HP direct injected V-6 delivering 29 MPG. One of the cool options is the large glass roof panel overhead that you can adjust the level of tint from very dark to nearly clear electronically! It is called Magic sky. There are many, many other options and innovations for this car.

The all new C-class two door coupe is also here! The all new ML is here too.

KEELER MOTOR CAR COMPANY is located at 1111 Troy-Schenectady Road, Rte. 7, Latham, NY

New Members

Rev. Richard Beckwith, PhDGreene, NY
 Robert GerryMorrisonville, NY
 Pat Setford.....Delmar, NY
 Thom Piliouras.....Wappingers Falls, NY
 Jennifer Sweet.....Wappingers Falls, NY
 Timothy Harnett.....Highland, NY
 Paul Mancarella.....Poughkeepsie, NY
 Elizabeth Nejman.....Schenectady, NY
 George MosesJohnstown, NY
 Luba GoldinLoudonville, NY
 Anthony Continanzi.....Poughquag, NY
 Rev. Victor CollierAlbany, NY
 Clark MooreLatham, NY
 Shawn SmithSelkirk, NY
 William Wolff.....Chatham, NY
 Steven BraznerAlbany, NY
 Jeff Parkinson.....Downsville, NY
 James EdwardsSaratoga Springs, NY
 Christopher CaseMarlboro, NY
 Cris Vanderburg.....Saratoga Springs, NY
 Rick Stegmann.....Valatie, NY
 Carlene ThusgaardAlbany, NY

Fitches' Corner Horse Show Parade

The Fitch's Corner Horse Trial's Antique Car Show featured only vintage Mercedes this year. It was Sunday, July 24th, the last day of annual three day horse trials. This year the show hosted the northeastern championships. Our members who owned cars that were twenty five years old were asked to parade and show their beautiful cars.

It was held at a farm, on Fitch's Corner, 649 N. Mabbettsville Rd., Millbrook, at the corner of the Shunpike (Rt. 57). The charity luncheon had 300 guests who paid \$200.00 for lunch. The ladies had an informal hat competition. The shopping tent featured fifty high end retail boutiques. It was a great family day and it spread over 130 acres with lovely views.

There were two enormous tents in the field filled with every upscale gourmet delight and some very upscale folks as well who were wonderful to meet and speak with.

The parade started at 11 am circling the jumping field in front of the luncheon tent and ended parking head in towards the luncheon guests. There was a brief ceremony when Dick and Donna Verrilli were awarded The Fitches Corner Awards for contributions to the equestrian community. Each driver was presented with a sterling silver Tiffany key chain to thank them for their participation. Some of us stayed and enjoyed the jumping.

ANNUAL OPERATION SANTA CLAUS CHARITY BALL

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 26, 2011

at

THE SAGAMORE

Bolton Landing, New York

TICKET PRICE \$100 PER PERSON

MUSIC PROVIDED BY THE AUDIOSTARS

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CHARITY BALL TICKETS &
ROOM ACCOMODATIONS ARE SEPARATE.*

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Grand Opening Mercedes-Benz of Wappingers Falls



September 14 was the grand opening of a beautiful new facility on route 9 in Wappingers Falls, New York. Many luminaries, dignitaries, local officials and the management team from Mercedes-Benz attended as well the general community.

Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres were served and all of the new models were on display. Jennifer Sweet a HUDMO member and Marketing & Communications Manager Mercedes-Benz of Danbury & Mercedes-Benz of Wappingers Falls (203) 778-6333 OR (845) 298-0600 had this to say:

“The grand re-opening of Mercedes-Benz of Wappingers Falls (formerly Friendly Motorcars) was on September 14th, 2011. Our new state-of-the-art facility is 3 times larger than our old one. With 60% more parts and service space, large customer lounge and boutique, a service drive thru, and a large, bright, and beautiful new showroom that holds more than 12 vehicles, our new dealership will help you experience the Star Treatment that we deliver. Thanks to all of our customers, Chamber of Commerce Members and friends that attended our grand re-opening event. At Mercedes-Benz of Wappingers Falls, we're still Friendly!” We changed our name with the remodeling of the new dealership to make it easier for our customers to find us online and on Route 9.

Meeting Mercedes-Benz Management

I had the good fortune to meet the Mercedes Benz executives who attended the grand opening of Mercedes-Benz of Wappingers Falls. All of them were quite friendly and eager to answer questions about their new line of vehicles for 2012. They were excited about them and anxious to discuss all of the new features and technological advances.



The individuals from MBUSA in your photo are (from left to right):

Stephen Langelotti, Commercial Vehicle Operations Manager
 Ted Zawacki, Area Manager, Northeast Region
 Jonathan Zinberg, Sales Operations Manager, Northeast Region
 Karl Stephan, Regional Franchise Manager, Northeast Region
 Andy Gillman, Regional General Manager, Northeast Region
 Niles Barlow, General Manager, Strategic Retail Development
 Fred Newcomb, Manager, Dealer Network

Interview Andrew Gillman MBUSA



Andy Gillman, Regional General Manager, Northeast Region who has worked for MBUSA for twenty-one years in a variety of jobs, all over the US said, “I don't want to talk about me. I want club members to read how much we appreciate them and their advocacy for our brand. We try to support them in any way we can.”

He said; “The next generation of cars will be the most exciting and technologically advanced ever. It will underscore why Mercedes Benz sets the standards to be met for all other high end luxury vehicles.”

“I am extremely proud of the Wappingers Falls dealership and all of other dealerships that make owning and leasing a Benz a wonderful experience.”

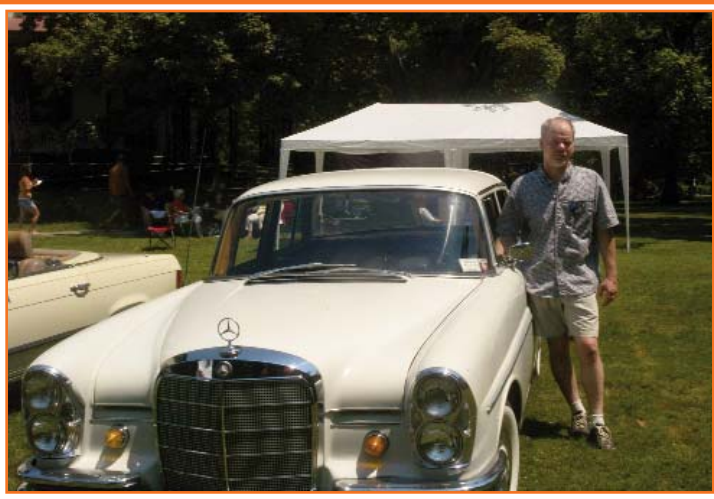
I interviewed him after about two weeks of phone tag. That reinforced that MBUSA really appreciates MB clubs, when a person of his stature takes time from an extremely busy schedule to return missed phone calls.

Thanks Andy.

Annual Car Show, Locust Grove

The annual car show was held on Sunday, July 17th in Poughkeepsie, New York, at Locust Grove the “Morse Estate”. The house in the background is the home of Samuel Morse, the creator of Morse Code. It has been restored for public tours. Most of our members took the tour.

We had a lot of vehicles and many visitors who came to admire the cars. We signed up a few new members too. Our show was part of a larger annual show that featured all types of vintage cars at least twenty-five years old.



Editor's Note

Getting and retaining members is not an easy task. The organization must find the hook. Somewhere between altruism and hucksterism, there must be a balance that engages members and potential members in a positive and rewarding way. We try but we are never sure. If we succeed it could be competence or faddism associated with a popular trend. If we fail we can blame it on the economy, lack of interest, sunspots or a curse from a malevolent force. Whatever the reason, we need to find out how to be consistent and increase participation and our membership rolls.

I am going to do a series of interviews that will include a cross section of our club. It will include longtime members, new members, women members, young members and probably some categories I haven't thought of yet. Please take a few moments to send me your comments so we can make your HUDMO experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

We all have a love of the same brand of car, but I'm thinking we may need more than that. The comments I receive will be compiled, summarized and shared with you in the September newsletter. If your comments and suggestions are especially helpful and compelling you will be featured in the Fall newsletter with a photo of you and your Benz.

Readers' Comments

Dear Jim,

You have written a fine letter, well thought out and provocative (hopefully).

I have thought long and hard for several years, asking myself why we experience minimal response from our members to the good events and benefits our club offers. I have no solid answers, only a few hunches.

1. Mercedes are no longer a unique or unusual car. They have become common and seen by many as just another car. Mercedes styling, for instance, is no longer particularly distinctive or ought I say distinguished. Many of us in the club seek out the older models that have a whiff of arrogance, a flare, a dash that contemporary models do not show. Herein is the difference between the Porche Club and ours.

2. That many, perhaps most, Mercedes are now leased rather than purchased and owned tends to make lessees indifferent to our enticements. A man's heart, St. Paul told us, is where his treasure is.

3. Dealer support, even as good as that rendered by Keeler to the club, at best is intermittent and half-hearted. If Friendly Motors is indifferent it's likely its customers are, too. This is a serious flaw that must be addressed at the highest level between MBCA and Mercedes-Benz. If the manufacturer does little or nothing to foster its relationship with the club and to impose its support upon its dealers we find ourselves clapping with one hand. Dealers like Friendly have a desirable franchise that ought to come with conditions: Support the MBCA or you lose it.



4. If owners and lessees have little attachment and enthusiasm about their cars, the club has little appeal to them, if any at all.

5. I understand the need for growing and retaining membership. At the same time I am not optimistic that we can do more than we are at present doing if my foregoing remarks are true. The activities we offer are good ones and usually well planned and executed. We enjoy enthusiasm at our core of perhaps a half dozen persons.

Speaking for myself, I like our society and friendships and so does Hilary. How else could we have ever met you and Carlene, Ron and Maureen, Bob McShane, Sandra, Werner and the van der Wouden tribe to name a few? Our shared interest brought us together. Good wholesome comradery is our best selling point.

Fondly, David

A good friend of mine is a Mercedes owner too. He knows I am a member and asked what I get out of it. He is not avid about his Mercedes. He is not interested in what I get out of it. Maybe there needs to be an alternate marketing scheme to market membership to individuals who just see the value in the car who are not Mercedes nuts like us. He's probably not alone. I am not sure how to recruit these other types of owners, but perhaps we could emphasize the value of our vehicles.

Sent by Sal De Fini

Great idea about interviewing section members as to their ideas and suggestions on gaining new members and retaining existing members. A demographic you may wish to consider are the strictly technical people, often referred to as the "techies" they are a very important and large sector of the MBCA population. As always thank you for all you do. I have always enjoyed working with you. If I can be of assistance to you in any way don't hesitate to call me.

Josie Lesler, DAL

The All New 2010 E-Class



Mercedes-Benz

Keeler
MOTOR CAR COMPANY

Rte. 7, Latham, New York
(518) 785-4197 • www.keeler.com



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Hudson-Mohawk Section

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