



Sunshine STAR



Issue No. 3, 2020

MBCA | Southwest Florida Section

May/June



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**"More Than a Car Club.
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Breakfast Meetings, 9 AM

Ft. Myers area...Perkins @ 41 & 6 Mile Cypress Pkwy.
2nd Saturday every month.
Postponed until Further Notice

➔  ➔

Naples area... Perkins on Pine Ridge Rd.
4th Saturday every month.
Postponed until Further Notice

President's Perspective

Here we are in the month of June, and much has transpired over the past couple of months. It appears that new rules and correctness are in place now with social distancing and avoidance for gatherings. How that affects our club is that our regularly scheduled events have been postponed. It has been disappointing to not attend our social Mercedes events - including even the basic breakfast meetings that occur each month: the second Saturday in Ft. Myers and the fourth Saturday in Naples. I miss seeing my fellow club members and friends! We are following the MBCA's rules and guidance that state our future events are on hold for now. We hope and expect to continue our gatherings that are crucial to our club, and will monitor the updated news. Some of the club's are getting more involved in technical online type of events, but I don't anticipate taking on new tech type ideas. Some of us have enough trouble just navigating through the array of social apps available. And simple tasks of just sending out information to our members can be hijacked by all types of errors, resulting in hours spent on simple routines. I understand that the new Zoom App for meetings can be used by even the very young students, according to some of our members whose grand kids navigate and explore with reckless abandon! But I am not as ambitious as I once was on the tech side. I did spend a lot of time recently completely cleaning and redoing my garage. Now that is something I can sink my teeth into! Simple tasks, even mundane requiring common sense, patience and the ability to part ways with sentimental junk. We hope that all of our members are safe and getting back to pre virus existence. All I know is there were all types of stories and occurrences that were just astounding. Remember that the information we gather to form our opinions is based on the media and what they do or do not offer as "news". We will of course let you know as soon as we can get more involved in our events. We promise not to use terms such as new normal, trying times, etc. I look forward to seeing and hearing from each of you soon!



RON CORDEAU



MBCA Southeast Regional Director:

Hank Webb hankwebb58@bellsouth.net

SWFL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:

President: Ron Cordeau

239-322-8817 roncor@hotmail.com

Vice President: Glen Sholl

239-272-1328 gsholl@comcast.net

Secretary: Monica Cordeau

239-322-9813 Monica.Cordeau@gmail.com

Treasurer: Joel Taub

239-549-0435 taub.joel@gmail.com

Membership Chair: Tom Harruff

239-591-8049 tharruff1813@comcast.net

Newsletter Design/Editor: Tom Starrett

941-347-7119 tomstarr74@comcast.net

Facebook Ace: Mario Puente

239-204-7434 mpuente-benz@hotmail.com

Section Directors: The Officers named above, and

John (Jack) Meyer

239-450-1998 johnmeyersr@hotmail.com

Peter Blackford

239-592-9814 priuspete@gmail.com

Anne Harruff, Past Secretary

Frank Altieri, Director At Large

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Ahead Of Its Time

SUBMITTED BY MAL NEWBORNE

340

THE AUTOCAR, 2 SEPTEMBER 1955



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Some Personal Observations on the 300 SL

HOW can any ordinary driver fail to be impressed by the 300 SL? It appeals to the base instincts in the nicest possible way. In its exclusive manner it does almost as much of everything as any other car and rather more than most. Of course it goes faster, accelerates more quickly, stops better and rides more solidly than the average sports car. It also costs more and carries little. That graceful tail houses only a 30-gallon tank and a spare wheel.

Its 130 m.p.h. and over is relatively effortless, yet in traffic it potters on top gear like a town chariot and with revs so low that they do not register on the dial. It can gulp high-octane fuel at speed, but "idling" along at 50 m.p.h. it injects less than a gallon in 30 miles. There is nothing souped up about this Mercedes; rather is it souped down in its production form. It brings the track car's performance to the road in a tractable form and, from all accounts, with reliability as well. A next-generation road vehicle, it exemplifies the direct relationship, in terms of performance with safety, between racing today and touring tomorrow.

Printed sheets should be provided, giving instructions on how to approach this waist-high monster, mentioning perhaps that previous flying experience may be an advantage. To raise the door it is necessary to fan a horizontal trigger which in turn folds out the handle. The first few inches of movement call for some lifting force; after that the spring loading takes over. These doors do not swing as far outside the car's girth as might be expected and so they can be opened freely when the car is tightly parked. There would be a good deal to be said in favour of this door design, even if it were not an essential on the 300 SL.

Quick entry is a matter of knack, practice and physique, and the hinged steering wheel is there to help. Passengers may find it tricky to swing their legs over the side decking outboard of the bucket seats, but once in there is plenty of room and the seat adjustment sensibly provides for height increase with forward movement and vice versa.

The driver sees well from his left-hand position and soon learns that the car is not really ten feet wide, as it appears at first. He sees around him the normal knobs and dials

plus seven ventilation controls, a parking light selector switch, a fuel booster pump, hand ignition and a passenger's horn button—none of them labelled. The central gear lever calls for a right-hand change but this does not feel unusual. The four forward gears have synchromesh.

A glance under the engine cover reveals little that is familiar; it might as well be an atomic unit. On closer examination around the shrouded manifold and piping, a vast cylinder block is seen reclining on its port side. From the forward placed air filter a surprisingly large duct leads to the manifold and thence directly into the cylinders. Equally large holes elsewhere allow the exhaust to depart



The driving position is roomy and comfortable and the knack of sliding in across the side decking is soon mastered. The steering wheel will hinge flat to make entry easier. In the heading picture the 300 SL is seen beside a familiar stretch of the Thames not far from Runnymede



All for £4,392 15s 10d Sterling . . .

and petrol to be poured directly into the tank. The radiator reservoir is mounted well back on the British offside and the hefty oil tank (it is a dry sump engine) in a corresponding position opposite. The oil radiator is beside the main coolant radiator over on the other side again. Hidden away under the six-cylinder block is the fuel injector.

Except from cold with the choke out, the 300 SL was not always a first push starter, idling was inclined to be "lumpy" nor could you, or should you, blip the engine. This I attributed to the fuel injection system. The starter switch is tied in with the ignition switch—an extra small twist against a light spring bringing life to the engine. You need to remember not to twist back too positively or the ignition key cuts the engine again.

To make full use of the performance of the Merc would, as yet, often be inconsiderate; it alarms the populace by its rapid acceleration or equally rapid stopping power. The noise is distinctive but very moderate. On the open road the driver has to think more than usual for the other man as well as for himself because few motorists have learned to judge the rate of closing with an approaching fast car. They see it 500 yards away, decide that there is time to swing out to pass a vehicle ahead and are then dismayed to find themselves nose to snout with a squealing sports wagon, on their wrong side of the road and technically at fault.

The car I drove was fitted with Dunlop racing tyres which are designed for adhesion and strength before wear or quietness. On smooth road surfaces they set up a merry whine which effectively drowns the other high-speed noises of engine, transmission and exhaust. Of wind noise I could detect nothing, even with the side windows removed. (They cannot slide or wind because of the interrogatory shape of the doors. They are either in the hole or in a bag behind the seat.)

I believe real appreciation of the 300 SL would come after about a month of varied driving, but a short acquaintance with this dramatic vehicle, taken as a main course between an Aston Martin *entrée* and dessert, naturally produced some definite impressions. There is the big push in the back in all gears and from 20 to 120 m.p.h. in top. With a touch of moisture on the roads the wheels spin in the gears and if you drop a ratio or two to pass another vehicle be careful lest the combination of power and camber whips your tail round. Hurrying away on a dry surface it is easy to burn the tyres and tarmac for 30 yards or more, but the sustained forward surge is thoroughly exhilarating.

It is not easy to design steering and suspension to suit such a wide road-speed range and one finds that the Merc has slightly heavy and abrupt steering for town work, while

Gentlemen (see also below) as well as ladies of Cheltenham admired the unfamiliar low curves of this visiting vehicle

at high speeds it is light and soberingly effective. The suspension is short and hard in the suburbs but comfortably substantial on the open-country curves.

Racing drivers no doubt take swing-axle and power effects on the turn for granted, but even as a one-time motor cyclist I am not entirely used to steering with the throttle. In the air, I do know how to adjust bank and rudder in a turn to avoid slip or skid, and this is vaguely relevant. The technique for fast cornering with the 300 SL seems to be to introduce the car to the turn at the minimum speed to be used and then to accelerate round and out—a mild version of the Moss technique. Whether right or wrong, for the 300 SL the car felt happy to me when turning under power, less happy if you had to lift your foot in the middle. I would not feel prepared to say without qualification that it understeers or oversteers. On a smooth, flat road it is probably accurate to the break-away point. Camber and bumps may cause a small unbalance towards the over or under. More power leads to over-steer.

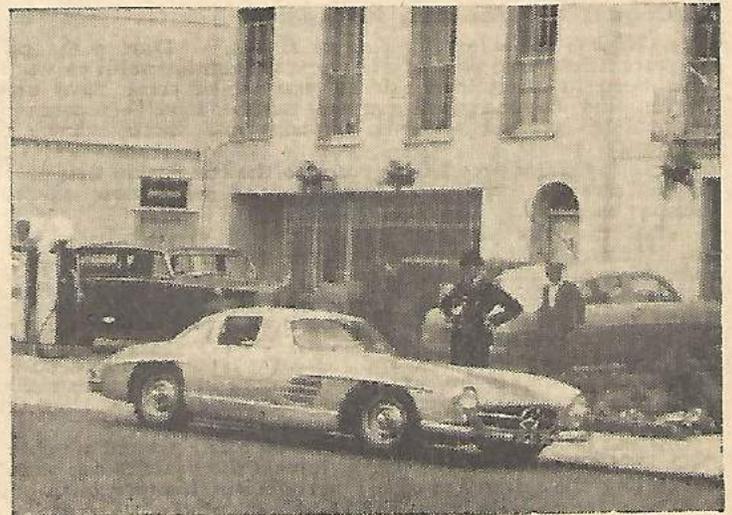
The full servo brakes are a joy to use. Smooth and powerful and requiring very little push indeed they are almost up to Derby-cum-Crewe standard and I would definitely exchange them for those on my own car or on other sports cars I have driven. I would not say the same about the gear change on this particular car which, though by no means unpleasant, was to me a little laborious. Perhaps it will loosen up more later; the mileage was only 1,700. The clutch pedal load is a good deal heavier than I have been accustomed to; it also transmits more power.

I finished a fast ride to Cheltenham and back unfatigued but a mite tense. The car gives a contradictory impression; achievement of its performance is relatively effortless, yet it also seems to be working hard. Perhaps there is an animal explanation. Nature approves of straining muscles and makes them lithe and beautiful in their exertions.

It is polite either to love or hate your friends: indifference is an insult. So with a motor-car. If it provokes strong feelings all is well, and any criticisms of the thoroughbred Merc are recorded in this spirit. I was sorry to say good-bye to it.

M. A. S.

If you loiter with intent—even to snap a photograph—you must expect the law to take notice. This officer was full of admiration.



Mercedes-AMG Formula 1 Team Adds CPAP Machines to COVID-19 Fight

In the U.K., the Mercedes-AMG Formula 1 team is building CPAP devices to help more coronavirus patients avoid the need for intensive care and ventilators.



- With the Formula 1 season on hold, the reigning champs aren't fighting for a title—instead they're fighting [coronavirus](#) by building CPAP machines.
- The CPAP machines can help patients with lung infections avoid the need for a ventilator, and they are being built with help from health-care professionals and engineers at University College London Hospital.
- Mercedes-AMG isn't the only manufacturer producing medical equipment; [Ford](#) and [GM](#) are building ventilators, with [other companies](#) producing personal protective equipment.

It seems like the only Formula 1-related news as of late is that more races are getting canceled because of [COVID-19](#). Most teams are sitting idly as well—but not the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 team.

The reigning world champions, having won five straight constructors' titles, have put some of that fight into beating COVID-19. The Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains division has partnered with University College London engineers and health-care workers at University College London Hospital (UCLH) to develop a CPAP device in less than a week to help coronavirus patients.

So far, 100 of the Mercedes F1 team's devices are undergoing trials. The U.K.'s medical regulatory body has already approved the devices for use in hospitals, although they haven't been field tested. If they pass trials, the Mercedes F1 team could build as many as 1000 per day.

In addition to the Mercedes team, a VentilatorChallengeUK group, which includes aviation giant Airbus plus Ford, Rolls-Royce, and others, will be working together to build ventilators for the U.K.'s National Health Service to use for coronavirus patients, the [BBC](#) reported today. Once they receive final approval, they will start production and already have orders for 10,000 ventilators.

As of right now, the Formula 1 racing season has been put on hold until at least June, forcing fans to watch old races and Netflix's *Drive to Survive* and play *F1 2019*. Some drivers, such as Max Verstappen and Lando Norris, have taken to the [virtual track](#) in lieu of being able to go racing for real. But now you can picture the people around the Mercedes F1 team doing something much more useful during their time off.





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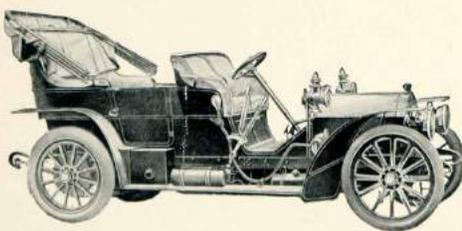
Renewed 31

A very warm welcome to our most recent members:

Greg Abenati	Merrell Andreas	William Demment
James Hagan	Gerry Mallon	Phil Olsen
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Brass Era American Mercedes

Contributed by Mal Newbourn



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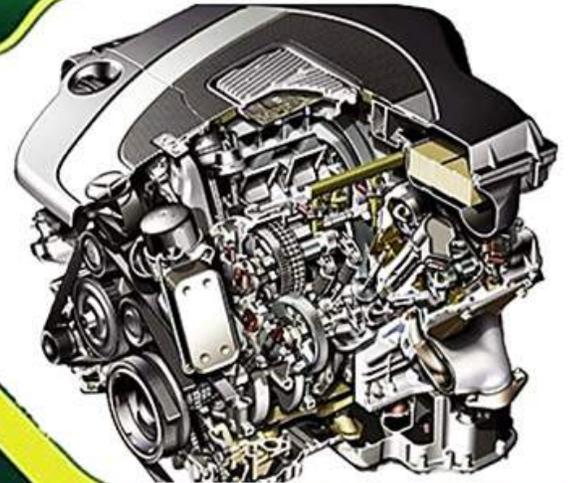


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Editorial...

As I approach the writing of this editorial I am overwhelmed with mixed emotions.

On the one hand, I have a strong feeling of optimism as we slowly fight our way back to normalcy from the body blow dealt us by the Covid 19 virus. Restaurants are beginning to open. Businesses are gearing back up and will hopefully be back to near normal conditions in a very short time. People, while still social distancing, are beginning to venture out and once again be in each other's company, albeit at a distance. I feel pretty good that the chances of us resuming our monthly meetings and gatherings are more positive than negative and not that far off. From the reports that I can see, the scientific and medical community are on a fast track to finding effective treatments for this viral scourge and, that the same time, are nearing the introduction of

of a vaccine that will hopefully shield us all from another round of the deadly virus.

I even feel so confident that Loretta and I have booked another cruise for January!

But, on the other hand, I fear for this great country of ours. The events of the last few weeks are not only shocking, but very disheartening. I know that I am not alone in expressing a feeling that this, the United States of America, is the best (and fairest) country on this earth. Of course we have some problems, every nation does. But the problems manifested in this country, for ALL people, pale in comparison to elsewhere in the world. And those that we do have we try diligently to correct.

What has transpired to cause so many to try and hijack our great representative democracy? Why have so many become consumed by hate and the misguided notion that individual freedom (for everyone) is a bad thing?

What possesses someone to riot, loot, burn buildings and businesses, and attack law enforcement for no justifiable reason? The other day Tom Harruff sent me a video of rioters burning Mercedes cars in a dealer showroom. When and how did our society change from seeing a Mercedes Benz car as

something to aspire to (as I'm pretty sure most all of us did) to equating it (and those who own them) to something evil and contemptuous? In my mind I'm pretty sure that the dumbing down of our student population (for nefarious political gain) has fostered generations of people who can no longer reason, let alone think for themselves. The result is that groupthink (read mob mentality) has taken over. The constant "blame game" that has become so pervasive in politics and society seems to have literally made individuals bereft of the ability to self evaluate and admit mistakes and fallibilities.

I am not a prophet. I don't begin to profess to have all, or even any, of the answers. But I do believe we have to get back to a more respectful society. To reinvigorate the concept of family. To reacquaint ourselves with God and religion (in whatever form that may be.) We need to reestablish the concept of personal responsibility, and to be ever mindful of the needs and wants of those around us. There's a word for it. It's called CIVILITY.

Today seems like a good time to start!

Tom S

About the Mercedes-Benz Club of America

The Mercedes-Benz Club of America (MBCA) is the largest Mercedes-Benz enthusiast organization in the world. As a non-profit 501(c)(7) organization, the Club proudly serves close to 30,000 Members who belong to one of 85 MBCA Sections throughout North America. MBCA's mission is to provide Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts with unique access to casual and competitive car shows, cash savings on new Mercedes-Benz vehicles, 24/7 online technical advice, parts and accessory discounts at participating Mercedes-Benz Dealerships, performance driving events, safe driver training, plus world-class membership conventions not available elsewhere. A subscription to the Club's 100+ page magazine, *The Star*, is delivered to Members every other month and is included with annual membership dues of \$55/ U.S.; \$65/Canada & International.

MBCA's national business office is headquartered in Colorado. For more information about membership and member benefits, please visit www.mbc.org or call 800.637.2360 weekdays 8am-4:30pm Mtn Time.

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So, You Think You're Fast?



I Raced My E63 AMG Wagon Against an Audi R8 and a Porsche 911

BY DOUG DeMURO
Automotive Columnist

I recently had the opportunity to race my used 2012 station wagon at the drag strip against two other vehicles from 2012, namely an [Audi R8](#) and a [Porsche 911](#). I thought this would be an enjoyable experience, largely because you don't often see a station wagon racing two iconic sports cars. I was correct.

Now, admittedly, my used 2012 station wagon isn't exactly any used 2012 station wagon; it's a [Mercedes-Benz E 63 AMG wagon](#), and it has 520 horsepower. So I sort of figured my wagon would be faster than the R8 and the 911, which is kind of a funny thing. I say this because the R8 and the 911 are an R8 and a 911 — and even though my station wagon is an AMG car, it's still large enough to carry around a chest of drawers, if you're so inclined.

So, anyway, I went to the drag strip with all three vehicles, and what I discovered, almost immediately, was that I was completely alone among people there with unmodified station wagons. This should not surprise you. Instead, what they had at the drag strip was a lot of very fast cars that made very loud noises, and then I was there with my panoramic sunroof and ventilated seats. I did not fit in.

Nonetheless, we lined up the Audi R8 and the AMG Wagon for the very first drag-strip run, and we had an interesting experience. What happened was I took off and shuffled down the quarter-mile drag strip at a relatively quick pace for a station wagon, and the R8 waited a few seconds before it did the same. My friend David, driving the R8, had never before been to a drag strip and netted a 2.7-second reaction time, which is laughably awful. But because they don't start timing until you actually leave the lights, he ended up beating me, running a 13.120-second quarter-mile at 110 miles per hour compared to my 13.293 at 109.

I was embarrassed, but I was also convinced I could do better: My start technique involved holding the brake and the accelerator at the same time and then letting off the brake; this caused the traction control to kick in, undoubtedly slowing down my run. Worse, I realized after the run was finished that I had done the entire thing in "Eco" mode with "Comfort" chosen on the drive-mode selector, rather than "Sport" or "AMG." I knew the wagon had a better run inside it. So, we lined up again, and again we took off. Once again, the wagon got a jump — David, driving the R8, was a little worried about hard starts with the 6-speed manual transmission — but then it pulled away fast. When we finished the quarter-mile, the Audi's time had been fairly consistent — 13.389 at 110 miles per hour — but the wagon shaved nearly a second off its quarter-mile time, largely thanks to a better start and the selection of "AMG" mode: It ran an impressive 12.541-second quarter at 113 miles per hour. Following that run, it was clear the wagon was faster than the R8.

And, so, we moved on to the 911. Now, I had no belief that the 911 would possibly beat the station wagon, given the huge horsepower difference between the two — 350 for the Porsche versus 520 for the Mercedes. But I thought it might hang close on account of the fact that, you know, it's a Porsche 911, and also the fact that this particular 911 had Porsche's ultra-quick "PDK" dual-clutch automatic, which is faster than both the R8's stick shift and the AMG's "SpeedShift" wet-clutch-thingy.

It did not.

When the light turned green with the AMG and 911 lined up against one another, the wagon pulled hard off the line and kept the 911 firmly in its rearview mirror the entire time. In the end, the 911 ran a 13.818-second quarter mile at 108 miles per hour, while the AMG saved its best run for last, knocking down a 12.492-second quarter at 112 miles per hour. The reaction times were similar, meaning what you see in the video above is really how much faster the AMG is than a Porsche 911.

And, so, after the drag strip run, I can draw a conclusion: The AMG Wagon is really, really fast. Of course, I knew it would be, and I assumed it'd be faster than the two cars I brought — but I didn't think it would be *that much faster*. It is, after all, "just" a station wagon.

Editor's Note: You can watch the video on YouTube @ <https://youtu.be/WFPz3YMKN6s>

BRETT OLEY, CFP®, MBA
 Co-Founder & Managing Partner, OKCW
 Financial Advisor, RJFS



D 239.778.1781 1400 Gulf Shore Blvd. N., Suite 112
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Upcoming Events 2020
Southwest Florida Section, Mercedes-Benz Club of America



DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS, AND GOVERNMENT EDICT, ALL
 ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY.

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES!

WE'RE GETTING CLOSER!!

Do We Have Your Current Email Address?

The Club and our own Section use electronic communications and we email our newsletters. So be sure to let the NBO know of any changes to your email address to ensure up to date information with both the NBO and your Section. Contact Membership Services with your updates...

mbca.org or call 1-800-637-2360.

Southwest Florida Section MBCA On The Web!

<http://southwestflorida.mbca.org/>

and...

[http://www.facebook.com/pages/SW-Florida-](http://www.facebook.com/pages/SW-Florida-Mercedes-Benz-Club-of-America/258407040951839)

[Mercedes-Benz-Club-of-America/258407040951839](http://www.facebook.com/pages/SW-Florida-Mercedes-Benz-Club-of-America/258407040951839)



Questions? Call your Section Officer at 239-322-8817,
 or our National Business Office at 1-800-637-2360 M-F 8am-5pm MT. Or visit www.mbca.org

Before You Go!



AT LONG LAST!

On Sunday June 21st at the suggestion of Mario Puente, several club members met for an informal Father's Day drive-in at Mel's Diner in Bonita Springs. Altogether one hybrid Toyota, One Ducati motorcycle, and Six Mercedes Benz's showed up! The "event" was a totally impromptu affair, and very last minute! It was conceived by Mario to be an opportunity to generate some buzz and pictorial content for this very newsletter. **VOILA**, here it is!

It was beyond great to see one another again, and to "talk shop" in a relaxed and totally adherent setting (yes, we pretty much kept our social distance)

I'm sure we will repeat the process again very soon and, hopefully, with a little more notice!

