

The SILVER STAR



Mercedes-Benz Club of America • Sierra Nevada Section • October 2020



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Gar Woods Grill.....	1
President's Message	2
Officers	2
Working from Home	4
October Dinner	5
Metris Weekender Van.....	7
The Crumple Zone	9
November Dinner.....	11
Items of Interest	12
Section Events	13
In Closing.....	14

**FIRST TUESDAY
 DINNER IN OCTOBER
 AT NAPA-SONOMA
 (SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS)**



Gar Woods Grill & Pier

Fall Drive & Lunch Overlooking Beautiful Lake Tahoe

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

In September, 26 members of the Sierra Nevada Section of the Mercedes-Benz® Club of America gathered at Gar Woods Grill and Pier in Carnelian Bay, California, for a beautiful lunch on the lake. A caravan of nine Mercedes left from Mercedes-Benz of Reno and made their way up Mt. Rose Highway, led by hosts Marc and Sue Dodson, arriving at their final destination ready for a delicious lunch. A handful of members who reside in the

Carson Valley, Gardnerville, and Truckee areas met the club at the restaurant.

Gar Woods has been a treasured gourmet restaurant at Lake Tahoe for 32 years, yet some club members admitted it was their first visit to the popular spot. Attendees were situated at long tables on the edge of the outside deck, and friends were able to enjoy casual conversation while overlooking beautiful Lake Tahoe. There was a refreshing breeze coming off the lake, and the clear

(Continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S EXHAUST



Changing Seasons *Shifting Gears From Summer to Fall*

There is a crisp chill creeping into the air and the stores are stocked with Halloween decorations, letting us know that fall is officially here. Even though the smoke has been a recent obstacle to fun, outdoor activities, Vence and I are looking forward to getting outside more in the next few weeks. I may not be looking forward to raking leaves, but I am excited for the changing seasons and the beautiful colors that come along with that.

Fall is a wonderful time to take a drive around Northern Nevada, whether it be to Lake Tahoe, Mt. Rose, or to your favorite coffee shop. The seasonal colors in our area are magnificent, and I invite you all to take in the beautiful trees and hopefully clearer skies. Before we know it, the snow will be here. We had a wonderful turnout to our recent drive to Gar Woods Grill and Pier, hosted by Marc and Sue Dodson, where we enjoyed lunch on the deck overlooking Lake Tahoe. The weather

was beautiful and the food was a real treat.

It may feel far away at this point, but be sure to mark your calendars for our annual Christmas Party, hosted by Ray Rich, on December 17, 2020. It's always such a wonderful evening full of good food, drinks, and company, and I hope to see all of you at the party this year.

We have a First Tuesday Dinner scheduled on October 6, 2020, at Napa Sonoma Plungate in Reno, hosted by Karin and Lloyd Gash. Check out the calendar at the end of the newsletter for more information on upcoming events. As always, if you'd like to host a dinner or driving event, reach out to one of the board members and we will help you get started. In the meantime, I hope everyone is staying safe and finding ways to enjoy the outdoors whenever possible. I hope to see more of you at our remaining 2020 events.

Gail V. Wells

Gail Wells
President



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SIERRA NEVADA MBCA FORMER PRESIDENTS

Marc Dodson • 2011
Gary Dyer • 2012 & 2013
Sherry Avilla • 2014
Don Williams • 2015 & 2016
Gary Dyer • 2017
Bill Shepherd • 2018 & 2019

The Silver Star is the official publication of The Sierra Nevada Section of MBCA, however, opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Sierra Nevada Section, MBCA, or its officers.



Gar Woods Grill & Pier

(Continued from Page 1)

skies were a welcome sight after so many weeks of smoke.

The dishes at each table were varied and included seafood, salads, soups, chicken, burgers, tacos, and sandwiches. Gar Woods' Dungeness crab sandwich was the standout selection, and those that ordered it were not

disappointed. Another highlight of the lunch was that the food came out at the same time, which is quite a feat for a group so large. Many club members sipped on a Wet Woody®, the



restaurant's signature frozen rum drink that gets its name from the classic wooden boats that grace Lake Tahoe. With nearly 20 different types of Wet Woody concoctions available, there was a libation for every possible palate.

The group spent two hours at the serene spot, enjoying food, friends, and frozen rum. With the advent of the changing seasons ushering in cooler weather, everyone was happy to spend the day at the lake soaking up the last bit of the summer sun. 



Working from Home

Mercedes Engineers Remote Work in Innovative Ways

by Ali Turner, Reporter for the Automotive Industry



Mercedes-Benz® engineers aren't letting the COVID-19 pandemic slow them down. Like many other companies, Mercedes-Benz is supporting its automotive engineering staff

by allowing them to work from home. For many members of staff, this allows them to continue to work while following mandated state guidelines on social distancing and lockdown orders.

While the commute is considerably shorter, it can also mean longer, more

rigid days. "It's much easier to make the early morning meetings, said Kathryn Stark, Principal Engineer for Powertrain Calibration in Redford, Michigan. "That's the upside. The downside is that every discussion is now in a scheduled meeting format, so my days are long and structured." Mercedes-Benz allowed Stark to take home necessary engineering equipment while continuously making sure she has access to development vehicles.

For an innovative company such as Mercedes, security is a critical component of its data management. With so many engineers working from home, an expanded bandwidth was necessary to keep company secrets safe. Much of the time at home, according to Stark, has been spent writing data-analysis automation scripts that will be put to the test when the team is back in the engineering labs. Many of the engineering team members are working on

(Continued on Page 6)



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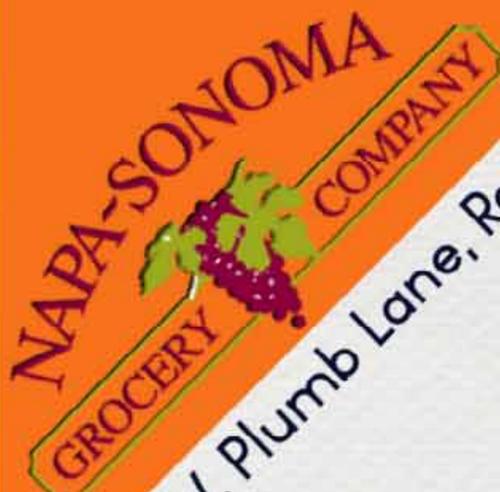
OCTOBER DINNER

FIRST TUESDAY DINNER

Hosted by Karin Gash

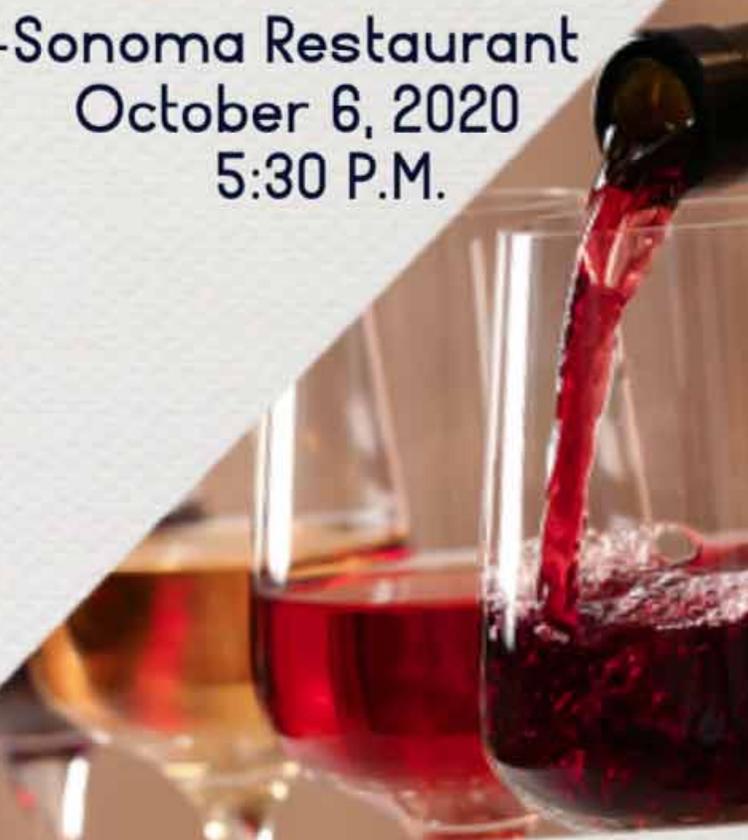
Napa-Sonoma Restaurant
October 6, 2020
5:30 P.M.

RSVP to:
Karin Gash
[775] 851-1439
karinmrich1946@icloud.com



NAPA-SONOMA
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Working from Home

(Continued from Page 4)

speeding up their progress so that when they get access to in-person testing, the process goes smoothly.

One way Mercedes-Benz is supporting its engineering team while they're at home is by providing them with virtual-reality headsets for collaborative design sessions. While the engineers are no longer able to simply walk over to each other's desks, they are able to iron out many design issues while on scheduled calls with their team. For some Mercedes-Benz designers, working from home means turning their living room into a small pre-development lab, including large pieces of hardware such as development boards.

As is the case with many companies who have been working remotely, the casual conversations at the water cooler and after-work happy hours have been missed. One engineering team at the Sunnyvale, California, development location has been enjoying virtual pizza days during lunch and happy hours in the evening. It's been an important way to keep the team motivated and cheerful during the abrupt transition.

For Stark, one thing she enjoys about working from home is no longer lugging her massive laptop, which is heavier than a typical laptop due to its processor-intensive programs, back and forth to the office. "On a normal day, lugging around a 10 lb. laptop might not be ideal, but when working from home, this is a bonus," she expressed.

While Mercedes-Benz development locations across the globe have begun a phased reopening, the carmaker's United States headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, will remain a remote workspace until at least the end of 2020. In March 2020, 875 employees at the headquarters were told to finish the year at home, and it's possible that could extend into 2021. "Working remotely was the exception," said Mercedes-Benz United States CEO Nicholas Speeks. "For the foreseeable future, it will become the norm." 

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Metris Weekender Van

Get Around Town or Out of Town with New Pop-Top Mercedes Rig

by Ali Turner, Reporter for the Automotive Industry

Harley Sitner is the owner of Peace Vans, headquartered in Seattle, Washington, which is one of the largest Volkswagen camper businesses in North America. In 2016, Sitner made a trip to Germany to check out camper-equipment manufacturers and see if they could help elevate his own business' offerings. Instead, what he found was that the impressive German midsize pop-top campers he saw were not available in the United States. Frustrated with this discovery, he decided to take matters into his own hands back in North America. After loading a shipping container with parts from German manufacturers Reimo and CF Maier, Sitner made his way back to Seattle and hit the drawing board.

Working with his crew, Sitner engineered his camper on a Mercedes®-Benz Metris, which he dubbed the Weekender. It was a hit in the camper community, and Sitner was able to leverage that popularity to convince neighboring Mercedes-Benz of Seattle to stick a couple of Peace Vans rigs on its lot. Out of his small shop, Sitner and his crew churned out the Weekender and its full-camper model, which was equipped with a stove, sink, refrigerator, and furnace, to eager customers.

About a year ago, Sitner was contacted by Mercedes-Benz Vans in Charleston, South Carolina, which had been paying close attention to what Peace Vans was producing, as well as the entire camper-van market. While Mercedes has its own line of Sprinter and Metris vans, the luxury automaker

thought a pop-top rig could tap into a larger fan base. Sitner wasn't able to produce products for Mercedes at his small shop in Seattle. Thankfully, Driveerge, which is located just up the road from the Mercedes-Benz Van factory in South Carolina, stepped in as a manufacturing partner.

"It's the best of both worlds, having Sitner's credibility and design, along with our trusted partner, Driveerge, which can produce with the same materials and processes, but at a quicker rate," expressed Don Maxwell, Mercedes Vans Upfit Manager.

The pop-top-equipped Metris will fit inside a standard 7'-high garage and offer a very tight 36' turning circle. Mercedes hasn't set a price yet, but consumers can expect to pay around \$60,000. For those that already own a Mercedes Metris van, the conversion will set you back around \$25,000. The top will extend upwards to 19" and allow you to sleep with your head to-

(Continued on Page 8)

WELCOME NEW SIERRA NEVADA MBCA MEMBERS...
Charles Blenkhorn — Reno, Nevada



THE FRONT SEATS ROTATE 180° WITH THE FLIP OF A LEVER, MAKING IT EASY TO LOUNGE INSIDE THE VEHICLE.

Metris Weekender Van

(Continued from Page 7)

wards the rear of the van. The Weekender comes with privacy curtains all around, including a big one that covers the front driver and passenger windshields. Aside from sleeping, the Weekender allows for comfort during the day, too. The comfortable and firm seats rotate 180° with the flip of a lever,

making it easy to lounge inside the vehicle. A second auxiliary battery takes care of the fridge, as well as the lights, small inverter, and other accessories.

The rear of the van features a standard receiver, wired with a trailer brake and solar connector for portable panels. The van features an impressive 5,000 lb.

tow capacity, easily allowing owners to pull a tow-behind trailer. As with all other Mercedes-Benz products, safety is a top priority, and the Weekender comes with excellent airbags and collision-prevention technology, as well as crosswind-assist technology and a rearview camera.

The vehicle is still in the production phase, but numerous upgrade options can be expected, including solar panels, touchscreen head unit with navigation, color body wraps, 8' awning, mosquito/bug screens, rear tent, swing-out rear doors, roof racks, pullout rear kitchen, and more. With this new offering from Mercedes-Benz, it's the perfect time to get out of town. 

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The Crumple Zone

How Mercedes-Benz Revolutionized Vehicle Safety

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

There might be a handful of carmakers that come to mind when you think of crash safety, but the innovation that has most affected the history of automotive safety was developed by Mercedes-Benz®. One of the most basic ideas surrounding passenger safety is the crumple zone, an area of a vehicle that absorbs the energy from a collision or impact. Typically, crumple zones are located in the front part of a vehicle, as research has shown that the majority of collisions are front impacts. Vehicles haven't always had crumple zones, though. Thanks to a pioneering, sharp-dressed, quirky inventor at Daimler-Benz, automobile safety evolved in the mid-twentieth century.

Béla Barényi was an Austro-Hungarian engineer who made numerous crash protection inventions and is commonly known as the father of passive safety in automotive design. After

studying mechanical and electrical engineering in college in the 1920s, Barényi began working for various Austrian automobile companies before setting his sights on Daimler-Benz. He impressed the board of management at Daimler-Benz in his interview by audaciously sharing his ideas for a complete transformation of the automaker's designs to incorporate more safety elements. When his interviewer asked him for a brief summary of what he thought would be the car of the future, Barényi gave a 22-minute critique of everything he found wrong with the cars on the road at that time, including Mercedes-Benz vehicles. "You're doing everything wrong," Barényi told his interviewer. His analysis, critiques, and ideas were valid and impressive, and he ultimately landed a design job at Daimler-Benz.

In 1937, Barényi conceptualized and patented the crumple zone before patenting it in a more developed form



in 1952 for Mercedes-Benz. Up until this time, automobile engineers and designers thought that a safe car had to be made of rigid lines. Barényi questioned this prevailing idea and instead began his own passive safety crash tests. He divided a car body into three sections, made up of the rigid non-deforming

(Continued on Page 10)

BÉLA BARÉNYI'S EARLY INNOVATIONS IN THE CRUMPLE ZONE LED TO GIGANTIC STRIDES IN VEHICLE SAFETY.



The Crumple Zone

(Continued from Page 9)

passenger compartment and the crumple zones in the front and the rear. This was a deviation from the contemporary, rigid chassis that had dominated the automobile industry. The first Mer-

cedes cars to utilize these new crumple zones were the 1959 Mercedes-Benz 220, 220 S, and 220 SE models, as well as the 1959 W111 Tail Fin Saloon.

The crumple zone wasn't the only

safety design change that Barényi made when he joined Daimler-Benz. He changed the inside of the cabin as well, with the dashboard and controls all made with soft edges and the ability to yield easily in a collision. Barényi rearranged the steering column and other heavy components so that they would not form blocks that would heighten the impact on the cabin. With his crumple-zone design, the car's body was meant to collapse around the cabin, absorbing the worst of the kinetic shock of an impact. Barényi's safety modifications also included the standard over-the-shoulder seatbelt that we are familiar with to this day. Even modern trains and railcars utilize Barényi's crumple zone concept.

Barényi was a determined engineer who knew that the marriage of style and safety was achievable with the right designs. His contributions to passive safety are significant in the automotive industry, from the seatbelt to the crumple zone. 



TACO TUESDAY



SECOND TUESDAY DINNER

at **MiCasa Too**

NOVEMBER 10, 2020

5:30 P.M.

2205 WEST 4TH STREET
IN RENO

RSVP

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

The National Automobile Museum

Sierra Nevada MBCA is a Proud Sponsor of This Great Museum Here in Reno

Here in Reno, we're lucky to be home to one of the top-rated auto museums in the world, The National Automobile Museum. Your Sierra Nevada MBCA Section is a proud sponsor!

What does that mean to you? Well, since your club is the sponsor of a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing on prominent display at the museum, all of our members get special benefits:

- Members get free admission into the facility, plus a 50% discount for any guests, during normal business hours.



- Members can request free guided tours of the museum, subject to the availability of the tour guides.

- Members receive a 10% discount at the National Auto Museum gift shop.

The museum has our member list on file, so just tell the cashier your name and that you're a member of the Sierra Nevada Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America.

The National Automobile Museum is located at 10 South Lake Street in Reno, (775) 333-9300.

Sierra Nevada MBCA Name Badges

We encourage all members to wear their MBCA name badges to all Sierra Nevada section meetings and events. WHAT???

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Be sure and order the magnet-backed version.



Photo of the Month



EVENTS

October 6, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Karin & Lloyd Gash, Napa Sonoma Plumgate, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Karin Gash at karinmrich1946@icloud.com or (775) 851-1439

November 10, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Second Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Marcus & Christy Dodson, Mi Casa Too Mexican Restaurant & Bar, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Marcus Dodson at marcus@dodsonpublications.com or (775) 997-9901.

December 1, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Marc & Sue Dodson, Sasquatch Tavern & Grill, Verdi, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Marc Dodson at marc.v.dodson@gmail.com or (775) 771-1080

December 17, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Christmas Party, hosted by Ray Rich, Napa-Sonoma South Restaurant, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Ray Rich at rayrich@sbcglobal.net or (775) 560-9592

January 5, 2021: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, Location To Be Determined

February 2, 2021: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, Location To Be Determined

March 2, 2021: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, Location To Be Determined

There are plenty of openings for future events. Do you have a favorite restaurant that you like to eat at, or is there a scenic drive that stands out in your mind? If you'd like to host a dinner, drive, or any event, please contact Patti Lamski at topat83@aol.com or call (775) 224-1794.

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IN CLOSING

Want Ads

These Want Ads are Maybe a Little Too Honest

by Marcus Dodson, 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.)

Looking to hire someone? Need some help with the wording? Well, here's a lesson in what not to say. Sure, being honest is important, but let's not go overboard.

Wanted: Someone to grind or chew hay for horse with bad teeth. Contact James "Bud" Williams, 942-██████████ Carterville

Need Girl Scout Cookies from a grown up

I would like to buy:
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I am not allowed within 300 yards of a minor so I will have to buy the cookies from an adult. I will meet you wherever necessary in the Louisville Metro area.

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Help Wanted 144

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WANTED: a surprise party for me. this saturday, 9pm. don't tell me when, that would ruin the whole life i live! contact lillian. i can vouch that she keeps secrets bc i'm lillian.

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Enquire within.

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