



# the capitol STAR

www.mbca.org/sacramento

The MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB of America • Sacramento Section February 2010

## Calendar Of Events

- Feb 21  
Railroad Museum  
Bill Brandt
- Mar 18  
CHP Academy Tour  
Bill Brandt
- Apr 24  
Road Rally to Bodega Bay  
Hank Pezzetti
- May  
Nevada City Playhouse Lunch/  
Dinner  
Skip Ibenthal
- June  
Sunday Drive to DutchFlat  
Inger Bisson
- July 17  
Angels Camp/Columbia  
Hank Pezzetti  
Big River - The Adventures of  
Huckleberry Finn
- August Road Rally  
Mark Reese
- September  
Kikoman Folsom  
Gloria McKnight
- October  
Oktoberfest  
Kevin McKnight/Hank Pezzetti
- November  
2011 Planning Meeting  
Inger Bisson
- December  
Sac Section Xmas Party  
Kevin McKnight

## California State Railroad Museum February 21, 2010 10:00AM

If you know your history, you know that Sacramento began as first a gold rush town and then a railroad town. Sacramento was the beginning city for the first transcontinental railroad.

I first attended this museum some years ago without much interest in locomotives. I left the museum a few hours later fascinated. While scouting out a restaurant for our last FSD I met 2 volunteers at the museum – one, a docent, is an MD from Hawaii who makes a pilgrimage here annually for a few weeks to educate visitors.

The other lives in Farmington, New Mexico and comes here annually to run the train. It is probably the best train museum in the world. It was suggested to me that we meet when the museum opens, see the movie at 10:15 and at 10:45 when it ends we will have a docent to give us a tour.

Here's the deal. Admission is normally \$9 per person. If we have a group of 15 or more it is \$8 per person. Send me your checks for \$8 and if we don't have 15 I'll simply tear them up on the 21<sup>st</sup> (or return them; your choice). If we have the 15 we will have an assigned guide and if we don't, we'll have to wait for a guide.

Parking can be expensive but I have learned if you find a spot on the street – with your ATM card – it is less than the \$1.50/half hour the lot charges. Lunch will be no host.

**Make the checks to MBCA-Sacramento** and mail to Bill Brandt 5910 Gloria Drive Sacramento 95822

**Bill Brandt**

## CHP Academy Tour 10:00 AM, March 18, 2010

If you check your calendar, you'll notice this isn't normal day for an MBCA event. It's on a **Thursday**. With California's well-known budget woes, I was told by my contact "there aren't enough people here on the weekends to give you're a tour".

We'll see their track where they train the officers, firing range, and classrooms. The Sacramento Section had a tour of their facility some years ago of their "car factory", where new cars are transformed into Highway Patrol Cars. When I asked my contact Rachel if that was on the menu she was a bit ambivalent but I will request this. I suspect the more that are interested the more they would be willing to show us this "factory"! I can tell you it is a lot more than just bolting in a radio! We'll see the track, firing range and classrooms where cadets become CHP officers.

Lunch will be no host at a Sacramento Institution, Club Pheasant. It is a family restaurant that has been around since 1933, now surrounded by a large shopping center. This is a joint event with the SF Section - we already have about 20 signed up from the SF Section. Send in your reservation my March 10. Cost is only \$10 p/p.

**Bill Brandt**



# President's Message

by: Hank Pezzetti

First let me apologize for missing this years' Christmas party and our Sacramento's first Sunday drive. Usually I take a vacation right after the tax season is over in April and this past year was not much different, I did manage to get away last May. As a lot of you know I love Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, to the point that I have two time-shares there. But one on the highlights of going to Cabo is the whales. They come to the Gulf of California, Mexicans do not like to call it the Sea of Cortez because of all the Mexicans that he slaughtered. Of the fifteen or so years that I have been going there I had never been there for this occasion. So last May I booked my slot for this December forgetting all about Christmas, sorry. So Julie and I arrive in Cabo on Dec 3 all set to go out whale watching. After we check in we go to the concierge desk to make arrangements for our boat trip only to be told that the whales don't start moving until January. We were bummed. So we settle back to make the best of it. The next morning we are sitting out on our balcony overlooking the Gulf and Julie spots a spout about 300 yards out. So we quick grab my binoculars and watch this whale proceed north to the spawning grounds. Wow, we thought we really got lucky. That day we spotted four whales, all heading north. Well we finally put it together, what the concierge really was talking about is that most people go to watch the whales as they are head south, back to Hawaii and Alaska after they

give birth and are taking their young offspring home to grow. They have to get there first. So for several days we watched a steady procession of whales heading north to spawn, but there was a pattern, seems they would only travel that route from about 10AM to about 1 or 2 in the afternoon. What a glorious sight, so after a week we made arrangements to go on a rubber boat ride and go whale watching. Even as we made the arrangements they were still telling us that there was no guarantee that we would sight whales, we'll take our chances. We set is up for the 11 AM trip. At the prescribed time and place we were ready, we were informed that we would be going out on a new boat for its maiden voyage. We arrived at the boat and were told to remove all shoes, even sneakers, wearing of hats at your own peril no guarantee you would come back with it. We were all issued life vests and we then mounted the boat. Funny word right, well that is exactly what we did the seat were like miniature horses that you straddled and hung on the bar for stability. This 30' boat had two 300 horse merc's on it, good thing the Sea was like glass that day. There were 8 passengers, 3 crew and two photographers on board. So off we go, perfect day the sun is shining not a cloud in the sky temp about 80, it doesn't get much better. We were instructed to look for spouts and sing out if you sight one. We were not out 10 min before we sighted the first whale, it was about a mile ahead at 12 o'clock, and the pilot kicked in the two merc's. We were on station in about 5 min. and there was not one whale but two. The pilot did not crowd the whales and we did not get any closer

that about 100'. We were informed that they swim on the top of the water usually about three times spouting as the surface, the spout is actually steam not water, and when you see the money shot, the tail coming out of the water they are sounding. When they sound they go deep, and will not surface again for 5 to seven minutes. We watched them for several dives and someone spotting another group so we broke off and tracked the next sighting. This time there were three whales traveling, it was getting better and better. After ten minutes we broke off and the crew decided to check out the ocean to see if we could spot hem before they made the turn into the Gulf. This took us out on a high speed run for about 15 min. What a ride that was, we soon found out why the seats were the way they were. It was like riding a bucking horse. As we got to the ocean we ran into a pod of Dolphins, they were all around us, there had to be a least 100 all jumping and playing with us. We spotted two more whales that we stayed with for a while and then headed back to the dock. We were out for 2 and a half hours and it went by in a flash. What a great day. Wish you were there.

*Hank*

## Contact Information for "the Capitol STAR"

Submit articles to:

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Sacramento, CA 95822

e-mail:

CapitolStar@sbcglobal.net

Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.

For changes to articles or ads:

Bill Brandt

5910 Gloria Drive

Sacramento, CA 95822

email:CapitolStar@sbcglobal.net

Deadline for changes to articles or ads is approximately the 26th of each month.

New article ideas:

Bill Brandt

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e-mail:

CapitolStar@sbcglobal.net

## We Have A New Web Site!

To say that it was a "remodel" isn't doing it justice. It has been totally redone, and I think the results are spectacular. Our talented webmaster, **Craig Griffith**, has told me that people from as far as Egypt have visited it. I get calls periodically from members who have missed – or lost – their newsletter.

The latest copy of the newsletter is always on the website. You can reprint any of it right there.

It will show information not in the newsletter. For example, not only our events but the regional events. Want to take your Mercedes on the race track? You can, in October at ThunderHill Raceway.

Our Charter Member Ted Bonnington has offered to help me write some history or our 41 year existence. So expect in the near future to see some stories of our Section – with photos – on this site.

Our web address will be part of the masthead to remind you of this additional resource. I'd like to thank Craig for all of his work for our Section! Check it out at [www.mbca.org/sacramento](http://www.mbca.org/sacramento).

**Bill Brandt**

### *An Evening in Little Prague*

On December 12, members of the Sacramento Section had our Christmas party at Little Prague in Davis. Despite it being a restaurant specializing in Czech cuisine, it had the atmosphere of a nice German "Gaststube" – and the dreary rainy weather outside reinforced that feeling.

Before being seated for dinner, we all had a drink and some nice hors d'oeuvres. Once seated, we had an evening of nice conversation with wonderful entrees.

Our members upheld our long tradition of helping children less fortunate, with many gifts sent to the Sacramento Children's Home.

I'd like to thank Kevin and Gloria McKnight for their efforts in arranging this event.

**Bill Brandt**

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## First Sunday Drive - February 7, 2010 - Central Valley Loop

*Details of our January drive are on our new website at [www.mbca.org/sacramento](http://www.mbca.org/sacramento). Scott Gordon suggested this drive to me while I attended the Planning Meeting of the SFBA Section. Let's call it the "Central Valley Loop". It'll be one of the longer drives this year if you are from Sacramento or the foothills. If you are in Stockton or Modesto then you are in luck! The mileage from my house near the Pocket area of Sacramento was 310 miles round trip.*

We'll officially meet at the Starbucks just off Hwy 120 in Escalon, just to the east of Modesto between 9-10 and leave at 10. It took me about 1.5 hours to reach Escalon so if you haven't gotten there by 10 and are reasonably close, call me and we'll wait for you. I'll give my cell number in the email I'll send to those who signed up to get FSD maps and information. For those of you leaving Sacramento and want to caravan to Escalon, we'll **leave** from the Starbucks at 1441 Meadowview at 8:00 - I will get there at 7:30. Pocket Road turns into Meadowview across Freeport Blvd, and this Starbucks is in the shopping center with Home Depot across Freeport Blvd. Just take the Pocket Rd east offramp from I5 - it is the next offramp after Florin on I5 South.

I found it to be a beautiful drive up into the foothills – past the “cowboy capital” of Oakdale – down 49 to Hwy 140 and back down through Madera. Over the years to me I have found much of the joy in travel isn't so much taking the planned route (although the road is scenic!) but the unexpected things you discover along the way. And let me say I discovered my kind of place. As I drove through the historic gold rush town of Coulterville, there was the Hotel Jeffrey. “Established 1851”, proudly proclaimed its sign. Naturally I had to go in. Manager Tom Love told me that it is the oldest continually running hotel and saloon in California. And before California statehood it was a Mexican cathouse. It has atmosphere and history. **So we'll have lunch there.** The only downside is for those who may want to stop at the end of the drive at the aircraft museum in Madera, we have to time our lunch. But to me the atmosphere of the Hotel Jeffrey far outweighs a lunch at a chain diner at the end of the tour. So for those if you who were on my Virginia City tour a few years ago, staying at Nevada's Gold Hill Hotel (the oldest in Nevada) you can make it 2. Charming hostess Mandy told me to simply give her a count when we leave Escalon. It will be no-host, of course.

**Since right after Coulterville a stretch of Hwy 49 follows the Merced River (with no guard rail , hairpin turns and quite a drop, please be aware of what you order to eat and drink beforehand.** At the end of our drive for those of you who love aviation as I do the Castle Airpark has a great display of planes, from a B36 (massive even today) to a B29 and its very rare cousin, the B50. Admission is \$10. For a FSD, no reservations are necessary – just show up if you want to go. The way the routine works is that about a week before the event you will get an email describing the drive along with a Google Map of the route and instructions. So you can actually join us along the route!

To get on the email list, simply send an email to [join-sacramento@FirstSundayDrives.com](mailto:join-sacramento@FirstSundayDrives.com). And I encourage you to join San Francisco's at [www.FirstSundayDrives.com](http://www.FirstSundayDrives.com). Any Mercedes-Benz owner of any year or model is welcomed.

**Bill Brandt**

**Note: For either of these events mail to Bill Brandt - 5910 Gloria Drive Sacramento 95822. Checks made to MBCA Sacramento. Questions? (916) 399-1736**

### February 21, 2010 10:00 AM California State Railroad Museum

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\$9.00 p/p \_\_\_\_\_

### March 18, 2010 10:00 AM CHP Academy

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\$10.00 p/p \_\_\_\_\_



## A Visit to MB-EI Dorado Hills

The morning of Saturday, January 23 found most of us under the wet, gray skies we had experienced for several days. Surprisingly, **Kris Summit** reported it was bright and sunny in Vacaville when he began his drive. He was one of eighteen who were at the Mercedes-Benz of El Dorado Hills agency when we were hosted to a get-acquainted session. The agency graciously hosted us for what we consider the first in a series of "technical sessions."

What would YOU like to have presented at future sessions? Let me know.

At our meeting, Service Manager **Chris Roth** gave each person a mail-back form to use for letting him know what is of interest. If you attended, please send those back to him. And, you can also let me know what your interests are.

Chris had representatives from the Sales, Service and Parts Departments give brief presentations. The focus of the Sales presentation was the European Delivery Program. **Ted Bonnington** underscored how nice an experience it was to take delivery of his newest MB in Sindelfingen and to drive it on the pre-planned Alpen Route.

Our tour through the Parts Department was interesting even to the non-technical minded. Imagine this: a \$100,000 Remstar parts storage system that is controlled by a computer. During our visit we had the chance to see it in operation. The computer received a message that a particular part was needed by a service technician. It sent a message to the Remstar that caused it to whirl and automatically move its many layers of parts bins. It stopped at the correct level, there was a light to tell the technician which row the needed part was in, and there was a readout that told him in which bin the part was. All he had to do was pull a tray forward, reach into the indicated bin and retrieve the part.

The expenditure of funds for this sophisticated piece of equipment is an indication of how agency owner **George Grinzewitsch** looks at providing excellent customer service.

Our visit to the service area gave me the first look at where my MBs disappear to when I turn them over to the agency "greeters." This working area is a far cry from the auto service shops of years ago. They have huge transparent roll-up doors that automatically open when a vehicle approaches. The transparent doors give the area an open well-lighted look while still keeping the cold air out. And, talk about clean. The service area is spotless!!

This meeting was an example of how the focus of a meeting can bring out different members. **Kelvin Lee** has been a member for 10 years, but this was the first event he has attended. Others I had never met were **Rod McKenzie, Bud Hopkins, Steve Austrhiem-Smith, George Rey, Mike Herrmann** and **Twan Sun**. They were all signed up to attend, but I think one or two didn't actually make it.

**Kevin McKnight** almost had to come by himself. His wife **Gloria** was not interested in hearing things like piston clearances. When she heard it was going to be a non-technical tour through the agency she came with him. She was glad she attended! Another attendee I had not seen in quite a while was **Tony Otis**. Of course El Presidente **Hank Pezzetti** was there. One surprise I had was that **Bill Brandt** showed up just as the presentations were getting under way. I expected him to be there as soon as the coffee, juice and goodies were planned to be available. [Ed.- between giving my dog, Mr. Tobus, his daily morning 2 mile walk and getting up at 06:00 I needed a "jump start" to get going that morning!]

**President Hank** has asked me to serve as a liaison between the Club and the agency for these technical sessions. We would like to have a session about every six months. That gives everyone ample time to let me or Service Manager **Chris** know what you would like to have presented. I will look forward to hearing from you.

**Allen Wrenn**

**916-988-0225**

e-mail: [anjwrenn@comcast.net](mailto:anjwrenn@comcast.net)

*Getting ready to leave for our January First Sunday Drive . The car with the mouth, er, hood, open is mine. I wanted to show someone my Optima battery. Well, this is a car club!*

*We toured some of the Delta, and saw some giant SMUD wind turbines behind Rio Vista. Additional details are at our website at [www.mbca.org/sacramento](http://www.mbca.org/sacramento).*

*Bill Brandt*





**Welcome New Members**

Matias Bombal Sacramento

Al Dalupan Folsom

Order your MBCA name badge for \$8-\$9.50 at the club store in the Star Magazine

**Join MBCA**

To join the Mercedes-Benz Club of America, call the MBCA National Business Office at (800) 637-2360 and use your VISA or MasterCard. Membership dues are \$45 annually. The dues include six issues of "The STAR" each year, plus your local section's newsletter (like this one). To pay by mail, make your check payable to MBCA, and mail it along with your name, spouse's name, address and telephone numbers and occupations to:

**Mercedes-Benz Club of America, Inc.**

**National Business Office  
1907 Lelaray Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909**

Or, ask a member for an application. You can also join by visiting MBCA on the Web:

<http://www.mbca.org>

Also, check out our local web site:

<http://www.mbca.org/sacramento>

**Moving?**

You must contact MBCA National at the above address or phone number. *The address list comes to us monthly from National. We cannot make changes locally.*

**Mercedes-Benz Club of America**

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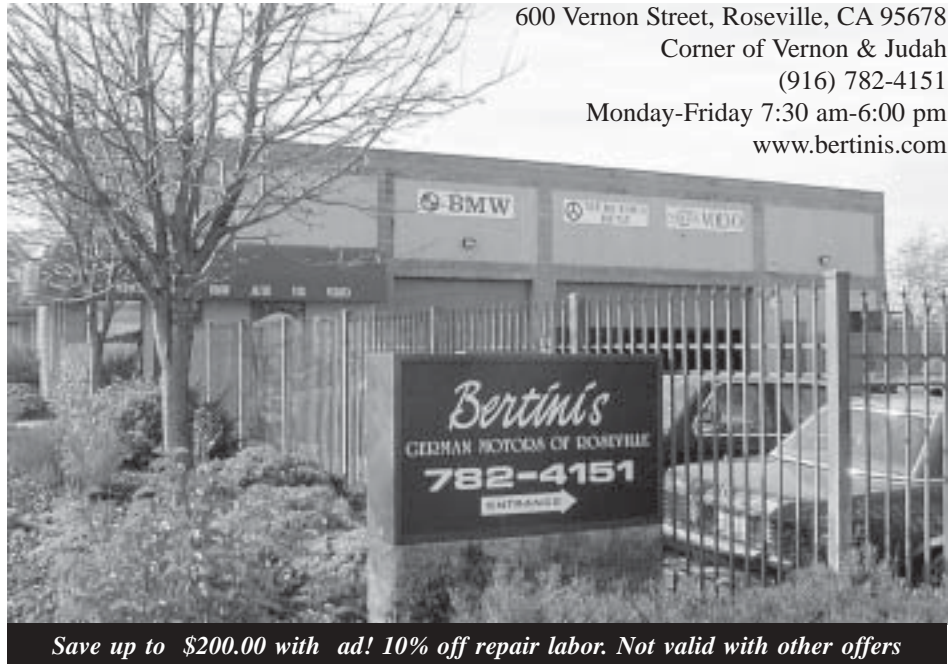
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## Mercedes Mart

This column is the Sacramento Section's want ads. The vehicles must be Mercedes. Mercedes accessories are also accepted. The ads will be printed for 3 months, at which time the seller must renew them. Cost for Sacramento Section members is free – Free space will also be given to MBCA members of other Sections on a space available basis. Non-members can advertise here for \$30 for 3 months. If you are a non-member, you may wish to join MBCA since you can also advertise in our national magazine *The Star* at no charge. We have a circulation of 350 members. Send a copy of your ad, including your name and phone number, to Bill Brandt, 5910 Gloria Drive, Sacramento CA 95822 or email [CapitolStar@sbcglobal.net](mailto:CapitolStar@sbcglobal.net). Because of complaints from past sellers of overseas **scams** think twice about including your **email address**.



*Save up to \$200.00 with ad! 10% off repair labor. Not valid with other offers*



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