



# the STAR capitol

The MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB of America • Sacramento Section May 2006

Spend a Day in Historic Columbia - June 24, 2006  
by Hank Pezzetti

## Calendar Of Events

June 24  
Lunch & Play at Columbia  
Hank Pezzetti  
(916) 687-4792

August Rainbow Lodge  
Sandy Reese  
(530) 878-1999

October  
Uncorked Rally V  
Tom & Inga Bourdon  
(707) 864-0567

November  
Planning Meeting  
Hank Pezzetti  
(916) 687-4792

December  
Christmas Party  
Kevin & Gloria McKnight  
(916) 721-1579

I volunteered to do an outing at the last planning meeting in November. I didn't know where we would go, but I would find something interesting. Verlene and I thought about something in the depths of California historic Sierra foothills. We ventured onto Jackson highway, down Rte 49 through the beautiful winding hills and Angel's Camp, Murphy's and wound up at Moaning Caverns. We went in and as caverns go it was a 4 on the scale of 10 and the 234 steps to climb out were a killer. Scratch that.

What else is in this area? I remembered back, when years ago, I use to fly into Columbia. One of the highlights of those trips was dinner at the City Hotel in Historic Columbia. Columbia is a restored gold rush town that is a State Park. Think Colonial Williamsburg for the gold rush.

So we ventured over to Columbia and strolled through the streets and into the City Hotel. For those that have never been there, the City Hotel Restaurant is a culinary delight. It is listed as a three star restaurant run by the Hospitality Management Program at Columbia College, sanctioned by the California Culinary Institute, but I believe that they exceed that. Here's a few dining reviews:

"The chef's creations have inspired gastronomes to make long trips just for dinner" - *Via*

"A sanctuary of good taste for the discriminating travelers" - *Bon Appetit*

"The hotel dining room dinners were outstanding" - *Los Angeles Times Times*.

Isn't it time that we spoil ourselves? We packaged a great lunch in the hotel dining room with a show at the Fallon House. This is a restored Hotel and Playhouse that will be featuring 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. Music is by Andrew Lloyd Webber (*Ed. note: An English playwright and songwriter making a reputation*) with lyrics by Tim Rice.

You should take a stroll though the town either before or after the lunch and show. Ride the Wells Fargo Stagecoach or order a sasperilla at the saloon! See Columbia pretty much as it was 150 years ago, complete with a blacksmith shop and gold panning sluice.

Lunch will be at 11 AM and the show starts at 2PM.

This adventure is limited to 45 guests due to the confines of the dining room. Cost will be \$34 (Your Cost), **with your Section paying \$14**. So mark your calendars now.

*Continued on page 5*



# President's Message

by: Bill Brandt

In some ways it doesn't seem that long ago. Former Sacramento Section member **Bob Cottam** asked me if I wanted to be a Vice President. I said yes. So many before me had given their time to make the Sacramento Section so successful. I felt it was my turn.

It's been 10 years since that time. During that time, I haven't missed one Section event. There must have been over 100 events. I must have set some kind of record, since the normal term is 2 years.

How some things have changed! Sadly, I entered MBCA just as **Julius Frieske's** annual summer **Tahoe Trek** to his cabin was ending. I keep hearing about "Kickapoo Joy Juice" at that cabin....That was a Sacramento Tradition that is now a memory...

However for some years I took the finished newsletters to Julius' house in McKinley Park, where he and son Bill affixed the address labels. That was their job for more years than I remember, and I wasn't going to be the one to break the tradition.

One day 100 year old Julius told me that he couldn't do this any more. I suspected he knew something I didn't. Within a couple of months he was gone. I can still

pany.

President **Inga Bourdon** was ready to retire and asked me if I wanted to be President. I felt that as Past Presidents both she and husband Tom would be big shoes to fill, but I volunteered for the job.

The 3 of us had a "transition luncheon" one Saturday at one of my favorite restaurants, Das Cliff Haus along the river in Rio Vista. Past Section member **Klaus Brien** of Munich and Rio Vista had the best schnitzel. With a Spaten Optimator beer nothing was better!

Who can forget **Henry Sudtell**? He was the club photographer. He was always so fastidious when it came time to composing the picture – with one exception. He usually forgot to cock the shutter. He endured a lot of good natured ribbing from his subjects.

The biggest project of the Sacramento Section during my time had to have been **StarTech 2003**. This was a national event devoted to the technical aspects of Mercedes-Benz. We had it at the Hyatt Hotel.

To tell you the truth when I was approached initially by some national people, I didn't

want to do it. I saw too many ways we could lose money on it – but I suppose one definition of a "leader" is , when sensing a changing in direction of the parade, make sure you stay in front!

So many Sacramento Section members volunteered, and with the capable leadership of **Tom & Inga Bourdon** it succeeded beyond all expectations – against the backdrop of 9/11 and many people still not flying. Section member **John Dupriest** told me that "*We are going to make you look good*", but it was the efforts and hard work of 50 Sacramento Section members who made the event such a success.

The reason that we have about \$15,000 in the treasury today goes back to this event and the hard work of so many.

I have decided it's about time for me to step down as President. Effective November 2006 someone else will be President.

With the history of the Sacramento Section's spirit of participation I have no doubt we'll be in capable hands. It's time to start making some new traditions.

Thank you for entrusting me with this job for these past years.

**Bill**

## Contact Information for "the Capitol STAR"

Submit articles to:

Bill Brandt

5910 Gloria Dr.

Sacramento, CA 95822

e-mail: [wbsite@lanset.com](mailto:wbsite@lanset.com)

Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.

For changes to articles or ads:

Bill Brandt

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email [wbsite@lanset.com](mailto:wbsite@lanset.com)

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

New article ideas:

Bill Brandt

5910 Gloria Dr.

Sacramento, CA 95822

e-mail: [wbsite@lanset.com](mailto:wbsite@lanset.com)

## Check Engine Light On?

One wag in an automotive magazine suggested that rather than have the text "CHECK ENGINE" on the light cars should simply have "\$\$\$\$\$\$" as a script.

But it doesn't always have to be an expensive repair. In fact, some problems can be fixed without ever going to the shop!

If your Mercedes-Benz is a 1996 or newer it has "OBD" – An Onboard Diagnostic System. Every time you start the car a computer checks literally 100s of things as fast as...a computer.

The Federal EPA mandated that one of these tests be for a loose gas cap – to prevent gas vapor venting into the atmosphere. Your car has a vacuum pump that will draw any air out of your gas tank to create a vacuum. If the vacuum doesn't hold, (air is leaking into the system) the sensor detects a "faulty" gas cap and triggers the "Check Engine" light. So, the easiest thing to check is a secure gas cap! If the cap is tight check the rubber gasket on the cap.

If it is loose, you'll get a second surprise. The check engine light will remain on for some time after the cap is tightened.

Again, Federal regulations mandate that the system check a number of times (start-stop cycles) to ensure that the leak really has been fixed. I have heard numbers of 5-8 "start-stop" cycles.

It might take a few days of driving for the computer to realize the problem has been "fixed".

### Bill Brandt

#### CHP 11-99 Foundation

In response to my column last issue on the CHP, Section member **Herb Cygan** wanted everyone to be aware of the 11-99 Foundation. It exists to offer financial help to the families of sick and fallen officers. 11-99 is code for "Officer Needs Assistance".

While it is not a part of the CHP, it is endorsed by them. For more information you can find them on the web at <http://www.chp1199.org/INDEX2.HTM>.

### Bill Brandt

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Mercedes-Benz

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## A Tour of Stuttgart-Sindelfingen

On March 25, 30 members of the Sacramento Section were taken vicariously to the Mercedes-Benz factory. We left through the portal of Granite Bay's Cabo's Mexican Restaurant. We saw not only all facets of the design and production process, but took delivery of a new E350. We saw designers create the concept car and 100s of robots (and the occasional human) assemble the cars.

When the car was finished, we were at the delivery area. Before we took delivery of "our" car, we had lunch at the company restaurant and did a bit of shopping at their extensive accessories area. Our tour guide, **Allen Wrenn**, told us that each day they deliver **300-400** cars to customers picking them up at the factory.

Before we left, we had a rather extensive tour of the museum, and saw plans for the new museum that will open in May, 2006. I'd like to thank hosts **Allen and Joyce Wrenn** for setting up this tour.

**Bill Brandt**



Allan & Sondra

## A Mystery Solved

On April 23, 2006 members of the San Francisco and Sacramento Sections toured DaimlerChrysler's fuel cell center in West Sacramento. It was originally scheduled for the previous day, but Communications Representative **Lora Renz** informed me a week prior that "we may not be able to host this on Saturday". Lora said that she simply received information from their headquarters that this time might be taken. Nothing else was known; hence the mystery. Since so many members had planned on Saturday, I felt that the next best alternative would be the following Sunday. The fuel cell people were most accommodating.

We are fortunate to have this facility in our neighborhood – the only other similar facilities are in Germany, Singapore, and Japan. And the people here have been so kind to us over the years. These cars – which have been under serious development by DaimlerChrysler since 1993, utilize the fuel cell to convert hydrogen and oxygen to electricity, which propels the car. Its only emission is water vapor. There are other companies experimenting with hydrogen propelling internal combustion engines. This process emits some pollutants, and is less efficient.



There has been a "chicken and egg" problem in that before the technology can be used widely, there must be widespread hydrogen refueling stations. Before there can be widespread stations, the technology must be developed to a degree – with cars offering range, reliability and affordability. The California Fuel Cell Partnership was created to facilitate this. By 2015, just 9 years into the future, these cars will be widespread in California.

We attended a technical lecture by the General Manager, **Dr. Peter Friebe**, and then had an opportunity to drive one of the hydrogen vehicles. We were all quite respectful of these "slightly modified" A Classes, which added about a million dollars to the base price. The startup procedure is similar to the cars we know. Turn the "ignition" key full right until you hear a click, then watch the LCD display "spooling up" giving percentages of readiness.

Within 5-10 seconds you are at 100% and ready to go.

Recently some of these have been introduced into fleet operation in the State of California. They are being used in Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Companies such as PGE and SMUD – both utility companies – are driving these in the "real world". As they are driving, a computer records performance data, which is periodically downloaded and sent via a wireless Internet network to Germany. In this way real time data is used to improve the product. The current vehicles get the equivalent of 50 miles per gallon with a 100-mile range. The next generation will achieve a 250 mile range. The fuel tanks, under 5,000 lbs of pressure, have been proven safe. They have been shot at and immersed in fire with no explosion.

At this time, the cost to produce hydrogen is coming close to parity with gasoline. Hydrogen can be made from virtually anything; presently extraction from natural gas or from water through electrolysis.

This was a joint event with the San Francisco Section. I'd like to thank **Hal Harper**, the San Francisco liaison, for making this a successful event. Finally, so much thanks goes to all the people at the fuel cell center. They have been so hospitable and accommodating to us over the years. General Manager **Peter Friebe**, Project Leader **Richard Fosmoe**, and **Luke Roina** all gave us their only free day of the week to host our Sections. So much thanks go to them, and past General Manager **Wolfgang Weiss**. Everyone has always opened the doors and given us so much of their time. *And the Mystery?* Well, I must say in 10 years of my planning events I had never before been preempted by a President of the United States who wanted to see the sights at the same time.

**Bill Brandt**

Continued from page 1

We will be meeting at the Sloughhouse Inn on Jackson Hwy at 8:30 AM and will be departing at 9 AM. For those that want to drive it themselves we will be going east on Jackson Hwy (Rt. 16) to Hwy 49 to Jackson, thru Jackson to Angels Camp, left onto Rt. 4 at the end of Angels Camp. Approx 4 1/2 miles out of AC turn right at Parrots Ferry Rd. Continue to Columbia on your left about 11miles. There are several parking lots available around Columbia at both ends.

**Space is limited to 45 guests!** Your Section will subsidize this event. Send in your reservation early!

**Hank Pezzetti**

## Parking Lot Follies

Almost every morning I have the same exasperating experience at the parking lot. Over the years I have learned to calm down somewhat (some would say that is all relative). At the age of 55 I have come to the conclusion that one would feel somewhat stupid being wheeled in an emergency room for “blowing a gasket” over something so seemingly trivial. So in an effort to deflect my aggravation into hopefully a more humorous direction, I humbly submit to you my observations of some parking lot profiles.

**The Prima Donna** - is the one I encounter most often. This is the person who wants you to wait behind him “however long it takes” to get that parking spot that is 30 feet closer to his destination. Most likely another space is open and available but that would require another 15 seconds of walking. This person will wait for the car in “his” space to exit – with a long line of cars in back sometimes spilling out into the street, until the chosen space becomes free.

**The Stalker** – As you return to your car he slowly creeps behind you out into the parking lot as you are walking. He thinks that you are (a) right near your car to exit and (b) know where your car is. In my case I have undoubtedly caused many a stalker to nearly blow their own gaskets when they finally realized that I hadn’t a clue where I left the thing 45 minutes ago. They generally give up following me as they realize I’m heading towards the hinterlands in a somewhat confused state.

**The Walker** – applies to me. While my 20 year old 300E isn’t worth much these days I park it with the same attention to “door ding prevention” as owners of much newer and more valuable cars. I don’t care if it takes me another 10 minutes to walk; it doesn’t bother me.

**The Follower** - seems to have a one-way relationship with Walkers. About half the time it seems when I leave my car by itself all alone – I return finding one other car parked come right next to it. It’s always just one car. Generally it is a beater with a dent or 2. These drivers seem to have a “pack mentality” and naturally gravitate towards another car, no matter how isolated. The more desolate the location the better.

**OK, there’s one more.** Having known a few people with a handicap placard – who really needed it – I encounter drivers without the placard who take a handicap spot “just for a moment” so they don’t have to walk another 45 seconds. I’ll let the reader supply a profile name....

**Bill Brandt**

### Columbia Lunch and Show, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ No. attending \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal Soup or Mixed Green Salad

Entrée Choices:

Seared Salmon with Orange Passion Fruit Sauce \_\_\_\_\_

Pasta Primavera with Olive Oil, Garlic, Fresh Vegetables \_\_\_\_\_

Yankee Pot Roast, Whipped Potatoes, Horseradish Sauce \_\_\_\_\_

Dessert – Chef’s Choice or Fallon Ice Cream Shop coupon Soup – Salad and dessert choices will be made at restaurant

Please make your checks payable to; MBCA Sacramento Section and send to;

Hank Pezzetti, 11371 Randolph Rd., Wilton, CA 95693

Any Questions call Hank at 916-687-4792

**REMEMBER: SPACE IS LIMITED TO 45, ACT QUICKLY \$34.00 per person, Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_**



## Welcome New Members

New Members

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Nathan Corey              | Sacramento         |
| Michael Gahagan           | Columbia, CA       |
| Gabrial Garofano          | Folsom             |
| James Hodges              | Placerville        |
| Richard & Phyllis Lindsay | Rancho Murieta, CA |
| Allen Lung                | Elk Grove          |
| Chris & Patricia Mar      | Roseville          |

**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

### Sacramento Section Officers • 2005

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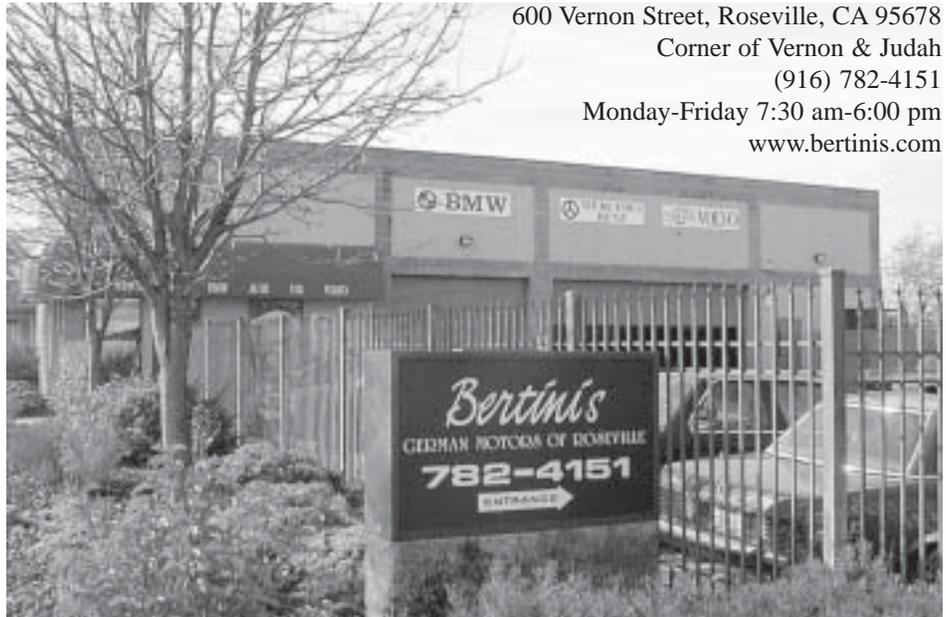
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## Mercedes Mart

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 or email [wlb@lanset.com](mailto:wlb@lanset.com).

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**\$500**

**Ted Lawson**

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**1970 250c Coupe**

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All power mechanisms work, clean, good driver.

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**Harry Whiting, Jr.**

**(530) 842-4878**

[harrywhiting@nctv.com](mailto:harrywhiting@nctv.com)



**2000 SL 600 Sport (AMG)**

Absolute mint condition V-12. Silver/black, just 29,500 miles. Bose 6 disc with subwoofer. Service "B", cooling flush and brake flush just completed at MBZ of Sacramento. **Extended Warranty through December 2009**. Custom cover, hard top carrier (with cover) and custom sunshade.

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**David (916) 487-5615**

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