



# Nickel City Star

FEBRUARY 19, 2009

SPRING 2009

[www.mbca.org/niagara](http://www.mbca.org/niagara)

**Coming Events:** See page 2

## Wine Tasting Party, Take Two!

Niagara Section  
Mercedes-Benz Club of America



With a slightly different twist from a conventional wine tasting event, the Niagara Section tried a Bring-Your-Own version, which was a real delight! Assembling at the home of Dave and Shelly Doherty, individuals and couples brought their favorite bottle and, with very little coaxing, each gave a small talk about the wine before pouring samples. We tasted wines from around the world—Germany, California, even New York State.

### *If You Like Riesling, You Might Enjoy Gewürztraminer*

*By Bill Fix*

**W**ine is growing in popularity as the beverage of choice among adults engaged in social and recreational activities in the United States.



*Widely consumed in European and other countries for centuries, Americans are awakening to its appeal as a consumer beverage and as a marketable product with huge growth potential in this country. In fact, many regions of the United States have discovered that our soil and climate conditions rival those of "the old country" vineyards.*

*In the spring of 2008, I produced an article for our newsletter titled, "What you always wanted to know about German wines..." I was asked to write a follow-on article to expound the virtues of German wine. (continued on page 7)*

## NIAGARA SECTION OFFICERS

### President

Gene Long  
8561 Falls Rd., West Falls, NY 14170  
716-652-8552  
genelong@verizon.net

### Treasurer

Herb Fischer  
235 High Park Blvd, Amherst 14226  
716-836-0511  
bayernguy@yahoo.com

### Newsletter Team

Joanie Long, Bill Fix,  
Mary Rollinger, Jim Norris,  
Karl Hutchinson  
**Editor:** Gene Long

### Vice President

Ed Yungbluth  
349 Argonne Dr., Kenmore, NY 14217  
716-873-9226  
yungbluth@adelphia.net

### Secretary

Rebecca Reed  
1570 Rice Road, Elma NY 14059  
716-652-4548  
rlinnr@verizon.net

### Northeast Regional Director

Doug Dees  
25 Birchcroft Rd., Etobicoke Ontario  
M9A2L5 Canada , 416-233-6599  
dees\_froelich@sympatico.ca

The NICKEL CITY STAR is published quarterly. Opinions, ideas and suggestions in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher or MBCA. No authentication is implied by the publisher or MBCA. No inference should be made that the products or services advertised herein have the approval of the publisher, MBCA, Daimler AG or MBUSA. The trade names and the trademarks "Mercedes-Benz", "Mercedes", and the three pointed star in a circle are owned by Daimler AG and are authorized for use by its licensees, which include MBCA. Personal ads for parts and auto sales are free to members, and commercial ad rates are available upon request from the editor.

## 2009 EVENTS CALENDAR

- **March 14 - Maple Sugar Tour and Pancake Breakfast**, Freedom NY, plus extra attractions
- **March 17— St. Patrick's Day Party** and Monthly dinner meeting, 6:30 p.m. Buffalo Brew Pub, Main near Transit, Wmvl
- **April 25 — Tech Session at MBoB** - Complimentary M-B inspections and refreshments (see page 5)
- **April 21— monthly meeting**
- **May 19 — monthly meeting (the last meeting until September 15)**
- **May — Grand Prix Go Kart Racing\***
- **June 14 – Father's Day Car Show at Sonnenberg Gardens\***
- **July 19 — Chautauqua Antique Car Club and Viking picnic\***
- **August - BBQ and New Members Meet and Greet Party\***
- **September - Air museum tour & dinner\***
- **October - Fun Road Rally\***
- **November—Tour of a local manufacturer\***
- **December - Annual Christmas Party\***

### ***\*Event details and date to be finalized***

These and other events are in the planning stages... watch for future announcements!

*Members of all sections and guests are always invited to Niagara Section events.*

*Details of most events will appear in future issues of this newsletter or sent via email and/or posted at [www.mbca.org/niagara](http://www.mbca.org/niagara). Or you may call Ed at 716-873-9226 for more information.*

*Please note, if you are not receiving emails about events and other important notices from the club, please forward your email address to: [genelong@verizon.net](mailto:genelong@verizon.net), so we can keep you up to date.*



We are having fun, despite the economy! Special thanks to Bill Fix, Mary Rollinger and Karl Hutchinson for again contributing fine articles for this issue, and to Joanie Long, Becky Reed, Ed Yungbluth for organizing the wonderful Christmas Party at the Cabaret Restaurant (page 4) and the Valentine's Brunch and Mama Mia! stage performance at Shea's Performing Arts Center (page 5). Sincere thanks to David and Shelly Doherty for the wine party, too!

Events are being planned for the upcoming year, which will offer a wide variety of activities. Check the list on page 2, and be aware that even more events are still in the works. We will notify all members in three ways: this newsletter, our website, and email from time to time. Please make sure we have your email address in our list, if you have not received an email from me in the past month, it means I don't have an accurate address for you. Send changes to me at [genelong@verizon.net](mailto:genelong@verizon.net). Thanks!

Our monthly meetings, the third Tuesdays of the month have been working out well at the famous Buffalo Brew Pub. Many members that we have been missing, are now attending. We have festive plans for the March 17, 2009 meeting, as an opportunity to celebrate St. Patrick's Day (as if we need an opportunity!)

Our planned "New Members Meet & Greet" night has been changed to a summer Bar-B-Que instead. More information will follow.

Lastly, we always need volunteers to help with organizing events, and committee members too. It's fun to get involved! Attend and bring friends! And remember, you don't have to own a Mercedes to be a member...

## Event

# Maple Sugaring in Western New York

Western New York Heritage Tour Series—Saturday March 14

Niagara Section 'Ausflug'

**Where:** Moore's Maple Shack and Pancake House, Galen Hill Road, Freedom, New York

**When:** Saturday, March 14th (alternate date: April 4, based on weather conditions)

**Signup:** Please send the form below to arrive by March 7.

**The Plan:** Meet at Dunkin' Donuts, Main and Willow in East Aurora at 9:30 am on the date chosen. Convey along scenic route 16 to Freedom to arrive at the Maple Shack about 11:00 am for a pancake brunch and a tour to follow.



We will enjoy a hearty brunch of buttermilk pancakes or French toast with real Maple Syrup, sausage, bacon & eggs, and ice cream with syrups made on site. (Brunch costs approximately \$10 per person including tax – gratuity is extra). Then we are invited to watch as maple sap slowly evaporates into delicious syrup – learn about the art of "sugaring" from Mr. Earl Moore. After brunch you can visit the Gift Shop if you choose to buy goodies to enjoy at home.

But don't spend all of your money...with our bellies full and our take home goodies safely in-hand we will mount up and drive a short distance to the center of Arcade, **Running Wolfe Winery** where hosts Catlin and David Wolfe will let us sample their products and make purchases if we care to. Parking nearby.

Lastly, on the way back, we will travel past the new **wind turbine** installation near Sheldon. This is an amazing sight and an impressive view into the future of power generation!

## Maple Sugar Ausflug Sign-Up Form—Please respond by March 7

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone# or email \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$10 per person, payable on site

**No money required, but please send this form by March 7 to: Mike Repko, 751 Rice Road, Elma, NY 14059-9581**

**...Or call 716-652-0374 to give us a headcount.**

## Niagara Section 2008 Membership Awards



**Bill Fix** receives the 2008 Member of the Year Award signifying dedicated participation and leadership in the Niagara Section.



**Roy Kuck**, center, was honored by Ed Yungbluth, left, and Gene Long on behalf of the Niagara Section, for 30 years of loyal service to, and membership in the club. Roy was presented with a two volume set of commemorative Mercedes-Benz books.

# Christmas Party at the CABARET!

Santa played a major role again this year and a grand time was had by all. Our dinner was terrific and we enjoyed having the Cabaret restaurant all to ourselves. Some members came from a hundred miles to celebrate the season and to generously donate toys to needy children in the Buffalo area.



# Valentine's Brunch and Mama Mia! Show

*Shea's Performing Arts Center, Buffalo*



## Tech Inspection April 25

### Event

Here is your chance to have a complete technical inspection of your Mercedes, by a trained experienced Mercedes Technician. This is a complimentary, no charge look at your car courtesy of Mercedes-Benz of Buffalo, for Club members only. You can speak to the technician and look for yourself too. Also you will receive a computer print-out of the technician's findings and recommendations.

In order to participate, simply make an appointment with the Service department for Saturday April 25, and identify yourself as a Mercedes Club member. The phone number is 716-633-0088. The number of cars is limited, so make your reservation early.

Refreshments will be served by Niagara Section members.





# BECKY REED

By Mary Rollinger

Our Star Profile for this edition of the Nickel City Star, Ms. Becky Reed, is not only our esteemed club secretary, but also our 2007 Member of the Year. Her fine efforts have enhanced our club membership for eight years now. Even though Becky does not lay claim to Mercedes ownership, she has been instrumental in planning and implementing many of our fine and fun outings.

NS: How did you become interested in Niagara Section activities?

BR: I was hired at the Buffalo Mercedes Benz Dealership ten years ago. It was my first introduction to the Mercedes Benz auto and its owners. Herb and Shirley Fisher were the first people I met. Then Gene and Joanie Long, who encouraged me to join the club. Not being a Mercedes owner, I was happy to learn that ownership was not required in order to become a member of the club.

NS: What's the dream model of a Mercedes that you would own, if you could?

BR: I really love the SLK convertibles. That's it! A black SLK convertible would suit me fine! I've driven many makes and models from the dealership. One of my favorite memories is driving down 219 on a nice warm day in an SLK with the top down.

NS: What qualities do you most enjoy about the Niagara Section Club?

BR: We're just a fun loving bunch of people. We are a diverse group, yet we have such a good time together. Some of my favorite activities are the Valentine's Day Brunch, the cruises, the Christmas Parties, wine tasting and the baseball games. I especially appreciate that many of our members are interested in antique and classic Mercedes, and their restoration.

NS: Give us a little background about your involvement in the club.

BR: I have been a member of the club for eight years, now. I am currently the Niagara Section's Secretary. Last year I helped to plan the Letchworth tour.



It was a popular event, and it was great to be able to share my admiration for Mary Jemison and her role in history.

NS: What feature would you most like to see on a Mercedes?

BR: It would be great if we introduced the B Class European Mercedes model into the U.S. It could be a wonderful seller because it is smaller and more economical.

NS: What is your vocation?

BR: I am currently retired. I worked for Mercedes first, as a receptionist; then in the customer service department.

Other jobs I have held include: twenty years with Sierra Re-

search as a defense contractor, a high school English teacher, a building contractor and working for a water purification company.

NS: Tell us about your hobbies and interests.

BR: I love to sing. I am active in my church as a soloist. I am a member of the Advent Chorale. I sing at weddings, anniversaries, funerals, and even do some karaoke. I enjoy cooking and travelling. In June I will be going to Ireland with two childhood girlfriends. I also enjoy short weekend and day trips.

NS: Tell us something about yourself that no one else would guess.

BR: I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis as an early teenager and at the age of sixteen was told I would not be able to walk again. I am of Germanic, Irish and English heritage and very stubborn. I don't give up easily and I take each day as it comes. Both of my parents have passed now. My health challenges have inspired me to be extremely independent.

NS: What is your favorite quotation, or do you have a quote that you live by?

BR: Yes. From the Bible in Ephesians: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

## *If You Like Riesling, You Might Enjoy Gewürztraminer*

*(continued from page 1)*

*“Among enthusiasts, Germany’s reputation is primarily based on its sweet wines and on its being home to the Riesling grape variety, which at its best is used for aromatic, fruity and elegant white wines that range from very crisp and dry to well-balanced, sweet and of enormous aromatic concentration.” Because the earliest German wines imported to this country were of the Liebfraumilch variety (a wine made from a variety of grape types and sugared to increase sweetness) Germany got a bad rap for producing sub-level white wines. Since then, if you ask some wine journalists, connoisseurs, trade insiders, or even non-German producers which wines they find the most exciting you will be surprised to hear German wines being mentioned with persistent frequency. The good news, in a sense, is that few are hearing this; hence, you are able to buy excellent German wines for less money than many commercially grown varieties of like quality.*

*Possibly, due to the aforementioned article, our club has developed a small cult of Rieslingers, of whom I am one. Perhaps you will want to expand your taste a little. So, if you like Riesling, you might enjoy Gewürztraminer. Traminer grapes were originally grown in Italy’s Tyrolean Alps, near the village of Termeno. Later a mutated variety of the grape was developed and introduced to German growers. The dark pinkish-brown, spotted berries were first called roter traminer. But because of the grapes “spicy or perfumed” aroma, the Germans called them gewürz (spicy)traminer. Gewürztraminer wines are an excellent match for fresh fruit and cheeses and a good compliment to many simple fish and chicken dishes, especially those using Asian spices.*

*While primarily a white wine country, red wine production surged in the 1990s and early 2000s, primarily fuelled by domestic demand, and the proportion of the German vineyards devoted to the cultivation of the dark-skinned grape varieties has now stabilized at slightly more than a third of the total surface. For red wines, Spätburgunder, the domestic name for Pinot Noir, is in the lead. This red wine comes from the grapes of the same name and is one of the most frequently harvested types of red grape throughout Germany. It is a wine that can be paired with foods that are similar to Pinot Noir pairings such as duck, lamb, pastas and meat entrees.*

*Another crossing and a personal favorite is Dornfelder. If a wine enthusiast is interested in drinking a German red wine that contains a full body and bold aroma, then Dornfelder is the wine to choose. This wine is derived from grapes which tend to ripen early on in the season. Due to its bold taste, one is best to pair this type of wine with foods that can hold their own in combination with this German red wine such as fruit, cheeses and desserts (maybe that’s why I like it).*

*Finally, please keep in mind, there are no bad wines, only wines you may not like.*

## WHEELS AND DEALS

**Wheels and Deals ads are FREE to all Mercedes-Benz Club Members.**

Please note: ads will appear in one issue only, unless specifically requested. Submit ads and requests to Editor or email [genelong@verizon.net](mailto:genelong@verizon.net)

**1983 M-B 300 Turbodiesel**, 87k miles, dark metallic blue/blue int., cold R134a a/c, power sunroof, auto, p/s, p/b, p/w, cruise, alarm system, one owner all original, exc. cond., prof. serviced, original Becker radio, new M-B battery, exhaust & radiator, hood pad, car cover, asking \$10,950, negotiable. Call 716-652-8552 or email [genelong@verizon.net](mailto:genelong@verizon.net) for pictures and more details.



# Some Thoughts on Gasoline

By Karl Hutchinson

*Taxes are always a popular topic of conversation, and I was asked by a friend for some details about gasoline taxes here in Erie County, given that our gasoline prices seem to be higher than they should be. While researching that topic, I came across several references to “winter” gasoline, so I decided to include that topic in this article.*

**Gasoline Taxes** New Yorkers pay some of the highest gasoline taxes in the nation, but our taxes on gasoline are probably not as high as you think. The following table lists the taxes we pay on gasoline and diesel, in cents per gallon (cpg), in Erie County.

Tax	Gasoline	Diesel
Federal Excise Tax	18.4 cpg	24.4 cpg
New York State Petroleum Business Tax	16.4 cpg	14.65 cpg
New York State Spill Tax	0.3 cpg	0.3 cpg
New York State Petroleum Testing Fee	0.05 cpg	None
Erie County Sales Tax – 4.75% of the following: Pre-tax fuel price+Federal Excise Tax+NYS Business Tax+NYS Spill Tax+NYS Testing Fee	8.34 cpg *(If pump price = \$1.999) 12.87 cpg *(If pump price = \$2.999)	8.34 cpg *(If pump price = \$1.999) 12.87 cpg *(If pump price = \$2.999)
New York State Excise Tax	8.0 cpg	8.0 cpg
New York State Sales Tax	8.0 cpg	8.0 cpg
Total Tax (If Pump Price = \$1.999 per Gallon)	59.49 cpg	63.69 cpg
Total Tax (If Pump Price = \$2.999 per Gallon)	64.02 cpg	68.22 cpg

\*Erie County sales tax computed by starting with the pump price, subtracting the New York state sales and excise taxes, and multiplying the result by 4.75/104.75

So, if the price at the pump is \$1.999 per gallon, we’re paying about 59.5 cents per gallon in federal and state gasoline taxes, and about 63.7 cents per gallon in diesel taxes. Notice that the state sales tax is fixed at 8 cents per gallon instead of being a percentage. That’s a good deal when gasoline prices are high, but a bad deal when prices are low.

The table above brings up an interesting point about highway funding and electric vehicles. Federal excise taxes on motor fuels go into the Federal Highway Fund to build and maintain Interstate and US highways. Similarly, state taxes are used, at least in part, to fund state highway projects and repairs. As more and more plug-in hybrids and other electric vehicles become available and people can drive without buying gasoline (at least for local trips), how do those drivers pay their fair share of highway taxes for road maintenance? I doubt that many, if any, of the politicians in Washington, DC, or Albany have given this any thought at all.

**Winter Gasoline** In order for our cars to start easily, the gasoline injected into the cylinders needs to vaporize prior to being ignited. The ease with which gasoline vaporizes depends on the temperature and the components that make up the gasoline. In summer, when it’s warm, gasoline vaporizes easily. The same gasoline, however, would have a difficult time vaporizing properly in the winter. For this reason, most states mandate special “winter” gasoline. Winter gasoline is blended to include more additives that vaporize easily in cold weather. These additives are not used in summer, since they would evaporate too easily and cause pollution problems. One of the more popular winter gasoline additives is butane. However, butane has a lower energy content than the other components of gasoline, so your car won’t travel as far on a gallon of winter gasoline as it will in the summer. On my car I have noticed a 2 to 3 miles per gallon decrease in mileage in the last couple of months. On the bright side, however, butane is relatively cheap, so gasoline with extra butane should be less expensive.

**Addendum** After this article was written, Governor Paterson announced his plans to reduce the state budget gap. Among his suggestions was a plan to return the state gasoline sales tax to a percentage instead of the current fixed tax of 8 cents per gallon. With the current pump price hovering around \$2 per gallon, the state could actually lose money, but they will make it up as the price of gasoline inevitably rises.



## Welcome New Niagara Section Members

LAWRENCE BROOKS and BARBARA NEMECHILDEBRANT

The Niagara Section Membership committee has launched new efforts to Recruit and Retain members. Our enrollment has been very steady over the past couple of years, but for 2009, we set a new Goal: to increase our roster by +10% and sustain the number.

Some of our planned activities are:

- **“New Member Meet & Greet” Bar-B-Que, August 2009.**
- **Greater MBCA presence at WNY car events, such as car shows.**
- **New member packets will be distributed to all current members. These will include introductory flyers to highlight our local activities and benefits. A great conversation starter, the flyer can be given to anyone with an interest in Mercedes, wherever you meet—in a parking lot, a party, or even a gas station.**

## Advertising space is available!

Advertising in the Nickel City Star newsletter brings your commercial message to at least two groups. This award winning publication is distributed to and read by over 100 local Niagara Section members as well as others within the Northeast Region of the M-B club. Also, recruitment copies are placed at businesses affiliated with the club, and read by many of their customers in waiting rooms.

The Niagara section Website also has links to our advertisers at no additional charge. If you would like us to include your website URL, simply provide the link information. Your ad and link will remain active for four consecutive issues, then will be automatically renewed and billed. You may also opt to specify multiple consecutive years and lock in current rates up to three years.

½ page size inside ad:	\$200.00	(Note: Ad copy may be modified between issues
¼ page size inside ad:	\$125.00	for special, promos or events.)
Business card size ad:	\$100.00	
à Web link to your site	No charge if ad is placed	

The Nickel City Star is published four times each year, and rates cover ads placed in all four consecutive issues.

*Please contact Gene Long, Editor, [genelong@verizon.net](mailto:genelong@verizon.net) or call 716-652-8552 for more information.*

***MBCA Membership Benefits - Please Renew!***

- Six big issues of The Star magazine every year
- Companionship with fellow M-B enthusiasts
- Locally sponsored events
- Local newsletter
- National driving, show, technical and social events
- Free classified ads, both local and national
- Free technical advice
- Reprints of recent and vintage articles
- Club Store online
- Raffle - new M-Bs



NIAGARA SECTION  
MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB  
OF AMERICA, INC.

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Nickel City Star Editor  
8561 Falls Rd.  
West Falls, NY 14170

A photograph of a silver Mercedes-Benz sedan, likely a C-Class, shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is parked on a reflective surface in a dark, modern setting. In the upper right corner of the image, there is a black rectangular box containing the Mercedes-Benz logo and the text "Mercedes-Benz".

**Mercedes-Benz of Buffalo**  
8185 Main Street, Williamsville, NY (716) 633-0088 [www.mercedesbenzbfflo.com](http://www.mercedesbenzbfflo.com)