



NICKEL CITY STAR

NIAGARA SECTION

BUFFALO, NIAGARA FALLS, AND WESTERN NEW YORK STATE

WINTER 2011-12

Christmas Party 2011



The fantastic new restaurant, Russell's Steaks, Chops and More was the chosen venue for this year's gala Christmas Party. Handsomely decorated for Christmas, Russell's lived up to its solid reputation of perfect surroundings and atmosphere, great service and fantastic food!



No sooner than we arrived, Santa Claus himself appeared! He greeted each of our attendees in person, and as is our tradition, each couple had a photo taken with him before he



had to depart for other engagements. Appetizers were excellent and we all had a chance to catch up with each other. Dinner followed with our special menu including salad, our choice of filet, strip steak, salmon, pasta, chicken and dessert too. During the party, a big screen slide show played back a collection of pictures of the past six years' events.

preparations and even prepared a poinsettia and a gift bag given to each couple or individual. Niagara Section also has an annual charitable event, so this year we donated unwrapped toys to St. Luke's Mission of Mercy. This local charity serves local unfortunate kids, making sure they are not left out this Christmas.

Our annual awards presentation ensued as Bill Fix and Gene Long presented this year's Member of the Year Award to Ed Yungbluth. Ed's level of activity both within our section and as an ambassador to other sections and regions is superb and he has been a proponent of the Niagara Section for not just 2011, but for many, many years.



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2012 EVENTS CALENDAR

- **January 17—Monthly meeting**, 6:30 p.m., Milos Restaurant, Main Street Williamsville. Guest speaker **Lauren Fix**, aka The Car Coach, will be our Guest Speaker January 17th. She can be seen and heard coast to coast on major TV, print, web and radio. Lauren is a winning professional race car driver with an educational background in engineering and marketing.
- **January 29 – Wine Tasting Party**, Ed and Bev's, RSVP, see below
- **February 12—Valentine's Day Brunch***
- **February 17—Annual trip to Canadian International Auto Show**, details to be sent via email
- **February 21—Monthly membership meeting** 6:30 p.m., Milos Restaurant, Main Street Williamsville
- **March 20—Monthly membership meeting** 6:30 p.m., Milos Restaurant, Main Street Williamsville



Please see our website www.mbca.org/niagara for calendar information and details!

*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.

See www.mbca.org/niagara and click on Calendar, 2012 Events, or

call Dave at 716-688-0540 for more information.

Also, check The Star and www.mbca.org for national events listings.

Event

Wine Tasting at Ed and Bev's

Date: Sunday, January 29, 2 p.m. to approximately 5 p.m.

Where: 4375 Homestead Lane, Clarence, NY 14031

"Admission": Simply bring an appetizer and a bottle of your favorite wine to share. Hear why each wine is a favorite!

Must be 21 or older to participate. Guests are always welcome!

To sign up, simply email eyungbluth@verizon.net or call Ed at 716-912-2121 or 759-1130 to let him know how many will attend.





As many of you know by now, we are starting off the new year with the seating of your new board of officers which took effect November 1, 2011. Your new board is: Bill Fix - President, Karl Hutchinson - VP, Dave Doherty - Treasurer, Fran Baumgartner - Secretary, and Gene Long - Ex-Officio.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our past board of officers for all of the hard work that they contributed to bring our club to its present and very admirable membership.

From the very beginning of our Chapter, founded by our first President Herb Fisher, and followed by Gene Long, we have strived to be the kind of club that reached out to its membership for ideas on what makes a club of this kind both active and successful. Through the efforts of all of you, we have developed a format that is the envy of many other club sections. We have regular monthly board planning meetings open to our membership where we plan and develop a wide variety of diverse activities and events that are consistently attended by an unusually large percentage of our members.

Our award winning newsletter, edited by Gene Long and our web site, developed and maintained by Art Bourget are significantly and consistently state-of-the-art.

Going forward, I can only hope to be able to continue leading our club in the fine fashion demonstrated by our past leadership. With your help we will continue to grow our club both in numbers and in quality. Towards that end I encourage you to spread the news. As a goal I would further ask that each of you bring a guest to those activities or events in which you participate. Remember, it's not necessary to own a Mercedes-Benz to become a club member.

Wishing each of you a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Is Mercedes Contributing to MDS?

- By Karl Hutchinson

I'm a motorcyclist, so I'm perhaps more aware of the abysmal state of driving expertise here in the United States than most car-only drivers. MDS, or Moronic Driver Syndrome, is an unfortunate and ever-present part of my daily driving experience. I'm sure you've seen these two types of drivers on the road. The first are completely clueless, looking straight ahead with their thousand yard stare, head and eyes never moving, never even a glance to the side or at their rear view mirrors. The second are much more animated, but they're doing everything but driving. Instead, their priorities are their phone, their breakfast, their makeup, or their satellite navigation system. Regardless of which type you encounter, these morons are a hazard to everyone on the road.

Mercedes-Benz is well known for its advancements in automotive design and safety systems. However, their latest efforts are seriously misguided. Attention Assist, Active Cruise Control, Blind Spot Assist, and Lane Keeping Assist, while intended to improve safety, may have just the opposite effect. They may actually encourage more driver inattention.

A theory called Risk Compensation says the safer or more protected an individual feels, the less cautiously he or she behaves. As a result, systems intended to reduce risk actually have very little real-world effect on accidents. ABS is often cited as the classic example of risk compensation. In a three year study in Germany, researchers looked at over 700 accidents involving taxi cabs, some with ABS and some without. The ABS-equipped cabs actually had a higher accident rate than the non-ABS cars. Here in the United States, insurance discounts for owning an ABS-equipped car have virtually disappeared as insurance companies have seen no decrease in accidents or costs as a result of ABS.

Mercedes-Benz may feel its new systems will increase our safety. Instead, they may encourage drivers to continue or even increase their reckless behavior. Mercedes' commercials touting these new "advancements" would be funny if they weren't tragic. The Google executive praising Active Cruise Control for preventing him from rear-ending a car stopped in front of him only looks foolish. If his depth perception is so poor that he cannot distinguish between a moving and a stopped car, he should surrender his driving license. I hope he never has another traffic accident, because he admitted on national television that he is a distracted driver who has to rely on safety aids to be safe on the road.

Those reading this letter who feel they need these systems to be safe on our highways should seriously examine their own driving habits and capabilities. Maybe they too should get off the road. Instead of relying on gimmicks to do their driving for them, they should consider taking an advanced driving course. And I don't mean a classroom course. I mean a real behind-the-wheel driving school to improve such skills as braking, swerving, and skid control. If drivers in this country were better trained, we would really be safer on the road.

Editor's comment: Agreed! Removing distractions and improving driver training are better paths to safety. MB Club offers several no-cost driver training sessions (your own car) each year at national, regional and local events. See your Star magazine for schedules.

Fahren in Deutschland (*Driving in Germany*)

by Bill Fix

It was 1962 and I was on my second deployment to Germany. Because I was an Army Specialist E-4 with over 4 years of service and married, I was authorized to ship household goods (furniture etc) as well as my privately owned automobile (POV) which at the time was a 1956 Oldsmobile Super 88.



What a car that was... a two door sedan painted turquoise and white with wide white wall tires and those beautiful "bullet" style tail lights. It was definitely an eye catcher.

The car was shipped via merchant marine cargo and was delivered to the port of Bremerhaven. At the time, I was stationed in Neckarsulm near Stuttgart. So I had to take a couple days of leave to go

to the port to pick it up. The port authorities cautioned me that because the car had been at sea for nearly two weeks and then on the dock for a while, that I might want to take it easy for the first 50 miles or so – let the car re-acclimate, so to speak.

I was anxious to get home so I immediately headed for the Autobahn, Germany's super highway. The highway was originally built at the direction of Adolf Hitler at the height of World War II to move military supplies from one end of Germany to the other as rapidly as possible. The highway was built for speed and even today has no speed limit except at exit interchanges.

Once on the highway I settled back and simply cruised at 50mph. I had the windows down and the radio on, tuned to the armed forces radio station. They were playing "oldies" from the fifties. *It felt great!*

Because there was no speed limit, cars were whizzing by me like I was standing still. The German custom for passing another vehicle was to pull up behind the car in front, flash the high beams to get the front drivers attention and then pull around and accelerate past the car. Most of the cars that were passing me were of course, Mercedes-Benzes, along with a smattering of Volkswagens, a Porsche or two, BMWs and Audis. With the high beam flash I also got a few horn beeps and several scowls because of my "slow" speed.

As I reached the 50 mile mark on my odometer I could almost feel the Oldsmobile beginning to stretch. It was whispering "let me go!". The powerful American built V8 responded easily to the pressure of the accelerator and the speedometer began to climb...60, 70, 80, 90 miles per hour. Soon we were cruising at over 100mph and there was still a lot of pedal left.

It didn't take long before I was seeing some of the cars that had already passed me. I probably was smiling ear-to-ear as I closed on the first car in front of me – a big Benz. We were both moving at over 100mph. I waited until we reached a part of the Autobahn that was on an incline. The Benz began to lose speed as we started up the incline. I reached down and flashed my high beams twice, pulled into the passing lane and put the pedal to the metal. The Olds speedometer inched up to 130mph. The light poles at the side of the road began to look like we were passing a picket fence...what a rush!! I had to close the windows and I was glad they were power windows – the wind noise was deafening. I couldn't even hear the radio.

At 130mph the exits just flew by. Before I knew it I was closing on the exit that I needed to get off the Autobahn. The sign said "Ausgang (Exit) 1 kilometer" so I started to ease off of the accelerator and apply the brakes. All of a sudden the exit was right in front of me and I was still doing 80 or 90mph. There was no way in h__ I was getting off at that exit, and so I sailed right on by....*whew.*

Lesson learned.....it takes a lot of room to decelerate from 130mph.

To be continued: (Trading the Olds for a M-B 190)

Christmas Party - Photos with Santa!



Questions? Call your Section President at 716-695-2582 or our National Business Office at 1.800.637.2360 M-F 8am—5pm MT, or visit www.mbca.org

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TIRES! Four Bridgestone Blizzak WS60 winter tires for C300. Almost new, used only 2,400 miles, size 225/40 R18 88R. Paid \$900, asking only \$550 for the set.

Also, one **Continental ContiSportContact 3**, size 225/40ZR18 with approximately 11,000 miles. Cost over \$300 new, asking \$75 or best offer. Please call Ed 716-912-212.



Newsletter



Nickel City Star Editor: Gene Long

Committee: Bill Fix, Roy Kuck, Jim Norris, Karl Hutchinson, Joanie Long

Advertising Rates: 1/2 page inside ad \$200, 1/4 page \$125, Business card ad \$100, Web Link no charge (with print ad). All rates per year (4 issues). Contact genelong@verizon.net for more information.

NEWSLETTER NOTE!

This newsletter is available online at our website: www.mbca.org/niagara

Please feel free to print it out, in full color, and read it at your leisure. If you prefer the electronic version, please email or call Gene Long (genelong@verizon.net or 716-655-4515) and your subscription will be sent by email notice only. In order to ensure that we reach all members, black & white paper copies of this newsletter will be mailed to all members. Thank you!

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MBCA Membership Benefits - Please Renew!

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- Locally sponsored events
- Local newsletter
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- Free classified ads, both local and national
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- Reprints of recent and vintage articles
- Club Store online
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Mercedes-Benz

The advertisement features a dark blue Mercedes-Benz CLS Class sedan shown from a front three-quarter view. The car is set against a dark, reflective background. The text "CLS Class" is positioned to the right of the car. At the bottom, the dealership name "Mercedes-Benz of Buffalo" is prominently displayed, followed by the address "8185 Main Street, Williamsville, NY (716) 633-0088" and the website "www.mercedesbenzbfo.com". The Mercedes-Benz logo and brand name are located in the bottom right corner.