



MBCA | SMOKY MOUNTAIN SECTION

Summer 2018

A Letter from the President

Dear Smoky Mountain Section Members,

I have decided that it is time for me to resign as President of the Section. I have enjoyed being President for the last several years, but I think that in order to reenergize our Section, some new ideas are needed.

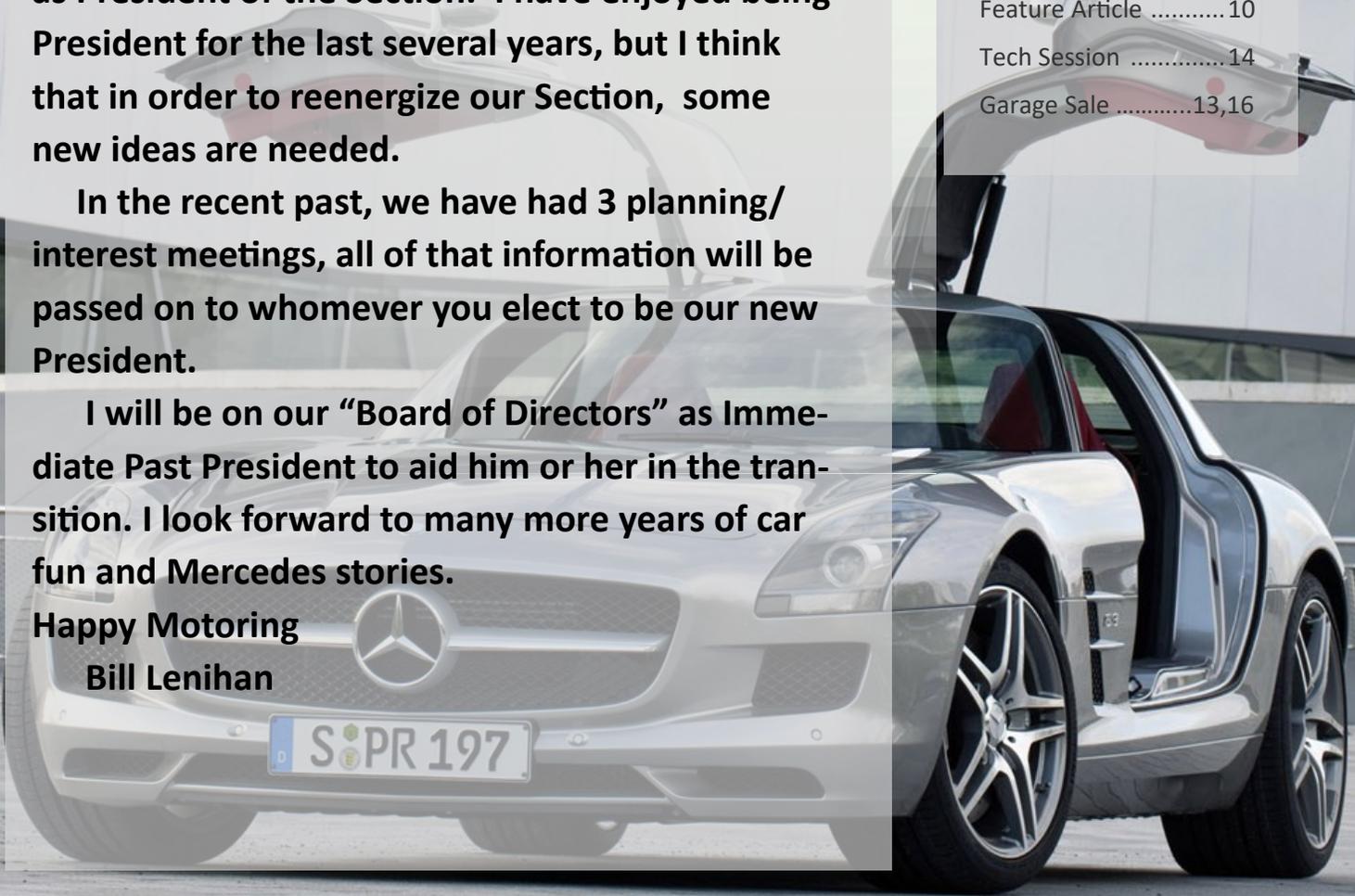
In the recent past, we have had 3 planning/interest meetings, all of that information will be passed on to whomever you elect to be our new President.

I will be on our "Board of Directors" as Immediate Past President to aid him or her in the transition. I look forward to many more years of car fun and Mercedes stories.

Happy Motoring
Bill Lenihan

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About the Newsletter

The Smoky Mountain Section, Mercedes-Benz Club of America, Inc. publishes this quarterly newsletter. Opinions expressed are those of the authors. Express permission is hereby given to other Sections of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America to reprint articles contained herein, except as noted. Articles should be mailed to the Editor, 233 Briarcliff Avenue, Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Copy deadline is the 15th of odd-numbered months.

An Overview of the Club

Established in 1956, MBCA has more than 20,000 members in over 80 Sections across the nation. These local Sections organize hundreds of events each year, ranging from social gatherings to specialized technical sessions. MBCA is a non-profit organization.

Join the Club	Call 800/637-2360
One year	\$ 55
Two years	\$107
Three years	\$157

Moving? Send address change to www.mbca.org

Local Activities

Your dues include membership in the Section of your choice. Each Section publishes a newsletter with news of its activities and their year-round calendar of events, including rallies defensive driving courses, car shows, and dinner meetings. Many Sections host special events such as Star-Tech, our national technical meeting and StarFest, our National Convention. Any MBCA member may attend any Section, Regional or National event.

The STAR

A subscription The STAR, MBCA's award-winning national magazine is included with your membership. Each issue includes technical information, a historic feature car in color, and the latest news from Daimler-Benz and MBUSA, articles on restoration, new car road tests, and advertisements from companies providing products and services for your car, plus free classified ads to members

Garage Sale

Members may advertise automotive related products for sale free of charge in the Garage Sale Section of the New Letter. Contact the Newsletter Editor.

Advertising Rates – Newsletter – 6 issues

Our Smoky Mountain Section newsletter reaches about 150 Mercedes-Benz owners in East Tennessee from Chattanooga to the Tri-Cities. Send ad copy and check to: George Murphy at (perfanalysis@comcast.net) or 233 Briarcliff Avenue, Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Full page – 8½ x 11	\$150
Quarter page – 4¼ x 5½	\$50
Half page – 8½ x 5½	\$100
Business card	\$25

Find us on



<https://www.facebook.com/SmokyMtnMBCA1980>

July 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
21	TBA	Tirekicker	Local Motors
15	8—11 AM	Harpes Cars & Coffee	West Town Mall
29		Concours d'Elegance of America	Michigan

August 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

24DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
18	noon	Tiirekicker	TBA
24	9am	Legends of the Autobahn	Monterey California

September 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
15	noon	Picnic	TBA
25-29		Silver Stars & Golden Aspens	Colorado
7-9		Mercedes & Muskets	Virginia
23		Great Marques Concours	New York

October 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
TBD		Cars & Coffee	West Town Mall

November 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
4-8		300 SL Classic	Arizona

MBCA Mercedes & Muskets

Sept. 7-9, 2018

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia

Step back in history at Colonial Williamsburg, a living museum that brings how our country began to life. Open to all Sections, MBCA members, and their families, this trip is guaranteed to spark your interest in history. A group rate of \$99 per night is available through Williamsburg Embassy Suites and includes a full breakfast and a nightly happy hour (use the code MER when making your reservations).

Click here to get all the details. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask. The registration form deadline has been extended to July 15, 2018.

Contact Nick Pasquine for availability.
Phone: (803) 283-3144
Email: NickPasq@aol.com

Reservation Form



Concours d'Elegance of America

At St. John's

Plymouth, Michigan

July 29, 2018

Join International Stars Section once again and enjoy on-site parking and a discounted entry ticket for the Concours of America, the Midwest's premier Concours d'Elegance.

The cost for one parking pass/one entry ticket is \$35; additional entry tickets are just \$25 each. To order, contact Michael Salemi at mdsalemi@aol.com, tell us how many parking passes and how many tickets you need, and we'll send you a PayPal invoice. Tickets and passes will mail out in mid-July.

Great Marques Concours

Sept. 23, 2018

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Mercedes-Benz Club of America NYC-Long Island Section will join Porsche and BMW at Old Westbury Gardens. For details, click here or visit our Facebook page. Registrations are due by Sept. 10. Make your check payable to MBCA and send it to:

Great Marques
c/o Gullwing Motors
100 Windsor Ave.
Mineola, NY 11501

For information, contact Oliver Seligman at (917) 763-0178.

Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Classic

November 4-8, 2018

Arizona

Sunday, November 4 Arrival, Registration & Welcome Reception

Participants arrive at The Boulders Resort in North Scottsdale. Participants may register, pick up credentials, apply decals and check in to the hotel. A drivers' meeting, welcome reception and the kick-off dinner will be held that evening.

Overnight Hotel:

[The Boulders Resort & Spa](#)

34631 North Tom Darlington Drive,
Carefree, AZ 85377

Monday, November 5 Day 1: Scottsdale to Winslow

Day 1 will take the participants from north Scottsdale to Winslow for the night. The route will take the drivers south a bit before connecting with Hwy 60 across Top of the World into the old mining town of Globe for lunch. In the afternoon the participants will drive east through the wonders of the Salt River Canyon and continue on through Snowflake and Holbrook and then west to the historic La Posada Hotel in Winslow for the night.

Route: – 278 miles / estimated 5:09 of driving

[Boulders to Boyce to Globe to Salt River to Holbrook to Winslow](#)

Overnight Hotel:

[La Posada Hotel](#)

303 E. 2nd Street (Route 66)
Winslow, AZ 86047

Tuesdays, November 6 Day 2: Winslow to Sedona

Day 2 will take the participants from Winslow to Holbrook before turning south toward the scenic Apache National Forest with a stop for lunch at Kohl's Ranch. After lunch the drivers will continue west through the beautiful high desert mountains of the Coconino National Forest and then south on AZ-89A through the dramatic Oak Canyon and into Sedona and The Enchantment Resort.

Route: 255miles / estimated 4:54 hours of driving

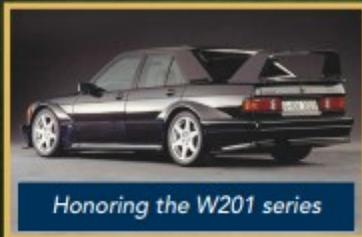
[Winslow to Holbrook to Kohl's Ranch to Mormon Lake to Sedona](#)

Overnight Hotel:

[The Enchantment Resort](#)

525 Boynton Canyon Road
Sedona, AZ 86336

LEGENDS OF THE AUTOBAHN® 2018



Honoring the W201 series



Judged Concours



Silver Star Preservation Class



Display-only Corral

The Legend Continues

Legends Of The Autobahn® is an all-German marque Concours d'Elegance held at the prestigious Nicklaus Club-Monterey during the famed Pebble Beach Concours week. MBCA members are invited to enter their car in the judged Concours, the Silver Star Preservation Class, or the display-only corral.

Honoring 35 Years of the W201 Series

35 years ago the Mercedes-Benz W201 marked the first chapter in the history of the C-Class. Today, the W201 models are celebrated as young classics by MBCA members from coast to coast. This year we honor the W201 series with a special class.

Don't miss this year's Legends:

Friday, August 24th

9 AM to 3 PM

Nicklaus Club

Monterey, California

Reminder: All Monterey Car Week events are moving back one week in 2018!



Register your Mercedes-Benz at www.mbca.org/legends

If you have questions, contact Allen Stephens at 503-708-0397 or allen.c.stephens@gmail.com.

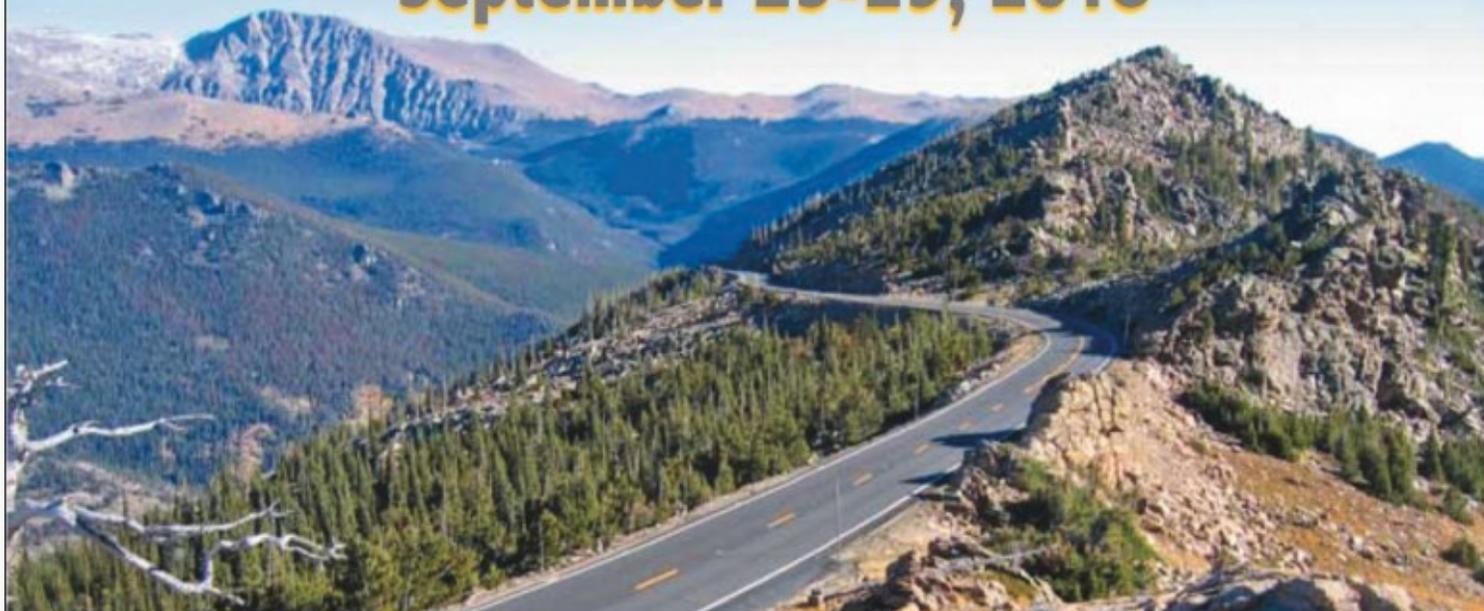


Silver Stars & Golden Aspens



Telluride - 2018

September 25-29, 2018



Register Today!

www.mbca.org/silverstars

Silver Stars & Golden Aspens is the national special event showcasing the beauty and grandeur of the Rocky Mountains. This 5-day driving event will take you up to 12,000 feet in altitude before plunging down to 5,000 feet. Highlights include:

- ▶ *Trail Ridge Road, Highway in the Sky*
- ▶ *Glenwood Canyon, gem of the US Interstate Highway System*
- ▶ *San Juan Byway and Million Dollar Highway (of Star Trails fame)*
- ▶ *Telluride Festival of Cars & Colors, premier automotive concours & static display. Mercedes-Benz is the featured marque in 2018.*

Silver Stars & Golden Aspens will cover 620 miles in 3 days of driving. There is no more gorgeous scenery, nor more inspirational driving anywhere else in the world.

Brought to you by the Pikes Peak Section.

2018 National Election

Mercedes-Benz Club of America will conduct a National Election this year to select four Directors at Large and six Regional Directors. The Directors at Large whose terms expire in 2018 are: Julie Bruggner, Scott Suits, Sr., Cliff Reyle and Frank Cozza. Regional Directors in the six even-numbered Regions will also be elected this year. Affected regions include: Mid-Atlantic Region (2), South Central Region (4), Southwest Region (6), Great Lakes Region (8), Southeast Region (10) and the Eastern Region (12).

Active members interested in running for office are encouraged to go online for information and petition forms:

- 1) Go to www.mbca.org;
- 2) click the 'Login' button at the top right corner of the home page and follow the login instructions;
- 3) click on the navigation tab titled "Community" then click on the drop down titled "MBCA Resources." The printable petition forms are under the "Election" section.

Completed Nomination Petitions and Conflict of Interest forms are due at the NBO by May 15, 2018.

If you need assistance, please call the NBO at 800.637.2360, 8am-4:30pm MT (M-T) 8am-4pm MT (F). The deadline for submitting valid petitions is close of business Tuesday, May 15, 2018.

Steve Ross
2018 Election Committee Chair

Microsoft Help

There was a pilot flying a small single engine charter plane, with a couple of very important executives on board. He was coming into the Seattle airport through thick fog with less than 10 miles visibility when his instruments went out.

He began circling around looking for a landmark. Finally, a small opening in the fog appears and he sees a tall building with a guy working alone on the fifth floor. He banks the plane around, rolls down the window and shouts to the guy, "Hey where am I?"

The man replies, "You're in an airplane." The pilot rolls up the window, executes a 275 degree turn and proceeds to perform a perfect blind landing on the airport runway 5 miles away. Just as the plane stops, so does the engine as the fuel has run out.



The passengers are amazed and one asks how he did it.

"Quite easy," replies the pilot, "I asked the guy in that building a simple question. The answer he gave me was 100 percent correct but absolutely useless, therefore, that must be Microsoft's support office and from there the airport is just five miles due East."

The Ship Repairman

A giant ship engine failed. The ship's owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine.

Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was a young. He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom.

Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do. After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for ten thousand dollars.

"What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He hardly did anything!"

So they wrote the old man a note saying, "Please send us an itemized bill."

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer..... \$ 2.00

Knowing where to tap..... \$ 9,998.00

Effort is important, but knowing where to make an effort makes all the difference!

The Modern Shade Tree Mechanic

I've always loved convertibles. I currently own two, a 1969 280SL and 2000 CLK320. Both are fun summer cars. I usually only get the 280SL out for car events and occasional drive. I may only put six or seven hundred miles a year and it only sees the road on sunny days with little or no chance of rain. The CLK320 is more of a daily driver in the summer months. It is a fairly modern car, with simple car electronics, no big color LCD screens or factory Bluetooth. I did install a Bluetooth to FM adapter that works great to connect my Samsung S8 Plus phone to the audio system so I may listen to streaming radio, navigation instructions and take calls. I use Bluetooth in all my vehicles and my phone for all these functions. I prefer the familiarity of the phones interface when switching between vehicles. I have also fabricated metal plates that the phone sits on with a magnetic case, so the phone serves as an extension of my dash.



The 280SL has the original 1969 Becker Mexico AM/FM cassette (first year for a cassette). I wanted to keep the car as original as possible, but I also wanted modern electronics. Years ago, when I was replacing the carpet in this car, I also put in a set of high quality infinity speakers on the rear deck. Even though the original radio powered them okay, the sound was not that stellar, plus I wanted Bluetooth connectivity. In this car I installed a Motorola T605 Bluetooth kit. This unit can connect to line level outputs from a radio and is placed before the power amplifier. So, hooking this up to a modern power amplifier to power the modern speakers and using Bluetooth from my phone gave me the sound I wanted, along with navigation instructions and the ability to take phone calls. The problem was the old Becker radio does not have line level outputs, only speaker level outputs. I installed a Speaker level to line level converter to get the output of the original stereo to drive the modern equipment. Even though I rarely use the original stereo for music, it still works seamlessly and keeps the original charm of the vehicle.

All this to say that a lot has changed in automobiles from the 1960's until now. From the 1960's there are very few sensors, no computers and the electronics are sparse, usually found only in the cars entertainment system. It was the late 60's when Volkswagen introduced the first on-board computer system with scanning capability in their fuel-injected Type 3 model. Around twenty years later in 1988 The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) recommends a standardized diagnostic connector and set of diagnostic test signals. But it was not until 1996 that the OBD-II (On-Board Diagnostic) specifications was made mandatory for all cars manufactured in the United States to be sold in the United States. This ushered in the era of the modern car. Laden with hundreds of sensors that feed into a computer to monitor everything from engine performance to if a window is up or down.



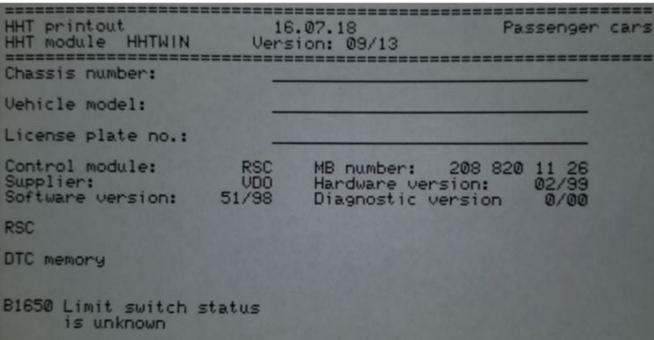
Anyone can go out and purchase an OBD-II scanner, plug it into the port, usually located under the dash and get the codes out of the cars computers. If you have a sophisticated scanner it may read the code and tell you what the issue is. If not, you can try to decipher the code yourself, and many are generic and will apply to any vehicle. But here is where car manufactures have us. Each manufacture creates their own set of specific codes, in some cases just for a certain model. These codes are not published to the general public, but only available by purchasing either expensive diagnostic equipment or service publications. Something the average car owner would not buy even if he wanted to work on his own vehicle. This requires you to either go to the dealer or a qualified mechanic that specializes in that brand of vehicle just to get a diagnosis of the complex systems in modern cars. In the right hands these tools are a blessing, allowing a mechanic to quickly find a faulty part and avoid swapping part after part until the car works correctly. But in some cases, it is the sensors that feed the computer that are the problem. And this brings me to my recent experience with convertibles.

Many people avoid convertible automobiles in modern cars because of the cost associated with fixing them if they do not work correctly. In my 69' 280SL I had an issue with the convertible top one time and it turned out to be a loose bolt. No electronics, hydraulics or sensors. Just a simple manually operated top. But recently I had an issue with my CLK320 top. This past spring when I took it out of storage the top stopped working. I checked around and discovered that the rear latch top release actuator had blown a seal. This is a hydraulic part and my keen sense of smell led me to the issue when I opened the trunk and smelled hydraulic fluid. Upon removing the insulation panel in the trunk, I could see the fluid leaking from the part. Upon doing some investigating, I found I could purchase this part for a little under \$200. From reading many of the forums online and other friends that work on Mercedes they recommended getting it rebuilt. The reason being that many of the parts like this may have been sitting on a shelf for years and the gaskets and seals in them are probably going to fail soon. So, I found a company to rebuild for a reasonable fee, but being a shade tree mechanic, I decided to buy rebuild kit off eBay and tackle the job myself. It was actually a very simple process and before long I had the part back in the car, topped off the hydraulic fluid, put everything back together and was ready to go about my merry way.



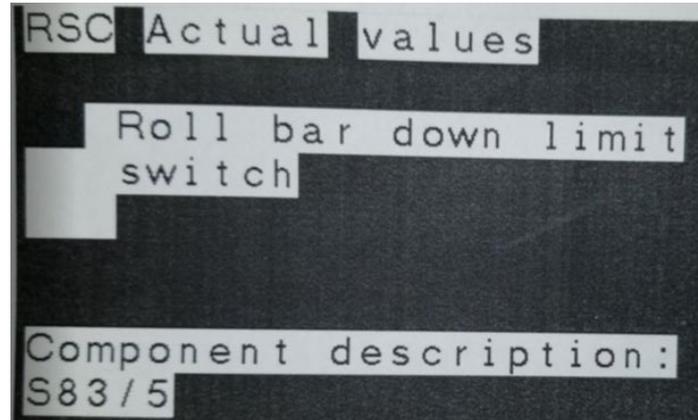
But the top still would not work. I could hear the pumps working, I could see it was trying to do something, but it just would not open. If I manually opened it, it would not close. It did not make sense, so I figured it must be something else. I read more forums online and many people had issues with the pump relay going out. This was a cheap easy fix, so I ordered a relay and installed it. Still, it did not work. I could only figure that either the pump did not have enough pressure or it was some other unknown issue. This is where I decided to seek professional council. I was driving down Kingston Pike in Bearden and saw [Bearden Benz Repair](#), between the Sonic and Nixon's Deli. I stopped in and talked to Ryland the service advisor about my problem and asked if they could just diagnose the issue, he said they could. We settled on a reasonable price and I made an appointment to bring the car in the following Monday morning.

Feature



I saw Ryland the following Monday morning bright and early and he took the car in the garage to be diagnosed. Around an hour later I had my answer. The OBD-II returned a code of B1650. My cheap generic OBD-II reader gave me this code, but because it is proprietary all I knew is that it had something to do with the body and a computer output circuit. Sort of like Microsoft Help. (see: "Just For Fun")

But with the proper diagnostic equipment they were able to narrow it down to the Roll bar down limit switch. It even gave the component description that I was able to look up online. Now that I knew what was causing the problem it all made sense. The top would not go up or down because the computer did not think the roll bar was all the way retracted. I set out to repair the faulty component. This is where my Karl Benz guardian angel must have been looking over me. I was able to find a YouTube video on how to gain access to the roll bar by removing the back seat. Only took a few minutes. The first thing I did was reset the electrical connectors and lightly tap on the suspect sensor with a ratchet extension. I then tried the roof, and Wala ... It worked. I'm not sure if the resetting the connectors or the tapping fixed it, but I will go with the tapping. (see: "Just For Fun")



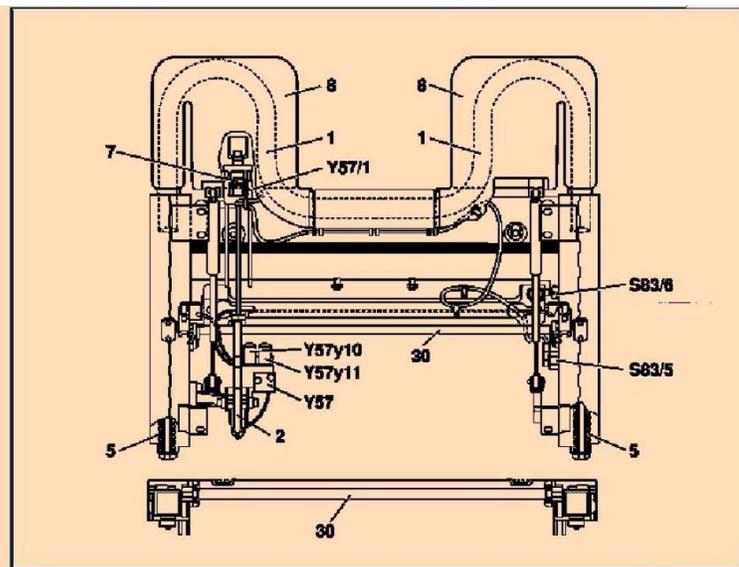
After It started working I decided to look up the part, just incase it stops again in the future. Here is the kicker.... Apparently, you can't replace this sensor, Mercedes only sells the entire roll bar system as a unit with a list price of \$7200. I doubt they sell many, because that is more than the car is worth in today's market.

Needless to say, I am very happy to have my convertible top working correctly again on my CLK320 and was able to accomplish this for the most part by myself for less than \$40 in parts and \$100 in expert labor. But if were not for the experts at [Bearden Benz Repair](#) and their dedication to working on MB products, I would still be putting that top up and down manually.



Faulty Sensor

- 1 Roll bar
- 2 Hydraulic cylinder roll bar on support and control element
- 5 Spring for crash deployment
- 7 Lock (coupling)
- 8 Head restraints
- S83/5 Roll bar (RB) lowered limit switch
- S83/6 Roll bar (RB) raised limit switch
- Y57 Roll bar (RB) valve block
- Y57/1 RB deployment solenoid
- Y57y10 Rod side valve
- Y57y11 Piston side valve



For Sale

1999 C43 AMG

Car is in like new condition with all service records and factory books
Mileage 64,000 – only 1500 imported to US over three years
Original silver paint; black & silver leather seats

VIN: WDB HA33 E3XF 784124

BAS, ESP, ABS

Automatic climate control with dust/pollen filters

Power driver's seat

Power windows with express-up and down control

Cruise control

3-channel integrated garage door opener

Outside temperature gauge

Auto-dimming day/night mirror

Heated power side-view mirrors

302 horsepower; 302 ft-lb torque; 0 to 60 mph in 5.9 seconds; electronically limited top speed of 155 mph.

Huge four-wheel vented disc brakes (adapted from AMG Mercedes race cars: 13.1-inch discs in the front, 11.8-inch at the rear)

AMG monoblock 17-inch alloy wheels with low-profile "staggered" tires (225/45 in front, 245/40 rear).

The C43 suspension system is modified with firmer springs and stiffer shocks as well as heavy-duty stabilizer bars.

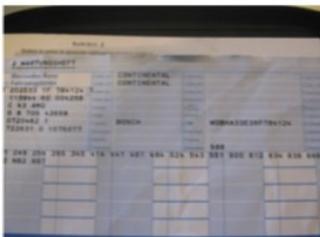
Includes the new-generation radio unit that features fiber-optic technology and integrates controls for the sound system and 6-disk CD changer and standard Bose audio system.

Features SmartKey radio-frequency unit to lock and unlock the doors, and a separate system to start the car.



Owned by MBCA Technical Advisor George Murphy for 10 years (2nd owner)

Asking \$17,900 865-482-9175 perfanalysis@comcast.net



Power Outlet

I frequently use a 12-volt vacuum cleaner to keep my car clean on occasion. But I am hesitant to plug it into the cigarette lighter socket in my ashtray because I have to turn the ignition key on to get power from the lighter socket. Is this a safe practice?

It may be safe as far as it goes, but I am nervous turning on the car without starting the engine just to use a 12-volt accessory – especially the newer cars with all sorts of computers turned on at the same time.

A better solution is to do what I did to my 1999 C43 AMG – I installed a 12-volt socket in the trunk that is connected to the battery via a 15-amp fuse. I use this source of power for my car vacuum cleaner, an electric impact wrench or any other device I want to run without turning on the ignition key.

CAUTION: If your car has TWO batteries, review the May/June 2009 STAR article before adding such a socket – it must be connected via the existing fuse block near the rear battery.

Parts:

- 12-volt socket with cap from Radio Shack
- In-line 15-amp fuse (buy a spare fuse, too)

A few feet of 14 gauge stranded wire – I used RED for the positive, black or brown for negative.

For a trunk-mounted battery, choose a socket location that is easily installed with adequate space behind the panel for the depth of the socket. (Alternatively, simply wire up the socket on the end of a wire and stow it out of the way when not in use. Be sure to use the insulating cap on the socket when stowing it away).

I found a convenient mounting screw to use for a ground connection; I used a ring terminal on the positive wire end to attach to a small screw on the positive battery terminal



Socket installed in panel behind right side taillight

Wiring to battery.

Fuse and wiring shown is tucked under the CD changer



Battery Issues

Q: When I first bought my 2005 C55, it had been sitting for long periods of time, so I wasn't surprised when the battery ran down, and I had to jump-start the car, and when I took the car in to the dealer, they confirmed that it was marginal, so they replaced it. Even with a new battery, only a few weeks later, I found myself with a battery that was too low to crank the starter, so I had to jumpstart it again. After driving it for about 50 miles, I got the warning "Battery/Alternator problem. Drive to workshop." This time, the dealer said the fault was with the voltage regulator, and battery wasn't getting a full charge when the engine was running. They mentioned that this problem had been encountered on other 2005 cars, and even had been the subject of a recall on some models, so replaced the regulator under warranty.

My question is why doesn't the Mercedes provide any warning that the charging system is not working until the voltage in the battery is too low to start the car? On older cars I'm familiar with, I would have at least got a discharge light warning on my dashboard, or would have realized there was a problem when my voltage gauge showed dropping voltage in the battery.

Is there some way I can find out that the regulator or alternator isn't charging the battery before I'm stuck again? Should be looking for an aftermarket voltmeter to fasten under the dash?

Signed: Stuck in Marin.

You have two problems here: short battery life and possible low alternator output. First – lead acid batteries typical have a life of four to five years. My rule of thumb is to replace any lead acid battery older than four years. I prefer the Optima brand AGM batteries because they do not self discharge while idle and exhibit long life. MB has recently started using these AGM batteries in newer cars – see The STAR May/June 2009.

Secondly – your alternator may not have been delivering adequate voltage to keep the new battery at full charge – and the battery may have been defective from the start. When your new battery was replaced the technician should have measured the alternator output to assure proper charging. Another rule of thumb: with the engine at 1500 rpm, you should see NO LESS THAN 13.8 volts at the battery terminals with all power consumers (lights, A/C, etc) turned off.

From members' experience, some 2005 models have suffered charging problems but I am unable to locate a relevant MBUSA Service Letter to that subject. Normally, your car's charging system will warn you of a low charging condition (as it did) and you can take appropriate action. Instead of a charging light, your car's computer displayed a message of the problem – so there is a warning, albeit in your case, almost too late. A charge light only shows low or no alternator output – it will not warn you of impending battery failure. A properly connected voltmeter could show degraded battery condition - when the key is first turned on before start – but I have yet to see analog automotive voltmeter show very accurate voltage. A good digital device would be more useful, but finding a good location in today's MBs that would be easy to see may be a problem. (Maybe install it in the glove box, where you could read it on occasion but not have it in the way otherwise).

If your car sits unused for long periods, MB has available an approved "trickle" charger - more like a maintainer for car batteries facing long periods of storage. The device can be installed to allow easy connection to AC power to keep the battery fresh, but not overcharged. The recommended trickle charger has the advantage of being fully automatic - it can remain connected to the battery for long periods without damage to the battery. Included with the battery trickle charger kit is the trickle charger itself, an extension harness, and hardware used for installation. The charger wiring installs neatly in the trunk and the car can be locked while the device is in use.

The kit is MB part number B6 754 2020. Model 129 SLs as of 9/95 production require fuse 7.5 amp (part # 002 545 08 34) and contact (part # 006 545 36 26). Installation instructions for do-it-yourselfers are shown in MB Service Information S-SI-MBNA-54/43. Installation is different for each MB model, so be sure to follow the procedure for your model.

Be sure to review the precautions mentioned in the May/June STAR when installing ANY electrical device in two-battery cars.

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(Change oil through dipstick tube - no crawling under car)



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