



Mercedes-Benz Club of America

Hudson Mohawk Section

SPRING NEWSLETTER JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2010

First Quarter

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“BEST OF THE BEST” KEELER MOTOR CAR COMPANY



Rich Fortune, Used Car Manager; Bill Dawson, Parts Manager; Maria Dunning, Vice President, Dan Rothstein, Service Director; Peter Connolly, General Sales Manager

Everyone who purchases a Mercedes Benz wants great service but some dealerships go far beyond what most buyers would ever expect. Keeler Motor Car Company located at 1111 Troy-Schenectady Road Rte. 7, in Latham, New York, has been offering this kind of service for more than forty years. Keeler is one of the oldest “Benz” dealerships in the USA. It was founded in 1967. The new main building opened in 1996 and that is when most of the current management team began their employment.

Maria Dunning, the Vice President of all the Keeler dealerships, said “No one comes to work with a different goal than mine. We all want to make the right decisions to ensure that our customers are satisfied and pleased with our conduct in sales and service. When someone purchases an automobile from us they become part of our family. We take care of them because we know that a Mercedes is not just transportation. It’s a life style. We are very proud of our retention rates.”

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The board of HUDMO is conducting an informal survey to find out who reads the newsletter and what your suggestions are for increasing membership participation. So with that in mind please send us an email. You can send it to any board member. We have a wonderful calendar of events that includes tech sessions, driving events, new member parties, (all members will be included) car shows, day spas, and picnics. That's just for starters. We want the club to be fun and informative for all our members. Your ideas will help us meet that goal. Starting now we will be asking our members to partner with board members to assist in our various events. If you are interested, contact us. Don't wait for us to call you.

As a special incentive, a drawing will be held at the next board meeting from your responses. The winner will have their dues paid by the club for one year and will be announced in the next issue.

Ron Tanner is recovering from an illness and will return soon. Our prayers are with him.

Jim Wright, Acting President

ATTENTION

With every e-mail and address update our Section provides MBCA, via website, phone, e-mail or snail mail, members will receive a 10% coupon for one item at the club store. One coupon per member will be sent electronically (so it must include a valid e-mail address).

ANNUAL AWARDS

HUDSON MOHAWK SECTION

HONOREES

DECEMBER 2009

At its year end Board meeting your Hudson-Mohawk Section of the MBCA gave out awards to two very deserving members. **Past Secretary David Bullard** was given a Certificate of Appreciation for serving four years as Secretary/Treasurer and two years as our most recent Secretary. **Past President Ginette Maslanka** was given three awards: a Certificate of Appreciation for her many years as President and the leader of our Section; a second award for 30 years as a member, (this award was given on the anniversary of her first joining the club in 1979); Ginette was also given a beautiful engraved plaque as Member of the Year for all her continuing contributions to the club. Join all of us in congratulating these two fine individuals. We know we can count on them for more in the years to come.

Ron Tanner, President

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

William Beecher

Clifton Park, NY

Charles and Mary Jane Mitchel

Poughkeepsie, NY

ANNUAL TECH SESSION AT KEELER

SATURDAY, MARCH 27 10:00 AM

Our section is pleased to offer a tech session at Keeler Motor Car Company in Latham NY.

The session will be open to the public and non members are welcome to attend. "Inspections will be by appointment only so we can plan accordingly" according to Rick Walker Mercedes-Benz service manager (rwalker@keeler.com) 518-724-1015x120.

Past tech sessions have been well attended. Attendees will have an opportunity to see our members' older classic Mercedes displayed. As part of the morning's program, there will be a discussion on how to wisely purchase a used Mercedes: what to look for; the do's and don'ts, and determining fair price.

A 50-50 raffle will be held, one winner and the auto restoration program at Northeast Parent & Child School in Rotterdam will receive the cash prizes.

You will also have a chance to win a free oil change at Keeler's, our host for the event. Our club event will have many highlights including answers to these and many other questions:

How does the drowsy alert work?

What distinguishes the Mercedes navigation system from others and how does it work?

How does one change a tire when suffering a flat?

What exactly is the roadside assistance policy?

What are the twelve points of a twelve point inspection?

We will also be hearing about the future evolution of Mercedes vehicles from a Keeler professional, Rick Walker.

Please plan on attending this event. The event is free and open to the public however registration is required for the 12 point inspection. To register or if you have any questions please contact me at:

T. David Bullard

The Marshall House, 136 Route 4 North, Schuylerville, New York 12871-1956

dbullard@taxredux.com

After every service transaction, Dan Rothstein, the service director sends a letter to get feedback from customers. The care that Keeler takes with its customers is probably why it has won "The Best of the Best Award" in a capital district newspaper readers poll in its category. The survey was held by the Times Union newspaper.

A great example of this is what I'd like to refer to as the "pajama call". Vice President, Dunning received a call that an alarm had gone off at the dealership early one morning. She quickly got out of bed and rushed to the dealership which was closed because of the early hour. When she arrived, a distraught customer, who had just been dropped off from the airport to pick up his car was stranded there with a dead battery. She went inside, got battery cables and gave the customer a jump and sent him on his way. It was only then that she realized that she was still in her pajamas. "That's Keeler service."



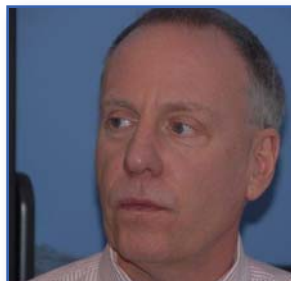
Keeler's service department is run by a very talented team that has raised their formidable technical skills to an art. No one is forced to wait for a simple task like changing a light bulb and all major work is scheduled for the customer's convenience. They are honest, highly skilled and very cordial. They know your car and who you are.

This group is managed by Rick Walker, who has been employed at Keeler Motor Car for over twenty years. He started as a technician apprentice and received promotions to his current position. Mr. Walker has achieved master guild status twice, once in 2001 and again in 2008. A master guild award is the most prestigious recognition for excellence that a service technician can receive. He said; "The



automotive service industry is not easy or for the faint of heart. Meeting customer expectations and keeping pace with ever changing technology for any auto manufacturer is an increasingly difficult task. With Mercedes-Benz there is no higher level of customer expectations or technology. Our goal is to exceed customer expectations and provide the absolute highest quality of service anywhere."

Keeler's service director Dan Rothstein has more than 35 years of experience in the auto industry. There are three service advisors, Rob Keparutis, Mike Severino, and Joe Palumbo.



Bill Fitzpatrick heads up the "BDC" or business development center which handles the incoming service calls, schedules the appointments and answers many of the customer's technical questions. Warranty administration is handled by John Kelty. Kristen Deveto handles cashing and customer contact.

Tim McKenna is in charge of dispatch and works closely with our two shop foreman to control work flow in the service shop. There are sixteen technicians with lift space for twenty. Many of Keeler's technicians are master certified. The technicians are always in in-service training and some are sent to Germany for highly specialized training. The service department can repair any Mercedes regardless of its age.

Bill Dawson is in charge of the parts department. There are six parts professionals including a shipper/receiver. There are two parts advisors embedded directly in the work shop strictly for servicing the technicians. While not all parts are in stock for vintage cars, most can be serviced and repaired with components available from Mercedes-Benz. Bill has a special library for older vehicles.



There are five support staff to assist with car washing, customer pick-up and delivery, lot maintenance, and housekeeping.

Enterprise Rental Car is available for clients who have alternative transportation needs. "Team work is the key, there are no unimportant positions." Bill Dawson said.

Keeler has an excellent sales staff for new and used cars. They are leaders in their field and have quite a bit of experience. Some have as many as seventeen years with the company. There are seven full time sales associates. The most successful salesperson is Dominick Lombardo who has consistently led in sales. Keeler is one of the country's top dealerships. Their prices are very competitive. The most popular vehicles are the C, E, ML, and GLK.

With a few exceptions the majority of customers are located within a thirty mile radius of Latham, New York. Some customers come from Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, southern New York and much farther away.

Peter Connolly, the General Sales Manager said; "We depend on customer retention. Anything that can be done will be done to maintain customer satisfaction." Keeler is like a family and the group in charge has worked together for many years. In addition to providing world class sales and service Keeler Motor Car is very active in supporting community causes and events. The new car sales manager is Nick McDonald. At the end of this article many of the groups supported by Keeler are listed.



The Hudson-Mohawk Mercedes Benz Club appreciates the help and cooperation we have received from Keeler over the years. We are partners in our love for these wonderful driving machines. Keeler has allowed us to use their facility for "tech events" and car shows. We look forward to many years of working together to help Benz owners get the most enjoyment out of their cars. "HUDMO" is glad to showcase this wonderful organization.

**HERE ARE A FEW ORGANIZATIONS
THAT KEELER SUPPORTS
THROUGH DONATIONS.**

Albany Business Review "40 under 40"
Hudson Valley Community College
Proctor's Theatre
Albany Institute of History and Art
Albany Wine & Dine for the Arts
Saratoga Performing Arts Center
American Red Cross of Northeastern New York
Families In Need of Assistance, Inc.
Colonie Police Benevolent Association
Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.
Capital District YMCA
Jewish Family Services
Saratoga Children's Theatre
St. Margaret's
The Equinox
Northeastern Regional Food Bank
American Diabetes Association – Tour de Cure



*Rob Keparutis
Service Advisor*



Tim van der Wouden; Rick Walker



Travis Horne, parts



*Bill Fitzpatrick, Business
Development Center*



Article & Photographs by James Wright

***SAVE THE DATE*
SECTION EVENTS CALENDAR**

- March 27 - Annuul Tech Sesion at Keeler, Latham, NY**
Contact David Bullard; dbullard@taxredux.com
- June 19 - Mercedes Jamboree at MBUSA Montvale NJ
Contact: Jim Wright 518-281-3406; killuh@nycap.rr.com
- July 11 - Hudson Mohawk Car Show in Hudson NY*
Contact: Jim Wright 518-281-3406; killuh@nycap.rr.com
- July 16,17,18 - Hemmings Auto Show Stratton Mt. VT.
Contact: Ron Tanner 518-822-6164; Exqqme06@yahoo.com
- Oct.9 - Fall Foliage Tour Saratoga*
Contact: Ron Tanner 518-822-1664; Exqqme06@yahoo.com
- Oct 11 - Fall Rallye Tivoli NY
Contact: Jim Wright 518-281-3406

***Hudson Mohawk Section Event**

We encourage you to offer suggestions and consider volunteering to help develop each of the Section events or to partner with a Board member to plan an event.

NEW MEMBER RECEPTION

There will be a new member reception on April 24, at 12:00 PM, at the Holiday Inn, Wolf Road, Albany, NY. New members will be entertained at the club's expense. It will be a chance to meet the club officers, each other and other members who attend.

If you joined the club in 2009, we will be contacting you. All members are encouraged to attend. The lunch fees will be announced in a reservation mailing. The hosts for this event are:

David Bullard
518-695-3765
dbullard@taxredux.com

Paul Lotters
518 656 3060
paul.lotters@verizon.net

WHAT KIND OF MERCEDES-BENZ DO YOU DRIVE?

I drive a white E350 2006. The car is wonderful. My second E.! I am a big guy and I am not comfortable in many cars. The E class is great for me.

My second car is a 1991 SL 500 (black on gray). I wanted a drop top. I have owned the '91 for 7 years; it has 70,000 miles on it and I love to drive it.

I choose cars by their looks and I stay with a make if the dealer is good. I like the way the cars perform and Keeler takes good care of me. If you are going to keep a car for a long time you have to spend money on maintenance. If you want to fix something you take it to the best trained mechanics; in the long run you save.

Don Finelli

I own several Mercedes Benz that I use for transportation, parts and re-building. They are: 1988 300 SEL; 1987 300SDL; 1990 190 E; 1988 260E; and a 1990 350 SDL.

George van der Wouden

Well I have two, a 1967 250 SL and a 1968 250 SL and I love them both. For some reason the '68 is faster than the '67 so I suppose I like it a little more for that reason. These are not show cars by any means, just lots of fun to drive. Maureen and I drive them in parades, rallies, tours; you name it we will drive in it. The '68 did the Route 66 tour while the '67 did the Circle Lake Michigan Tour, both great events. The 1967 was a true barn find and I am still cleaning it up, someday I may have it restored, that is after I win the lottery of course.

Ron Tanner

I own the following MB's: 1984 190E (blue); 1985 MB 300 TD (silver); 1978 MB 300 CD (yellow).

Tim van der Wouden

I have a 1982 240D Mercedes Benz (all original parts) with 100k; a 1990 560 SEL (for sale); 1976 240D; 1991 350 SDL and a 1986 190E (a re-built wreck).

Cornelius van der Wouden

MBCA HUDSON MOHAWK SECTION END OF YEAR REPORT

Beginning Balance 1/1/09	\$3,000.62
Total deposits	\$5,949.83
Total disbursements	\$6,195.28
Ending Balance 12/31/09	\$2,755.17

*George van der Wouden,
Hudson Mohawk Section Treasurer*

MBCA WOMEN

Do you find yourself yawning at car shows while your husband or significant other goes on and on about nuts, bolts and car parts? Do you bring a book and escape or sun yourself for an hour? I would like to know if anyone would be interested in a Spa visit. Some friends and I found a wonderful Spa in Saratoga during the German car show in October. Would you please e-mail me if you are interested and/or if you have any other ideas as to a different time and location. I will act according to your responses and keep you updated. Thank you.


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518-527-8822

cthusgaard@gmail.com

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**THE 2009 LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM
HAS BEEN EXTENDED UNTIL
APRIL 30, 2010.**

The All New 2010 E-Class



Mercedes-Benz

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(518) 785-4197 • www.keeler.com



Mercedes-Benz Club of America

Hudson-Mohawk Section

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