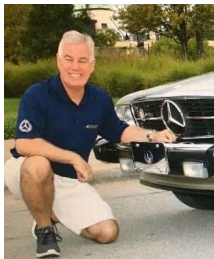




**EASTERN OKLAHOMA SECTION
OF THE
MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA**

**TULSA STAR NEWS
July - Aug 2023**



**John Kushnerick
President**

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Last month I offered two opportunities to meet new people from around the region who share your interests and lifestyle. The May Poker run with the Ozark section was a blast and all who participated really enjoyed the drive, comradery, and the lunch after the tour.

The Mercedes Benz picnic in Edmond with the members of the Central Oklahoma section was equally rewarding with fifty members and guests enjoying a beautiful day picnicking at Hafer Park. Along with seeing old friends, it is always great to see the various models of Mercedes Benz (old and new) on display. Thanks to Jeff and Lisa Leatherock for hosting another picnic with lots of food, door prizes, and featured guests.

As we are moving to the next few months, I would encourage you to come to two events that you might like. The first is a Night of Horsepower as we go to Fair Meadows racetrack to see thoroughbred horse racing in Tulsa on Wednesday July 12. Details are in this newsletter as well as an eblast that you should have received in late June.

August the section will host our second annual "BENZ & BRATS" potluck dinner at the home of Tom DeLorbe in Bixby. The section will provide the Brats and buns as well as an assortment of nonalcoholic beverages. We ask members to sign up for side dishes, desserts, or a casserole. Last year we had this event at our home and the turnout was great. This is a perfect environment to meet folks where you don't have to shout across the table or be confined to one chair in a restaurant.

At the next board meeting in August, we will be nominating new officers and board members for the next two-year term. If you have interest, please speak to one of the officers or current members of the board listed on the back of this newsletter. There will be openings for folks who want a voice in planning activities and events for 2024-2025.

Finally, I want to thank members Ron Hardage and Richard Jagel for their many years of service to the club as board members. Ron served many years as our Event Chair and with his wife Jean planned many of the major drives and trips over the past 15 years. Richard Jagel served as a Board member and as our longest serving Treasurer for nine years. Both men have earned the Member of the Year award multiple times. We thank them for their service to the section.

Thanks for your support and continue to have a great summer.

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EASTERN OKLAHOMA SECTION UPCOMING EVENTS



WEDNESDAY JULY 12 6:00PM

FAIR MEADOWS PARK THOROUGHBRED RACING

MEMBERS CAN MEET AT THE PARK AND EAT BEFORE AT THE AIR CONDITIONED SNACK BAR , BAR, OR ONE OF THE FOOD TRUCKS ON SITE.

THURSDAY JULY 20 6:00PM

JULY GATHERING

WATERFRONT GRILL, JENKS OK, GLASS MEETING ROOM

FRIDAY AUGUST 4 10:00AM

Q3 EASTERN OK SECTION BOARD MEETING

HARDESTY LIBRARY, ASH MEETING ROOM

THURSDAY AUGUST 17 6:00PM

BENZ & BRATS POT LUCK DINNER & DESSERTS

AT THE HOME OF MEMBER TOM DELORBE, BIXBY, OK

SATURDAY AUGUST 19 9:00AM

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SPRING POKER RUN ALWAYS FULL OF FUN AND SURPRISES

Twenty-six members and fifteen cars from the Eastern Oklahoma and Ozark sections participated in their third annual Poker run through the Cherokee Indian territory of eastern Oklahoma.

Organizers John and Dottie Miller and John and Harriet Kushnerick planned the route, five stops, and prizes for this fun driving event. Each stop other than the final lunch location was an Indian Casino where members could try a quick slot or two before moving on.

Participants paid a \$15 entry fee of which \$5 was donated to the Alzheimer's Association, \$5 to the member with the best five card poker hand and \$5 would be split to go to each section's treasury. As it turns out each of the section President's had the highest and lowest hands. Dennis Anderson of the Ozark section won the event and John Kushnerick of Eastern Oklahoma had the lowest hand.

Lunch was hosted by Hooker's Grill in Prior OK where hungry poker players ended their more than 240-mile journey with great food and beverages. Five spot prizes were awarded as well as two large gift baskets. Winners of the gift baskets were Jerry Herron and Kathy Ratzlaff.

The big winner of the day was the Alzheimer Association which will receive \$130 from the admission fees and an additional \$130 from Dennis Anderson contributing his winnings to the organization.

Big loser of the day was John Kushnerick with the lowest hand as well as a flat tire that happened early in the trip and kept his speed to 55.

Special thanks to Kristen Bebout and Jackie Cooper Imports for providing snack bags for each car.





MEMBERS DELIVER MEMORIES OF BETTER DAYS

Eight members visited the Brookdale Senior Living center in Broken Arrow on Friday June 2 to put on a display of vintage Mercedes Benz automobiles for the residents.

Members met at Jackie Cooper Mercedes Benz and paraded to the parking lot of the center where they were met by groups of senior residents who wanted to view the fine automobiles. Members were able to speak about their cars and interact with the residents who appreciated getting out in the nice weather and viewing cars from the past 35+ years.

Judging by the reactions, Nathan, and Robin Armers little red”SLK convertible was the fans favorite. Thanks to Nathan and Robin for setting up this fun little event.



MY FAMILY...

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MY BENZ...



MY BIO...

I come from a Family full of Real Estate Professionals. This journey started for me only a few years ago when I decided to join the "Family Business" in real estate for myself.

I originally started a career in the service side of the Oil and Gas industry and was there for over 16 years. In that time, I have provided detail care and guidance to many customers and have worked hand in hand with the engineering team to provide excellent customer service for those who put their trust in me.

I have transitioned those skills into a successful career in Real Estate. My goal is to help each client that I work with by identifying their individual needs through the process of selling, buying, or investing in a home. By doing so I am able to make this intricate process stress free.

My goal is for each client experience to be a ten! With the support of my team and the value of the company I choose to work with, that goal is achieved in each family or business I help.

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Oklahoma picnic celebrates Mercedes Benz ownership.

Fifty members and guests from the Central and Eastern Oklahoma sections gathered at Hafer Park in Edmond OK on Saturday June 10, 2023, for the annual Oklahoma Mercedes Benz owner picnic.

Special attendees included Katie Carruth MBCA Executive Director, Charles Woods National Treasurer, Brett Jurick South Central Regional Director, and Charles Boyd former South Central Regional Director.

This was the largest attendance we have had since the start of the picnic. Members dined on a catered picnic lunch by the Food dude Kings Cuisine. A meal of Hamburgers, Brats, Hot Dogs, baked beans, potato salad, assorted fruit, chips, cookies, lemonade, and iced tea was served.

It was great to meet new friends and catch up with old acquaintances.





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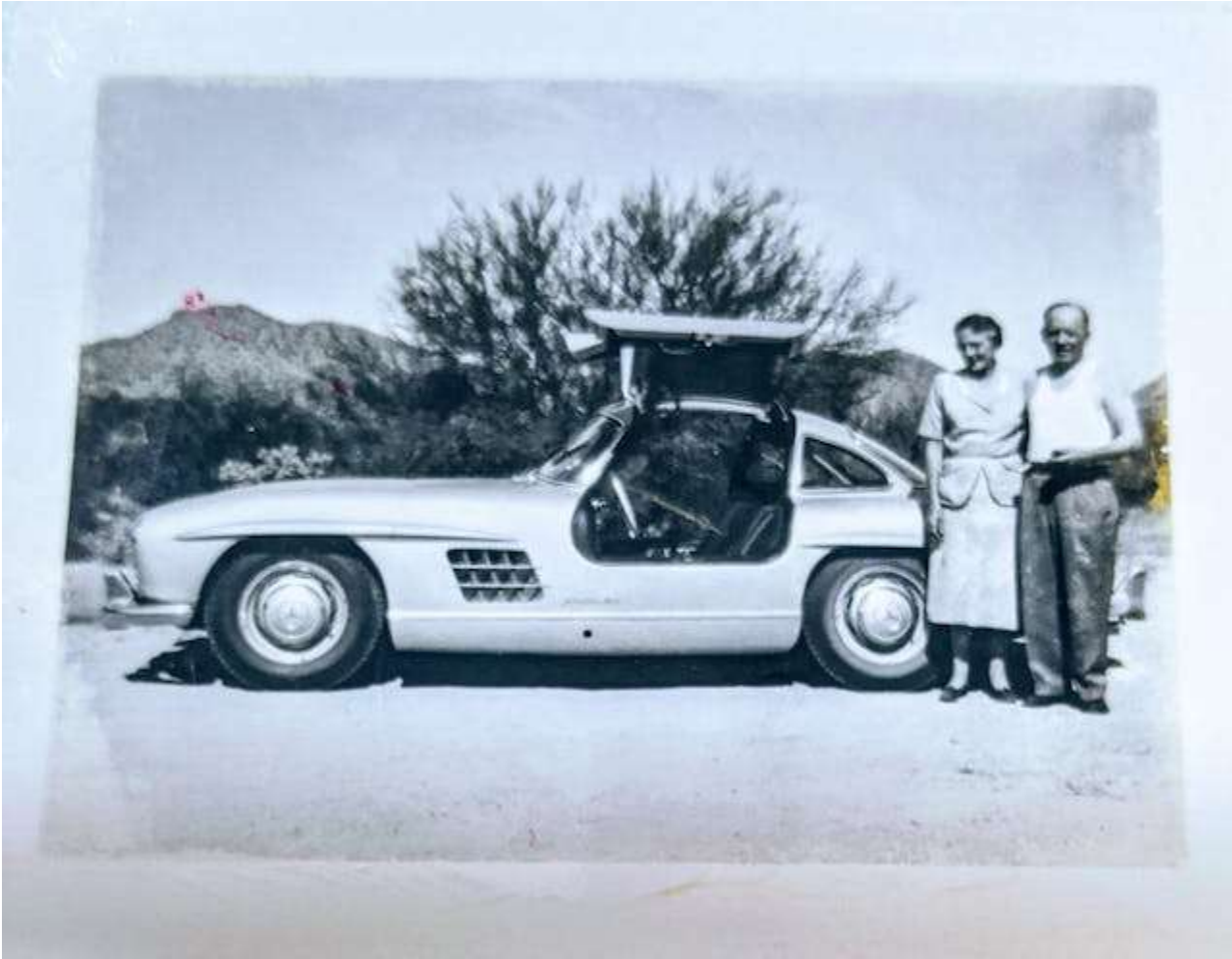
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The missed phone call that cost our family \$915,000

Matt Fink



Matt Fink

Every family has a story of “The Car that Got Away” — or they *should* have one, at least. Mine involved missing out on a car whose value then increased *eighteen times over*. My family had what some say is the most collectible sports cars ever. One of only 167 built. One that often sells for well over a million dollars nowadays. We just didn’t get a phone call in time.

Our story begins in 1952 at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The top two places went to Mercedes-Benz in their purpose-built race car, the W194. Despite its success, Mercedes had no plans to sell a roadgoing version. The U.S. importer for Mercedes at the time, [Max Hoffman](#) (who interestingly lived in a Frank Lloyd Wright home and commissioned Wright to design his Manhattan Jaguar dealership), had a different opinion. He thought America was doing pretty well post-war and there were people with money to spend. He was able to convince Mercedes that it would make sense for them to sell the [300SL Gullwing](#) as a road car, and he was right. The firm built and sold 167 of them in the debut year. Here’s something you don’t read every day; the street version actually had more horsepower than the race car. This was the first production car with mechanical fuel injection and if you could find a road long enough it could hit 163 mph. Yes, in 1954!

My family joins the story in 1955 when Great Uncle Welcome and Great Aunt Honey (yes, their real names) took a drive to Arizona to visit an old friend. This wealthy friend proudly showed off his newest purchase. His 1 of 167, 1954 Mercedes Benz 300SL Gullwing. Silver with leather interior (a \$165 option). He laughingly told them how the dealer had convinced him to spend an extra \$85 for the matching luggage set. As you can imagine, Welcome and Honey loved it.

Their friend took note of how they loved that car. So much so, that unbeknownst to them he changed his will to leave the car to them. That surprise phone call announcing them as the new owners of the 300SL came in 1974 with his passing. You can imagine their pride bringing home this ultra-rare dream car.

Great Aunt Honey especially loved how the cute luggage fit perfectly behind the front seats. Her excitement was short lived though as she soon realized why the luggage was designed to sit there. She couldn't fit anything in the actual trunk, because it came pre-filled with a spare tire and a mammoth 34.7-gallon fuel tank and little room for anything else. Knowing her husband was so excited she did not want to complain. Returning to their home in very hilly Alamo, California (a suburb about 20 miles east of San Francisco), Great Uncle Welcome noticed his first real problem with the car. It was grueling to drive on a regular basis in the mountainous terrain around Alamo because the clutch was extremely heavy. So much so, that Mercedes eventually offered it with a clutch arm helper spring.

Honey never drove anyway so Welcome did not want to say anything since he knew how much she loved it. Honey however did begin to notice something strange. He started choosing to drive their barebones brown 1971 Plymouth Valiant 4-door sedan more and more. But how could he choose to drive that boring car when the most beautiful car he had ever seen was sitting in his driveway? Well, it's hard to continue to love a car when you can't get in or out of it. The 300SL had unusually high door sills as a consequence of the gullwing doors. These were challenging for most people to swing their legs across, but especially difficult for an elderly couple. To help with this, the steering wheel had a neat trick where it would turn 90 degrees horizontal to act like a handle to use when climbing in. That didn't address the other problem he was facing: upkeep. Mercedes recommended oil changes every 1000 miles. Because of the car's race-bred dry sump lubrication system with large oil cooler, Welcome's short trips around town would not get the oil hot enough to flow properly. The final straw however came from Honey the day she learned that in addition to the Gullwing not having air conditioning, the windows also could not be rolled down.

They soon made the very difficult decision that this dream car just wasn't for them. They decided to sell it, but they wanted to make sure it stayed in the family by blessing someone who would really appreciate it, and they knew just who it should be. It was still 1974 when Welcome called my grandpa looking to find my dad. "Can I have Tom's phone number please? I know he and his family are into cars. I have a Mercedes sports car I would like for him to have. I would only ask \$5000 if it goes to him." To which my grandpa replied, "Sorry Welcome, but I know that Tom isn't interested. He's got a family now, he shouldn't be buying some old sports car."

Welcome tried one more time. "Are you sure? I could at least ask him. If not Tom, what about you? I really want this to stay in the family." My grandpa unfortunately replied, "You know that we have ten kids Welcome, we have no business buying a sports car. Goodbye," and hung up the phone. Three days later, Dad found out about that phone call and (even before he yelled at his own dad for this colossal mistake) he desperately tried to reach Great Uncle Welcome ... but it was too late. His neighbor had just driven away in it having offered him \$10,000.

In the end, all we are left with is a good story. The Hagerty #3 average condition value for the [1954 Mercedes 300SL Gullwing](#) is \$920,000. Whenever one comes up on a Barrett-Jackson auction, I still text my dad and have him tune in to watch, even though it hurts. That fitted luggage Great Aunt Honey liked so much ... is now worth \$20,000!

Thanks, Grandpa, for protecting my dad from buying probably the most historically important sports car Mercedes-Benz ever made. Maybe we would not have seen the potential 18,300 percent increase in value. After all, at the time my family lived in Madison, Ohio, right on Lake Erie, so who knows what condition it would be in now. But man, it is hard not to think about what would have been if my Dad had only got that phone call. For any of you with sports cars out there, feel free to leave me one in your will. I promise to love and care for it, even if the clutch is heavy and the windows don't go down. Until I get a call from one of you, I will keep my model of the 300SL on my desk alongside other dream cars I'll never be able to afford. That's my family's story, what's yours? What's the "one that got away" you wished you would have bought?



MECUM AUCTIONS COMES TO TOWN

The world-famous Mecum Auctions came to the Sage Net Event Center at Expo Square on Friday June 9-Saturday June 10, 2023. Over 600 cars were up for auction including twenty-six Mercedes Benz cars and vans.

The one that caught my eye was a 2009 SL550 Silver Arrow (one of only 550 produced). The car did not meet its reserve and did not sell at \$45,000. The bid goes on.

Mecum is a supporter of MBCA and will be present at Mercedes Grande in Indianapolis this September.



OZARK EURO RALLY

All are welcome to enter or to come to the all-German Ozark Euro Rally in Eureka Springs AR on Saturday August 26 at the grounds of the Passion Play.

This show started as a Volkswagen show and has grown to include all German marks including Porsche, Audi, Mercedes Benz, and BMW.

Attending is free to everyone. If you want to enter your car into the show, the cost is \$25 which includes a T-shirt and poster. There are NO classes! This is a show for enthusiasts who love to show off their vehicles, regardless of how it looks and for those who love the comradery that owning a German car brings! We encourage any and all to bring out their vehicles.

If interested contact jkushnerick@cox.net. You will need to book a hotel for Friday night unless you plan on driving over the day of the event as a spectator. The show is from 9:00am -3:00pm.



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