

# Steel City Benzers



**MBCA Pittsburgh Section Newsletter – Q4 2020**

*The Pittsburgh MBCA Section has **279** members*

*We would like to extend a special welcome and hello to our **16** newest members:*

**Norman Ballard, Sr.**

**Maureen Barton**

**Brian Delmar**

**James Faulkner**

**George Fleet**

**Ruth Forsyth**

**Elizabeth Kairys**

**Larry Moses**

**Vishal Patel**

**Ari Rochmann**

**Mahesh Sane**

**Brenda Schwartz**

**James Southwood**

**Elias Towe**

**Dr. Eveldora Wheeler**

**Scott Winkley**

*We are also proud that **39** members have renewed their membership in the last 3 months!*

*Without new and renewing members, we wouldn't be where we are today. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events!*

## **MBCA Pittsburgh's First Virtual Annual Meeting by Susan Grunewald**



October 24, 2020  
Pittsburgh Section  
Mercedes-Benz Club of America  
2020 General Meeting

The Pittsburgh Section held its annual meeting in a digital format due to social-distancing restrictions. A number of members attended the meeting, where we introduced the members of the current Board, how long they have been members, and which Benzes they have.

The meeting then covered highlights from 2020 including the February meeting, photo, and lunch around the Pittsburgh International Auto Show, features of the club in the national *Star* magazine, and October's drive to Moraine State Park to support the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix charities.

We discussed ideas for 2021, such as more virtual tech sessions, additional articles in the *Star*, and more drives. The nature of the relationship between our Section and the regional and national levels of the MBCA was also discussed. Due to financial difficulties, the national level of the club has reduced rebates given to the local sections, making it all the more important that we continue to recruit new members and host events at the local level to keep members engaged. The meeting also included our first ever virtual car show, which included four categories. Adam Parness won Best Pre-1995 for his 1981 240D. Peter Hutchinson won Best SL for his 1957 190SL. Jim Weaver won Best AMG for his 2019 GLC 43. Nick Guernsey won Best Contemporary for his 2012 S550 4Matic. The winners were featured on the club Facebook (Official Mercedes Benz Club of America Pittsburgh) and Instagram accounts (@mbcapgh).

Last but not least, at the end we had a lively discussion with Members who brought forth a number of good ideas.

## A View from the Driver's Seat



Although many want to swiftly put 2020 behind us, I'd prefer to reflect on the many positives that 2020 brought to our Club this year.

While I cannot speak of numerous gatherings this year, the impromptu North Shore Gathering and scheduled Fall Drive brought many smiles and charitable contributions. I am so honored that our Section triggered a wave of challenges to other car clubs in the region to be creative and raise money for the charities that had heavily counted on funds from the cancelled PVGP. Our club raised nearly \$4000 for the PVGP Charities and was publicly recognized by the PVGP Executive Team for leading this new fundraising approach.

Although MBCA National has had struggles with steady declining membership, our Section actually grew by four members in 2020!

Thanks to Mark Sheldon for sharing our story with *Rally Across America*, which showcased our Moraine State Park Drive and Safe Gathering in their publications!

A special thank you to Paul and the entire Bowman family for their efforts as we shifted to virtual Tech gatherings, and who conducted an amazing Tech Talk Session on Brakes. We look to extend this offering to other Sections as well as post it on YouTube.

Another sincere thank you to Susan Grunewald, Our Club's Member of the Year, for her incredible persistence and efforts to ensure prominent articles on our Section's Members were showcased in two Star issues this year (and more to come in 2021)!!!

We proudly welcome Franco and Jeff to our Board this year and are grateful for their support to lead continuous improvement with Dealer Relationships and Club Growth.

Goodbye to 2020, but the biggest of "thank you"s to our Club Members! Wishing all a safe, healthy and happy holiday season!

*Sandy Turko*

We, the **Board of Directors**, would like your feedback, so please feel free to contact us at [mbcapghchapter@gmail.com](mailto:mbcapghchapter@gmail.com) with suggestions on event ideas. We look forward to hearing from you!

***Sandy Turko***

**President**

***Dan Marcin***

**Vice-President**

***Marilyn Smetana***

**Treasurer**

***Paul Bowman***

**Secretary & Newsletter Editor**

**Board of Directors**

**Franco Fratangelo**

**Paul Georg**

**Susan Grunewald**

**Franco Fratangelo**

**Jeff Hirst**

**Betsy Marcin**

**Mark Sheldon**

**Sandra Simpson**

**Ray Smetana**

## Technology Links

In addition to this newsletter, there are other channels to keep up with what's happening with the Pittsburgh Section.



**Website:**

<http://www.mbcapitt.org/>



**Facebook:**

[Mercedes Benz Club America Pittsburgh](#)



**Email:**

[mbcapghchapter@gmail.com](mailto:mbcapghchapter@gmail.com)



**Instagram:** @mbcapgh



**Twitter:** @mbcapgh

## Newsletter Update

All Pittsburgh Section Newsletters are distributed via email and available to view via our website.

## Recruiting New Members

**By Sandy Turko**

Attention MBCA Pittsburgh Members: It's a win-win for everyone to recruit new members! We all know that this is "Our Club"; its ability to thrive depends on each and every one of us! As financial support from National MBCA has dropped by more than 75%, we count on our members for active participation and promotion of Our Club.

If every member would recruit just one person, we would increase event ideas/participants, extend our support for PVGP and other local charities, and increase the potential for more fresh articles for this Newsletter and the national Star magazine! New members also benefit from 10% discounts on service and parts at participating dealers as well as a discount on new vehicles. Finally, every recruiter named by a new recruit when they join, receives an extra free month added to their membership.

While doubling our headcount is a stretch goal, we do challenge each of us to help promote Our Club and share the benefits received from a nominal annual contribution. We still have club cards and ask anyone interested in obtaining some to please email us at [mbcapghchapter@gmail.com](mailto:mbcapghchapter@gmail.com)



## Welcome New Pittsburgh Section Board Member – Jeff Hirst



Jeff Hirst, aka “Deacon Jeff”, lives in Canonsburg with his wife, Susan, and their two sons Alex and Matthias. Jeff has been a member of the club for several years.

Jeff traces his interest in the marque to when he was a teenager and had an opportunity to buy two 1975 220Ds for \$450. As the story often goes, those two got away but they sparked his interest in Mercedes Benz, especially the cars designed by Bruno Sacco in the 80’s and 90’s. Jeff currently is custodian of a 1993 300 CE Cabriolet (featured in the March 2018 Star magazine) and a 1997 SL320 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition.

Jeff was ordained in 2011 as a Deacon in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and is assigned to St. James Parish in Washington, PA. Deacon Jeff started a ministry this past year at the onset of the pandemic that delivers packaged food boxes monthly to nearly 90 seniors living around Washington, PA. He is employed as a Director of Human Resources.

As a new Board Member, Jeff will be collaborating with our other new Board Member, Franco Fratangelo, on the club classifieds and Mercedes-Benz dealer outreach.

## Welcome New Pittsburgh Section Board Member – Franco Fratangelo



Franco Fratangelo is a native of Pittsburgh, who was born into a very heavily Italian cultured family that emigrated to the US in 1967. He was a Class of 1986 graduate of Penn Hills High School and earned a Bachelor's degree in Business at Point Park University. He has been married 25 yrs to Carla Lousia Quattrucci Fratangelo and has two boys, Nino (22) and Luca (18).

His interests include: cooking, cigars, wines, spirits, RC helicopters and drones, cycling, tennis, playing guitar, Formula 1 racing, high-end vehicles, traveling, and reading. He has owned several businesses including Dynamic Printing Technologies and Ceramic Grillworks.

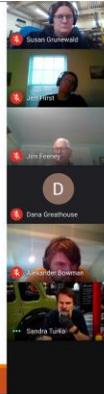
He purchased his first Benz in 2017, a 2015 C300 4Matic.

# Virtual Tech Conference: Brakes

By Paul Bowman, Gear Head Coordinator

## Basic steps involved in renewing a brake system

- Research ahead of time what you will be getting into so that you can have the right parts, supplies, and tools on hand:
  - YouTube videos (be careful - the quality can vary widely, so watch multiple videos). Videos can help you determine "am I getting in over my head?"
  - [www.mercedessource.com](http://www.mercedessource.com) has "how to" videos for classic Benzes.



Since 2016, the Pittsburgh Section has sponsored numerous Gear Heads meetings that have involved a lunch followed by a Tech Talk. Given the social-distancing limitations we are facing in 2020, we decided to follow the lead of other MBCA Sections and conduct a Virtual Tech Conference instead on Brakes on November 21.

While we certainly missed the lunches and conversations of past events, the virtual format actually offers a lot more opportunity to see technical details up close with the camera zoomed in and the ability to have a more interactive Q&A where everyone can hear the questions.

A special thanks to my son Alex, who helped out tremendously! Alex is a Staff Engineer in Vehicle Dynamics Chassis and Brakes at Honda of America Manufacturing in Marysville Ohio (virtual events also allow us to have experts join us "long distance"), who brought a wealth of technical knowledge from the car industry as well as future trends and challenges.

We plan to repeat this event on January 30 for those who could not make the November event as well as inviting members from other MBCA Sections.



## 2021 Calendar of Events

January 30: Virtual Tech Conference on Brakes (Repeat of November event but available to other Sections)

March/April/May: Spring Drive

Spring/Summer: Tour of Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA (thanks to member Mark Ramsay for suggesting this!)

April/May/June: Q2 Virtual Gearhead Event (topic TBD)

PVGP: July 24 & 25 (fingers crossed that this is in person!)

September/October/ November: Fall Drive

Q3/Q4: Virtual Gearhead Event (topic TBD)

October/November: Annual Meeting

We still have a lot of uncertainty caused by Covid-19 restrictions that are hard to predict but plan to ensure member safety by a combination of virtual events and outdoor events where social distancing is feasible.

Each event will have more details sent out to Section membership 4-6 weeks before the date. We are open to any and all ideas for future events! Please e-mail us at [mbcapghchapter@gmail.com](mailto:mbcapghchapter@gmail.com).

## Classifieds

We invite members of the club to submit advertisements of cars, parts, and other Benz-related paraphernalia to our quarterly newsletter and our Instagram account (@MBCAPGH).

These classifieds are free for active MBCA members who are paid up on their dues.

Please use the word '**classified**' somewhere in the subject line of your email. For car ads, please include: year, model, mileage, condition, service history, a photograph, brief description, price, and contact information (e-mail and/or phone number).

For parts and accessories, please include: a description with condition, which year/vehicle it fits, part number if at all possible, a photograph, price, and contact information (e-mail and/or phone number).

Please be advised that your listing will also be posted to our social media platform -- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, **unless you tell us to limit it to the newsletter.**

Members can purchase advertisements for any sort of business or networking that they wish to promote. Please contact us for rates at [mbcapghchapter@gmail.com](mailto:mbcapghchapter@gmail.com).



### 2010-2013 Mercedes S Class W221 18-inch x 8.5 inch rims

Very good condition. Three are available. \$250 each. Text: (724) 816-1946.



### W124 Seats – 7-Passenger Wagon

Navy blue in good condition. \$150 for the set.

Contact: (412) 310-6031.



### 1993 V-12 Mercedes 600SL

One-owner car drives and shows very well. 30,589 miles. Needs tires and a wax job. All original: Signal Red paint, Camel Brown leather, Black soft top and Red hard top. \$25,000

To schedule a time to view the car, text (724) 312-8912.