



MARCH 2011 | DESERT STARS SECTION | ARIZONA

Memorial Day Holiday Trip!

Southwestern New Mexico and Carlsbad Caverns

Arrangements for this year's Memorial Day trip have been made and we are accepting reservations. As you may recall from previous trips, we must limit the number of cars to about 10, so please get your reservations in early to save your spot.

All Pinheads will meet and stay at the *Palace Hotel* in historic Silver City, New Mexico on Thursday, May 26th. On Friday morning we will drive through part of the Gila National Forest and pass through the ghost towns of Kingston and Hillsboro, then visit White Sands National Monument. On Friday afternoon we will drive along Tularoso Canyon through the Mescalero Apache Reservation (the most feared Indians in the 1800's) and stay in the Lincoln National Forest in Ruidoso on Friday evening. Saturday morning we will visit historic Lincoln and travel on to Roswell to visit the UFO Museum (weeeeh weeeeh). On

Saturday after we will take the King's Palace tour at Carlsbad Caverns. On Sunday we are scheduled for the Slaughter Canyon Cave tour and will also have a self-guided tour of the Big Room in the afternoon. If we are fortunate, we may see the flight of the bats leaving the caves at dusk.

Our past Pinheads will tell you what wonderful places we have visited in the past. I think this year will also prove to be a memorable one.

We are taking reservations with a \$100 deposit. We expect these spots to fill quickly, so please fill out the registration form on page 6 and send to Dick Sharp A.S.A.P. If you have questions, please call me at 480-661-1325.

Dick and Mindy Sharp

Get Your Kicks on Route 66

Join a group of Desert Stars for a weekend of fun along Arizona's Route 66 on April 29-May 1, 2011.

Every year, the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona hosts the Route 66 Fun Run. The three-day event begins in Seligman and travels 140 miles west to Golden Shores. Along the way each area adds a unique touch to the celebration, including visits to Peach Springs, Truxton, Valentine, Hackberry, Valle Vista, Kingman, and of

course, Oatman.

For registration, go to www.azrt66.com download the form and view their web site. For motel information, call our Dick Sharp at 480-661-1325. Any questions, call Bob Yoder 480-998-0194.

Bob Yoder

Auction Highlights!



Russo – Two SLs



Russo – 1957 220S



RM 1955 300SL Gullwing

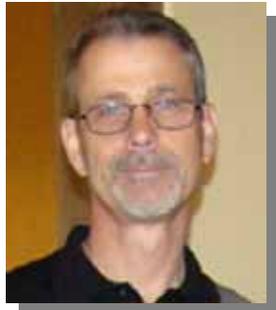


RM – 1960 220 SE Cabriolet



Gooding – 1955 300Sc Roadster

President's Message:



I had been speaking to a few members back East, Ohio to be specific, and they were telling me that by the end of this month they hope to have their cars out of the garage with plans to get them ready for spring and summer club events. Garage? Get them ready? I guess living out West, and never having lived in a place where the roads are salted, I had no clue. These are not collector cars, but average Mercedes-Benz's from the 80's and 90's. When I asked them what they drive during the winter months in the salty snow and ice, the answer was almost unanimous. Asian import, front wheel drive and most of all, it has to be expendable.

In contrast here in the Southwest we drive our cars year round giving very little thought to body preservation. At most our concerns are for rock chips and sun damage. Most of our driving events take place during the winter and spring months. Rallies, Poker Runs and clean car shows that would be unthinkable back east, but happen all winter long here in Arizona.

One of the trips I'm looking forward to is the Southwest event in Borrego Springs California on page 7. I will participate in my first Gymkhana. From what I am told it's an Autocross, but with a twist. I can't wait! So while our friends and families back East are wondering where they will put tomorrow's snow, we need to get out and enjoy our cars. We truly have the best of both worlds. Owing one of the finest cars on Earth and having the perfect weather to drive in.

I hope to see you at an event or Star Night soon!

*Bud Cloninger, President
Desert Stars Section*

Star Night

Join Ron and Rhonda Borino and other Desert Star members for dinner. This club event is designed to be a casual evening of fun, food, drink and conversation. We will discuss past and future club events as well as any other topic of interest. New members are encouraged to attend this event. The location will move throughout the valley and is scheduled for the 3rd Thursday unless there is a conflict. Attendees are responsible for their food, drinks and the portion of the gratuity assessed by the establishment. Due to seating arrangements these events are limited and members must RSVP to Ron Borino at 602-550-9939, before the dates listed for each event.

Do you have a favorite restaurant suggestion? If so, feel free to email your idea to Ron at rlborino@hotmail.com. Perhaps we can use your idea in an upcoming event. Restaurants must be able to accommodate at least 20 people preferably in a separate space and if possible be a locally owned facility, resort, hotel, etc. We want to try great places all over the valley. The next Star Night is:

Thursday, March 17th beginning at 6:00 P.M.

This month we will go to *Tanzy Restaurant* (www.tanzrestaurant.com) which is located at 15257 North Scottsdale, Road, Suite F-250, Scottsdale, 85234. This is a new trendy Scottsdale establishment located upstairs in the Scottsdale Quarter next to the new IPIC Theater.

Thursday, April 21st beginning at 6:00 P.M.

We are going to *Pane E Vino* (www.allmenus.com/az/phoenix/4670-pane-e-vino/menu/) in North Scottsdale. This establishment was recommended by a couple of members and will be held on Thursday, April 21st beginning at 6:00 p.m. The address is 8900 East Pinnacle Peak Road, Scottsdale, 85255.

Ron Borino

January

- Anne Durning
- Chuck Jones
- Jon Koontz
- Austin Murphy
- Mark Simpson

Welcome New Members



February

- Rick Mann
- William Kilburg
- Charles Fiore
- James Dugan
- Paul Brinkley-Rogers

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Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. All members are welcome. Check with a board member concerning place and time.

Auto Auction Action!

"Scottsdale Week" is a misnomer. It's not strictly in Scottsdale, and it's more than a week. However, to those in the collector car hobby, the term describes six Phoenix-area auctions over the course of eleven days in January. And when we're not dodging 2010's 50-year storm that sent tents flying across the Loop 101 freeway, the weekend can be a star-gazer's delight – Mercedes-Benz stars, that is.

A total of 58 Mercedes-Benzes were up for auction during the "week", and I was fortunate enough to examine well over half of them. The examples – and their selling prices – were in-step with the auction house's status. Of the 14 highest-selling M-B's, 13 were consigned to RM Auction (Biltmore) or Gooding & Co. (Scottsdale Fashion Square). These two auctions continue to feature extraordinary vehicles. Bringing a camera is a must, as you'll definitely see unique and low-production number classics.

The heavyweight auctions featured a nice selection of young-timers as well. Behemoth Barrett-Jackson (Westworld) featured 13 Mercedes in their 1,200 vehicle line-up, and Russo & Steele (North Scottsdale) had 10 in their 750+ consignment inventory. While generally overloaded with muscle cars and customs, Russo & Steele managed to net the week's fourth-highest Mercedes sale – a 1955 300SL Gullwing in stunning light-green. The Gullwing aside, all of the Barrett-Jackson and Russo Steele young-timers went for less than \$35,000, with the notable exception of a spectacular 1999 SL 600 RENNtech with a 7.4 liter V-12, which went for \$47,000.



So as Mercedes-Benz owners, what can we learn from these auctions?

Gullwings are hot (again): It could be the introduction of the new SLS that has triggered the market, but 300SL Gullwing prices have rocketed ahead of their 300SL Roadster siblings. In the past few years the Gullwing would carry only a 15% premium over a comparable Roadster, but this year saw Gullwings spike, including a duel at RM Auctions between a European and a Middle Eastern bidder over a beautiful graphite 1955 Gullwing, fetching \$1,375,000, a record amount for a steel-bodied Gullwing. Additionally, Gooding & Co. had a 1955 silver example go for \$858,000, the aforementioned Russo & Steele Gullwing did very well, and RM had a very rough-around-the-edges example with bubbling white paint sell at the top-end of its estimate at \$544,000. Even a mediocre 2007 "Speedster Gullwing" replica sold at RM for \$99,000. It had been estimated at \$28,000.

W111 Cabriolets may have peaked: The 2009 release of the movie "The Hangover" and its silver W111 protagonist gave a nice boost to an already rising market, but both examples in Arizona sold below estimates, including a 1967 300SE that was one of only four made with a factory five-speed. It sold at Gooding for \$112,750, against a \$120-\$150,000 estimate. RM's 1965 220SE was an odd factory "beige grey" that sold for \$66,000 against an estimate of \$80-\$100,000. It's a small sample size, but later 2011 auctions may portend if this is becoming a trend.

Take my SL, please: R107 and R129 SL's were well-represented, and these models still offer a great entry-point for first-time classic Mercedes enthusiasts. Eleven R107's were available and thirteen R129's crossed the block. Interesting models included a brown 1972 350SL that was Betty Grable's final vehicle (Silver Auction - \$12,500 – not sold), as well as a 1982 Marine Blue 380SL which

fetched \$36,300 at Barrett-Jackson. Among the R129's, Barrett-Jackson found a few models with provenance, including a 1997 SL320 in Quartz Blue (one of only 250 made in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the SL Roadster – \$33,000), and a 2002 SL500 Silver Arrow special edition (\$20,900).



Additional Highlights: Gooding sold a red 1962 "barn find" 300SL roadster for \$951,000 – confirmed as the lowest-mileage 300SL in the world, with only 7,367 miles. Gooding also sold a large number of rare and racing Ferraris from the estate of collector Benny Caiola, which also included a 2008 McLaren SLR Roadster with only 575 miles on the clock, sold for \$264,000. My personal favorite was a cavernous 1960 220 SE Cabriolet (W128) in a light-green mist color (RM, \$165,000), and runner-up was a light blue/silver 1955 300 Sc Roadster (W186), one of 53 made, sold by Gooding for \$660,000. My wife was really enamored with a red 1957 Ponton 220 S (W180) at Russo & Steele, that sold for only \$4,400.

In addition to over 2,500 collector cars across six auctions, Hagerty Insurance hosted a three-day symposium at the Penske Museum, and Russo & Steele held a panel discussion on the state of the hobby. Of course our own Desert Stars Auction Dinner capped off the week's activities nicely. If you have the time next January, I'd highly recommend attending. Full-day passes are affordable for most of the auctions, especially for the previews, where you can talk to the vehicle owner and take plenty of photos. The high-end auctions are pricey (RM and Gooding), but have open re-entry throughout their events. Whether browsing, photographing, comparing to your own, or bidding, there's something for everyone, and just maybe, you'll take home a Star.

Auction Day Tour and Dinner Enjoys Bidder's Success

Auction week in Arizona is always interesting, but this year it turned educational as well. The Desert Stars hosted SL Market Letter editor **John Olson** who gave members an insider's view of the auction process. Members toured the RM and Gooding's Auctions on January 22nd and learned what to look for both before and during the actual bidding. We watched several classic M-Bs cross the auction stage and examined several more that had been sold earlier in the day. In each case, Olson pointed out some of the features that may have affected the car's price – for better or worse. Fascinating!



Later we adjourned to the *WildFish Seafood Grille* and enjoyed a delicious dinner with all the trimmings. There was lots of lively discussion about "the one that got away" – the car, not the fish! We also heard from Olson, who shared his philosophy on current collectables; from **Alex Frank**, who introduced us to the Tesla Roadster, a neat, quick new electric sports car; and the proprietor's of Arizona's Shelby American Distributor who brought out a continuation 427 Cobra. Finally, lobbyist **Bill Gilmore** filled us in on the latest in proposed Arizona legislation that could affect

our favorite hobby.

Special thanks to **Bob Yoder** for arranging the speakers. The Auction Weekend Dinner has become a favorite way to end car week in Arizona and we'll surely do it again in 2012. Plan to join the fun next January, especially if you're visiting the Scottsdale auctions from another MBCA Section.

Chuck Stanford, Jr.



Luck Keeps Rolling, Desert Stars' 5th Annual Poker Run – Success!

The Feb 19th Poker Run proved to be another excellent club event – fun, food, great people AND cars. We had a variety of experiences, starting at *Arizona Cars* (formerly *Protective Film Solutions*) where our host Ryan Tounsley provided breakfast and an overview of his unique product line. We then went to the *McDowell Sonoran Preserve* where the beauty of our environment was highlighted. We moved on to *Taliesin West* commemorating architect Frank Lloyd Wright who made Arizona one of his hallmark locations. Next to the *Penske Museum*: cars, cars, cars. Then to the home of Terry Tapp, owner of *Top Shop*, where he and his friend Karen Stiles provided yummy snacks and an introduction to Terry's services. Our next stop was at *Squaw Peak Park*, another beautiful environment surrounded by our wonderful city. Finally, enthusiastic participants relaxed and enjoyed the camaraderie at *Christopher's* restaurant where the staff managed our group of 34 with great service and great food. Our luckiest first prize team of the day was **Ed & Joyce Kasmir**, second prize going to **John & Marianne Hutchison**, third prize to **Mark & Deborah Ichiyama**, and our last place prize went to **Joe Lee** & his guest Pete, along with the advice to stay away from Las Vegas. Thanks to all who made this a fun day in our fabulous southwest haven!



1st place winner, Ed Kasmir (right)

Our next stop was at *Squaw Peak Park*, another beautiful environment surrounded by our wonderful city. Finally, enthusiastic participants relaxed and enjoyed the camaraderie at *Christopher's* restaurant where the staff managed our group of 34 with great service and great food. Our luckiest first prize team of the day was **Ed & Joyce Kasmir**, second prize going to **John & Marianne Hutchison**, third prize to **Mark & Deborah Ichiyama**, and our last place prize went to **Joe Lee** & his guest Pete, along with the advice to stay away from Las Vegas. Thanks to all who made this a fun day in our fabulous southwest haven!



Brynn & Don Burton with Jim & Linda Meece

John and Roberta Phin

Popular Putting Canceled at Desert Highlands

Unfortunately due to golf club accommodation we **WILL NOT** be enjoying the beautiful landscaping at the Desert Highlands Country Club, 18-hole putting course.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused. If you have any questions please call me at (480) 391-1997.

James Boyle

	cab-ri-o-let [kab-re-uh-ley] – noun an automobile resembling a coupe, but with a folding top.
	The 2011 E-Class Cabriolet

The all new E-Class Cabriolet is the latest addition to the E-Class line-up. The open-top, two-door model, which is here at Phoenix Motor Company, features a classic fabric soft top, making for a stylistically pure cabriolet feeling. Viewed from the side, the new model is an intriguing proposition – with its clear proportions and a flawless cabriolet silhouette.

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Registration Form

Memorial Trip to Carlsbad Caverns

Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-30, 2011

Contact Information:

Name(s): Number Attending:
 Address:
 City: State/Prov.: Zip:
 Email Address: Phone No.:

Deposit of \$100⁰⁰ per couple. Limit of 10 couples. Registrations should be mailed A. S. A. P. Call Dick Sharp for information at 480-661-1325

Make your check payable to: **MBCA Desert Stars**; and mail to: **MBCA Desert Stars c/o Dick Sharp, 11371 East Cochise Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85259**

British European Auto Tour

Saturday & Sunday April 16-17, 2011

Please join auto enthusiasts and owners of world-renowned cars manufactured in Great Britain and Europe by taking a 2-day auto tour starting from the Sonoran Desert of Phoenix and cruise to the high desert of Wickenburg where we will have coffee and donuts. Then through the Joshua Tree National Forest almost to Bagdad as you drive the twisting curves of Highway 93 to 96 toward Kirkland to enter Prescott from the west. We will have special parking on Whiskey Row for lunch and shopping. Drive through the winding roads of Mingus Mountain to Jerome, drop back to the chaparral of Clarkdale and Cottonwood for water and pictures in the park. See the ever changing colorful countryside as we cruise our way north into Flagstaff for Saturday night.

Please arrive Saturday morning at 5:30 A.M. to check in and pick up your goodie bag, etc. **DEPARTURE IS 6:30 A.M. SHARP FROM I 17 AND DUNLAP RD. IN PHOENIX.** Cars will gather in the parking lot off the northbound frontage road (just north of the Sheraton Crescent Hotel). There will be a snack truck in the parking lot serving breakfast items and drinks for you to purchase. Sunday morning we will return back to Phoenix by way of Highway 87 through Payson or Highway 260 into Camp Verde and then Highway 17 into Phoenix.

The \$125 PER VEHICLE registration fee will be limited to registration closing on March 16, 2011 or the first 150 paid registrations received.

Log on to <http://www.beataz.com> and join other Desert Stars in the fun before its too late! Contact Mike or Janice at 480-759-9386 or e-mail: koolkat@cox.net for further information.



Regional Event

Borrego Springs Resort & Spa



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to the Bloomin' Desert
2011 Southwestern Region Joint Event



The 2011 Joint Event will be hosted by the San Diego Section on 18 and 19 March 2011.

Location: The location is the Borrego Springs Resort and Spa located in Borrego Springs California which is a small resort retirement community located approximately 120 miles North East of San Diego. The weather in March will be very nice with the desert flowers in full bloom. Borrego is a popular destination for the car clubs in southern California. The San Diego Section had had several events there in the past and many of you may have attended one of the San Diego Section's Tequila Rose regional events held there in previous years. Other clubs that have had events there are the Rolls Royce, Corvette, MG, Classic Car Club of Americas and the Antique Car Club of America, etal. You may check out the resort by going to www.borregospringsresort.com

Events: Participants will arrive at the resort on Friday 18 March when the hospitality suite will be open and you are free for the evening. On Saturday 19 March we will be holding a Gymkhana, followed by a Rally. In the evening there will be an awards banquet where trophies will be presented to the first three participants in each event. In addition to the dinner, we will be holding an Auto Memorabilia Show together with an auction. You can bring things to show, things to auction, or things to show and then auction - your choice. The hospitality suite will be open at various times throughout the weekend, starting at 3pm on Friday.

Cost: The cost is \$335.00 per room, maximum two people. This cost includes a deluxe room for two nights, awards banquet, hospitality suite, goody bags and quality, desirable awards in keeping with Mercedes Benz Marque. There will also be a raffle with the top prize being registration for two at the 2012 event. The cost without the room is \$120.00 per car and if you wish to attend the dinner only it will be \$50.00 per person.

Registration: Send a check together with this slip to register for the 2011 Joint Event to: Steve Ross, 16151 Fruitvale Road, Valley Center, CA, 92082 Tel: 619 508 3925 and checks should be made payable to "MBCA San Diego Section" by Wednesday 9 March 2011.



Name _____ Car model _____

Number of participants _____ \$ _____ I would like to participate in
the Auto Memorabilia Show and have _____ to display.



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Desert Stars Sharpen their Driving Skills

January 29 saw this year's edition of MBCA Desert Stars' Defensive Driving Course. A beautiful day greeted members who arrived early to set-up our course in the large parking lot at *F1 Race Factory*.

Our instructors outlined the agenda for the day and how they hoped to teach us about our cars and improve our driving habits. Modern vehicles are loaded with technology that helps drivers maintain control while motoring safely. Modern Mercedes-Benz cars have a virtual alphabet soup of features that we explored with our experienced instructors.

Walt Anderson, **Bud Cloninger** and **Dick Sharp** tutored participants in the fine points of obstacle avoidance, long-distance aiming, and the importance of smoothness and maintaining control throughout various evasive maneuvers. Each driver had several opportunities to navigate the course with instructors on board. Observers could see their confidence building as drivers learned some of the handling abilities of our starships. Speeds increased along with smoothness and control, leading to broad smiles on the faces of drivers and passengers alike.

Before lunch, we received a tour of the *F1 Race Factory's* large Phoenix facility, where guests can drive 45-mile per hour racing karts in an exciting indoor environment. We enjoyed lunch in the neat *Trackside Grill*, and received discount passes to enjoy some kart races later on our own.

After lunch came a reconfiguration of the morning's outdoor course into a closed circuit. This lets participants use the skills learned in the training part of the session to see real-time application of their

benefits. Smoothness and staying on the line are what quick track times are all about, and practice makes perfect. Participants were able to see their lap times decrease as they became more familiar with the concepts learned in the morning's lessons.

By early afternoon, most members had seen times drop steadily as the defensive concepts took hold in their driving style. Drivers stopped by the timers following each lap to check their progress. In the end, fast time of the day went to instructor **Walt Anderson** at 30.1 seconds in his E320; just

a second behind was **Chuck Stanford** in Ava's MINI Cabrio and third was **Kathleen O'Boyle** in Jim's Chrysler Crossfire (actually an SLK cousin) at 31.2 seconds.

Thanks to all who worked to make this event such an educational and fun day, and to the *F1 Race Factory* for the use of their first-class facility.

Chuck Stanford, Jr.





Keep your address updated with the MBCA National Business Office at (800) 637-2360, or <http://mbca.org/mbca/addchange.htm>

Save These Dates:

Star Night	Thursday, March 17, 2011
Borrego Springs Resort – Regional Event	Friday, March 18-20, 2011
The British European Auto Tour	Weekend of April 16 - 17, 2011
Star Night	Thursday, April 21, 2011
Route 66 Fun Run	Friday, April 29 – May 1, 2011
Star Night	Thursday, May 19, 2011
Memorial Day Holiday Trip – Carlsbad Caverns	Thursday, May 26-31, 2011

Don't Miss Out on the Southwestern Regional Event in Northeast San Diego. Go to www.borregospringsresort.com for resort information.



Visit our section website at <http://www.desertstars.org>