



Tri-Angles

Minuteman Section MBCA
Official News-Letter
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Special points of interest:

- Annual Meeting
- Theatre Event
- Dinner
- Special Award
- Classified
- Upcoming Events

ANNUAL MEETING, THEATRE, DINNER 2012

By Ronald Beaton

The haunting musical, *Next To Normal*, was the featured play attended by the Minuteman Section members and guests on Sunday, March 25th at the Boston Center for the Arts on Tremont St. in Boston's gentrified South End.

The play centers on Diana, a mother of two and her husband, Dan, who deal with the depths and despair of Diana's bipolar illness and the effects of her disease on the family.

In the first act Diana is making sandwiches for the children's lunch, but she has spread the bread all over the floor. Dan realizes that she has a problem and tenderly assures her that everything will be alright. He suggests she visit the doctor again to get some help. She has been treated with drugs for depression and hallucinations for 16 years, but stopped taking them because she did not like the side effects and misses the highs and lows of her illness.

Meanwhile daughter Natalie resents her mother's inconvenient illness. She practices the piano and meets a young man at school who enjoys listening to her music and has a personal interest in her as well.

As their relationship develops, she brings Henry home to meet her parents. Diana springs a surprise birthday party for her son. Dan holds



her and tells her their son, Gabe, is not present. He died 16 years ago from an intestinal obstruction. His ghost visits her from time to time and his presence increases in her mind and life.

In Act II Diana starts treatments with a new doctor who wants her to take shock therapy. After shock therapy her memory fails and she becomes upset. She has forgotten her daughter and other things, but realizes her son is dead and tries to put him to rest in her mind. The songs add another dimension to the play with poignant lyrics and moving scores.

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Rich Garick receives special award



Rich receives award from John

President John presents Rich Garick with a special award to recognize his many years' service to the club in organizing the annual meeting, theatre and dinner event.

As we can all imagine, a lot of work goes into this very special event to coor-

dinate the theatre (with a view to the members enjoying the play) and locating a nearby venue for dinner with good food able to accommodate a large crowd and both be available on the same date. Oh, and let's not forget, he gets a great price too!



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www.mbca.org/minuteman

President's Message

On March 25th The Minuteman Section held its Annual Dinner and Elections. The current Officers were reelected by unanimous vote.

I want to thank the membership for allowing me to serve as President for another year. Thank you to Vice President Ed Owen, Treasurer Mark Fancy and Secretary and Webmaster Nancy Piekarczyk, for all their efforts. Ronald Beaton continues his fine work as Newsletter Editor. I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their continued work for the Section.

I can't put into words the appreciation I have of Rich Garick's Chairmanship of our Annual Dinner.

This was Rich's 25th year chairing the event and no one works harder. It's always a well-planned and much-anticipated affair. He's an inspiration to me and the benchmark for all other events.

We are always looking for new events and people to run them. If there is an event you'd like to run let me know and I'll help make it happen.

Our next event is European Auto Solutions Tech Session at their new facility at 1486 Main Street Waltham, RSVP at 560sec@charter.net.

Attention Cape Cod!! On May 20th we have a "Cruise In" at

Prime Mercedes-Benz Service Center in Hyannis, bring your favorite Mercedes-Benz and enjoy food and entertainment provided by Prime, the only Authorized Mercedes-Benz Service Center on the Cape. Same RSVP and details for both events are on the Website www.mbc.org/minuteman.

John S. Piekarczyk
President, Minuteman Section,
MBCA



The Editor's Desk



Spring is here! Mother Nature bursts forth with her annual imperative! The majesty and power of the season compels dormancy to end and life to renew.

Time to get the Mercedes ready for the coming year of fun driving and Minuteman activities.

We've just completed our first event of the year: The Annual Meeting, Theatre and Dinner in Boston. Our new officers were elected at the Annual Meeting and we had a great time with the theatre and dinner. We hope to see more of you at future events this year. Remember your vote

counts so vote early and vote often as Boston's late mayor James Curley would admonish his constituents.

April 28 will see a tech session at European Auto Solutions, 1486 Main St. Waltham. Each member will have his car on a lift for 15 minutes while inspected by a technician.

May 20, Prime Mercedes-Benz Service Center of Hyannis at 95 Falmouth Rd. Hyannis. We will tour their new sales and service facility while enjoying food, soft drinks and entertainment.

June 10, Hardwick Winery Caravan with lunch at the Steaming Tender in

Palmer.

August 12 should be set aside for Ken Bourque's Nautical Cruise. Always a sellout and always wonderful.

September 16, Germanfest at Larz Anderson Museum in Brookline.

October 12-14 is Farberallye time. This year in Sturbridge, Mass., and a must attend event. Mark and Becky Fancy are making the arrangements and this is sure to be a memorable outing.

We have room for more so offer your suggestions and perhaps help plan an event.

- Ronald Beaton



Right to Repair

By Kevin Murphy

I don't think it's typical for MBCA to take a position on political matters and this is merely my opinion/position on this issue and has no reflection on the views of MBCA as a whole, but this is an issue that could effect all automobile owners. I'd like to take a minute and talk about Right to Repair. Many states, including Massachusetts, are currently considering "Right to Repair" legislation that would require auto manufacturers to make proprietary tools and technical information available to independent service shops so the dealer is not the only option you have when you need scheduled maintenance or repairs.

I don't think its right that automakers are able to load their vehicles with proprietary diagnostic software and special tooling that precludes an independent shop from diagnosing or repairing a motor vehicle. Independent repair shops help keep prices low by creating competition in the marketplace. They employ people. They are one of the easier small businesses to start-up and manage as a sole proprietor, and they are often times more honest than the dealership.

I'm a big fan of independent repair shops. There are two of them that have been vital to my enjoyment of my Mercedes-Benz. They couldn't be more different as far as facilities go, but "Right to Repair" is vital to both their business models. The first shop I use is operated by a guy named Ken in a small one man shop in Worcester. Ken's shop is just a general repair garage. He actually doesn't really like working on Mercedes, but because my other cars have been going there for the last 10 years or so, he does what he can for me.

One of the things Ken did for me was change the plugs in my w210 estate. The 3.2 litre engine requires a funny wrench to change the spark-plugs. Ken didn't have this wrench. If I had been unable to buy this funny wrench from my vehicle's manufacturer and give it to him to do the job, changing the 12 sparkplugs in my car could have cost me a few hundred bucks at the dealership. "Right to Repair" laws mean that guys like Ken will be able to get that wrench when they need it.

I also use European Auto Solutions in Waltham when Ken doesn't want to tackle something on my Teutonic technological monster. EAS is a much bigger, multiple bay shop that employs several people. They work almost exclusively on Mercedes-Benz vehicles and are a major supporter of our section. They've been in business for 12 years and just expanded their facility, added personnel, bought more equipment and increased

their parts inventory. All these things are good for the economy. All these things are good for the consumer because they provide competition in the marketplace, and they provide consumers with the ability to "get a second opinion" when they have doubts at the dealership.

EAS's whole business model is based on Right to Repair and right now it depends on the "spirit of fair play" of one manufacturer. Fortunately, for the most part, MBUSA is reasonably friendly to the consumer and the independent shop with www.startekinfo.com which lets you buy access to information and their willingness to sell many of their specialized tools. However, even Mercedes-Benz has things that are becoming more proprietary, things that can only be serviced at the dealer. "Right to repair" legislation will require manufacturers to make available all the knowledge and materials required to fix a

(Continued on page 7)

CLASSIFIED FOR SALE

1966 Mercedes-Benz 250 Se Coupe



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The New SL350

If there is such a thing as a 'cheap' Mercedes SL, it's the SL350. This entry-level model comes with a 3.5-litre V6 producing 302bhp and a price-tag that's likely to be over £10,000 less than the SL500's.



as the standard suspension, so specifying it may not be worthwhile.

Refinement is excellent, and with the roof up you'd be hard pushed to notice you were in a convertible. There's virtually no wind or road noise, and squeaks and rattles are notable only by their absence.

Compared to the old SL350, this new model

In terms of performance, the two cars aren't

split by as much. The SL350 sprints from 0-62mph in 5.9 seconds, while the bi-turbo V8-powered model completes the same sprint in 4.6 seconds, but the way this power is delivered is the biggest difference between the two.

Where the SL500 is happy to deliver a huge hit of acceleration in any gear and at any speed, the SL350 needs to be revved to get the best out of it. That takes away some of the SL's relaxed driving experience, but adds a new depth of involvement.

Changes to the handling are minimal, with the SL350 feeling a little lighter on its feet and keener to change direction. Both are far more accomplished than their predecessors, but without the heavy V8 engine at the front, the SL350 is certainly the more nimble of the two. It corners in typical SL fashion though, which means plenty of grip and little drama, but next to no feedback.

But the SL has always been comfort-biased, and the SL350 boasts the same pillowy-soft ride as the more expensive SL500. Our car was equipped with the optional Active Body Control suspension, which does improve handling, but it's just as comfortable

is 140kg lighter, and that helps in achieving the fuel economy figure of 41.5mpg, which is 30 per cent better than the outgoing model. The seamless 7G-Tronic gearbox and stop/start system also play their parts.

The surprise is that two cars that differ only in the engines that power them can feel quite so different on the road. The added agility and rev-happy nature of the V6 engine mean the SL350 has more of a sports car feel than the SL500, which is the more GT-inspired of the two.

Price: £75,000

Engine: 3.5-litre V6, 302bhp

Transmission: Seven-speed automatic, rear wheel drive

0-62mph: 5.9 seconds

Top speed: 155mph

Economy: 41.5mpg

CO2: 159g/km

Equipment: Full leather upholstery, climate control, heated seats, cruise control, sat-nav

On sale: April

This article originally appeared in Auto Express, written by Luke Madden

Next to Normal

(Continued from page 1)

Diana notes that Henry at age 16 reminds her of someone. She returns from a doctor's visit to explore her keepsakes and comes across the music box which she played for her long-dead son.

Dan sees this and becomes enraged. He smashes the box to the floor.

Diana now tries to comfort Dan and asks why he is so faithful after the years of anguish he has endured. He assures her he will always be there for her.

She visits Dr. Madden again and realizes that it is not her mind, but her soul that is hurting and wonders what to do if the treatments fail to help.

Natalie is waiting outside the office and Diana tells her that she would settle for Next to Normal if she can't be healed.

At the end, Diana tells Dan she is leaving to spend time by herself. She does not want to burden him any longer and feels she needs to succeed and sometimes fail on her own. She is going to live with her parents. Dan begins to show signs of his own oncoming mental illness as Gabe looks on, the play ends.

An entertaining if not amusing play, it never the less evokes visceral emotions. An afternoon well-spent.

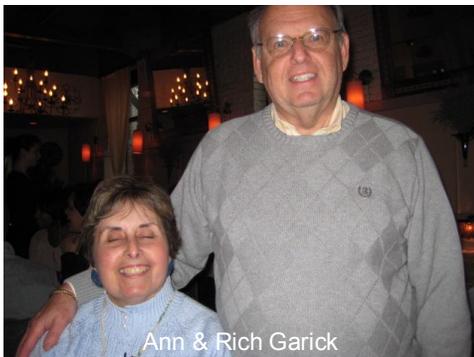
ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held at *Masa*, also on Tremont St. some few blocks distant. The current slate of officers was re-elected to thunderous applause, acclaim and approval.

Dinner was quite good as usual with a full menu offering several great appetizers, entrees and desserts. Just about everything had an unusual and

highly flavorful to spicy southwestern flair. The food was good, the service was good, the companionship of fellow Mercedes enthusiasts was good. All in all...

This was another sold out affair chaired by Rich Garick.



Ann & Rich Garick



Nancy & John Piekarczyk



Catherine Kelly & Ronald Beaton

Right to Repair

(Continued from page 4)

vehicle, whether the car company has a "spirit of fair play" or not.

As motor vehicles get more complicated and as software and electronics become a more important part of the business of repair, (especially with the increasing popularity of hybrids and electric vehicles) if we want to have choices as to who services our cars, independent repair providers need to be able to access the proprietary tools, software, technical data and diagnostic equipment needed to service modern automobiles.

That's why its important to support the "right to repair" laws that are circulating around the states these days. With more consolidation going in the auto business, there are fewer and fewer companies running dealerships in the US (for instance

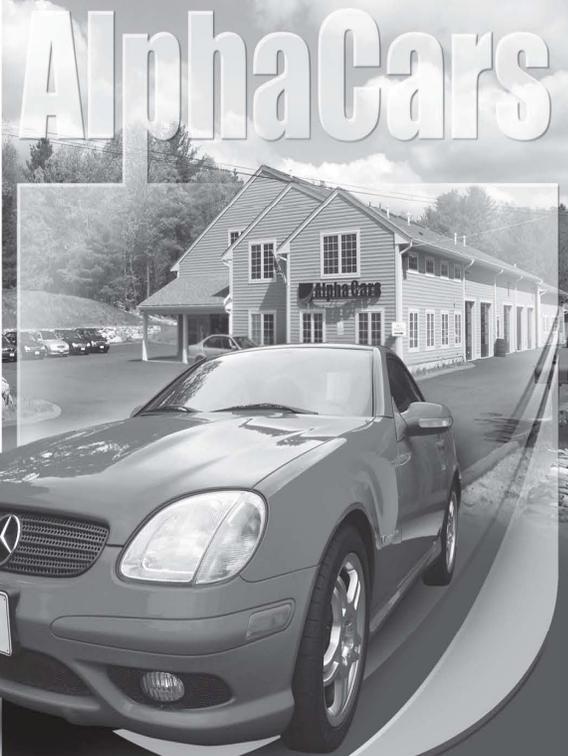
Herb Chambers, Ernie Boch, Penske) and there are fewer service options available to consumers when it comes to modern automobiles as a result of this. As enthusiasts of a brand with a 125 year history, we must consider that right now, somewhere, is a 16 year old kid who looks lustily at a 2012 SLK, and wont be able to afford it until he's 40. When that happens, he deserves to have places like EAS and Ken's shop as alternatives to the dealer when it comes time to get it fixed.

There are, of course, numerous other independent Mercedes repair shops like Vanderveer Motors in Norwood who do first class work at substantially reduced prices. Give your local repair shop a chance to earn your business.

Note: EAS is owned by Ed Owen, a vice president of Minuteman Section MBCA. Vanderveer Motors is owned by Peter Vanderveer, Tri-Angles Technical Editor -ed



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UPCOMING EVENTS

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May 20, Prime Mercedes-Benz New Dealer Tour, 95 Falmouth Rd., Hyannis, Mass. RSVP John 560sec@charter.net



**June 10,
Hardwick
Winery
Caravan**

A grand time for all at this beautiful winery. A pleasant drive through the countryside as part of a caravan, plenty of parking, plenty of wine tasting. Great fun!

August 12, Ken Bourque's Annual Nautical Cruise

from Pickering Wharf in Salem, Mass., on *The Flame*. Dinner follows this 2-3 hour cruise.



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For information, contact Laura Simonds at 650.592.7613
or simonds1@pacbell.net



SEPT. 16, GERMANFEST XXVI at the Larz Anderson Museum in Brookline. One of our club's premier events: a don't miss. RSVP slamin@conformis.com



OCT 12-14, FARBER-ALLYE XXXV in Sturbridge, MA details to follow.