



# Star News

## SOUTH FLORIDA SECTION

### Upcoming Events

Be sure to watch the mail for further information about our new events for 2004, including:

#### April, 2004

Second Annual Poker Run

#### May/June, 2004

Cruise Ship Luncheon

#### September, 2004

Annual Meeting

#### November, 2004

Miami Auto Show

#### December 4, 2004

Holiday Party at the Miami Shores Country Club

### Email Addresses...

Make sure the club has your email address. Send it to Ken Robinson at [ken@kenrobinson.org](mailto:ken@kenrobinson.org) so we can add you to our email list. We can then send you an advance notice of upcoming events.

## Holiday Party Report 2003

The Southeast Section held its annual holiday party on Saturday, December 13th at the festively decorated Miami Shores Country Club. Freshly returning from an extensive trip through Australia with Billy and Sondra Joel, President Jerry Cohen and his charming wife Ruth welcomed the members and their guests. He introduced special guests Regional Director Len Sokoloff and his wife, Kay, who joined us from North Carolina. Len took this opportunity to present a plaque to Ken Robinson, who was honored as Officer of the

Year of the Southeast Region. Congratulations to Ken for this well deserved award.

The setting was delightful and the diners enjoyed watching the golfers on the floodlit driving range outside the dining room's picture windows. Gabriel Gomez played Santa Claus once again this year and distributed wonderful door prizes to lucky diners between courses. Many members and guests also brought gifts for a gift exchange.

Members came from as far north as West Palm Beach (John Gaustad) and as far south as Marathon in the

Keys (Gordon Derman) bringing with them invited guests. John Gaustad was joined by his parents from Norway and Gabriel Gomez invited family and guests from Canada. We all enjoyed the good camaraderie of fellow members and friends.

Thanks Jerry Cohen for choosing the venue, Tünde Robinson for organizing the event and Gabriel Gomez for selecting the club-donated door prizes.

**Starting with gentleman in foreground and proceeding clockwise: Ron and Andrea Babice; Ruth and Jerry Cohen; Kay and Len Sokoloff, Southeast Regional Director; Billy and Sondra Joel.**



# President's Message

As we finish the first months of the New Year, I cannot help but again consider all the exciting areas that we experienced in the immediate past and are looking forward to in the immediate future.

The first and obvious thing that comes to mind is this newsletter, which has been reorganized and enhanced in many ways. We have contracted with an outside source to professionally produce our publication similar to the manner in which other Mercedes Club of America Sections that have taken the same path. With this change, we will be accepting advertising from members and outside vendors who might wish to target our specific audience. The cost of advertising space is reasonable and you are encouraged to inquire about pricing. Other sections have successfully taken this route and we look forward to the same type of success.

During 2003 we continued to sponsor several social and technical events that drew a lot of praise from our membership. A new program, THE POKER RUN, organized by Gabe Gomez, was a hit the first time out of the

starting gate. Numerous stops along the way included both technical and social aspects ending with a "reading" of the cards to select poker hand winners and cash prizes were awarded to the lucky ones. This event will be scheduled again in 2004 so make your plans to participate.

Another highlight in 2003 was a spectacular visit to the ANTIQUE CAR MUSEUM where we spent considerable time touching and feeling about 60 antique cars of all kinds and breeds. After the guided tour and time with the cars, almost all the participants had lunch and spent quality time making new friends

This year we established a new position in the club, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, and that slot is ably handled by JOHN GAUSTAD who promised to be creative in attracting new members to the club in spite of the loss of members nationally. Our sense has always been that current members are the best recruiters for new members, so invite your friends to join the club and share in the wonderful experiences.

In addition to the programs mentioned above, we had a large gathering in February this year for our Day at the Races and for the remainder of this year we are discussing plans for our second POKER RUN, LUNCH aboard a magnificent CRUISE SHIP, the annual AUTO SHOW and the next HOLIDAY PARTY.

We live in an exciting part of a great country and belong to a select group of car owners who have much in



**Regional Director Len Sokoloff presenting Ken Robinson with Southeast Region Officer of the Year award.**

common. Support your club by attending events and help us grow by bringing guests to events. These guests often join the club and that enables us to continue with our programs.

I hope to see you at one of our events soon. If you're not a member, why not join us? Drive safely.

Jerry Cohen, President



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The South Florida Section now has its own website. You can find your club on the Web at [mbcaorg@southflorida](mailto:mbcaorg@southflorida). Drop by from time to time to see what's new. It also provides an easy way to contact the club. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

## Director Profile: John Gaustad

Director John Gaustad was born in Trondheim, Norway. He graduated from Trondheim University with a degree in electrical engineering. In the early 1990's John relocated to the Virgin Islands where he was involved in building luxury hotels and town homes.

In 1993 he came to the United States and took up residence in Fort Lauderdale. There he obtained a General Contractors license. He has built and renovated homes

for the city of Fort Lauderdale. After seven years there, he moved to West Palm Beach where he builds and renovated properties for his own account. Exporting automobiles, motorcycles and boats to Norway is another of John's pursuits.

A long time Mercedes buff, John has owned a 230TE, 1990 560SEC, 1993 600SEC, 1997 500CL, 1990 500SL, 1998 ML320 and a new 2004 CLK convertible!

A race car driver of some



John Gaustad receives award at the Stammtisch 2003 from Ellen Buchanan (Southern Stars Region).

note, John walked away with First Prize in the Autocross with his 500SL and Second in

the Concours d'Elegance at the Stammtisch on Jekyll Island, Georgia this past year.

## Auto Beauty Contest

Automobile aficionados are always eager to see, touch and hear about the latest in auto design and the most recent innovations in the automobile industry. As a result, the annual Miami Auto Show, once again proved to be a premier event for the South Florida Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America.

Director Howard Engel did his usual magic, making lunch arrangements at Pizza Via on world famous Lincoln Road, and a club favorite. Aside from the great food there was the usual conversation between friends and acquaintances regarding the latest work done on their respective Mercedes, race events attended, and who was on which diet - Atkins vs. South Beach!

The Auto Show held at the Miami Beach Convention Center featuring the latest in high tech communication,

giant screens and dazzling displays, proved to live up to its name as one of the largest and most glamorous shows in the United States. Here was an opportunity to browse, sit in, gawk and admire the latest slick creations from all over the world.

Topping off the displays, in a premier location was the "mighty" Mercedes-Benz

exhibit. As in years past, it seems as if Mercedes attracts the largest crowds. Judging by the enthusiasm shown by attendees climbing in and out of the ML's, SL's, CLK's and the rest of the line, Mercedes-Benz was the star of the show.

The Mercedes hospitality suit was once again open to members of our South

Florida Section. It proved to be a popular haven where delicious refreshments were available, and tired feet could be rested. Incidentally, because of the show, at least two new vehicles were purchased by our members!! This year's show more than lived up to its reputation of showcasing the latest.



## Section Officers

**Jerry Cohen, President**  
Jeruco3@bellsouth.net

**Ken Robinson, V. President**  
ken@kenrobinson.org

**Marie Pappas, Treasurer**  
mariepappas@aol.com

**Tunde Robinson, Secretary**  
tunde@tunde.org

## Directors

**Howard Engel** (3 yr. term)  
954-572-0519

**Gabriel Gomez** (1 yr. term)  
gabrielgomez@keyes.com

**Gustavo Moncayo** (2 yr. term)  
gustavomoncayo@aol.com

**Ted Pappas** (2 yr. term)  
tedpappas25@aol.com

**Mel Shrago** (2 yr. term)  
mshrago9169@aol.com

**John Gaustad** (Newly appointed)  
jjpgaus@bellsouth.net

# Win, Place & Show

The bugler played the “call to the colors”, then came the voice of the announcer saying “They’re off!” and out of the starting gate, like a blast from a canon, the horses sprung forward, stretching every muscle to get to the finish line.

That’s the sound and sight that greeted the members of the South Florida Section, race after race, at Gulfstream Park on a bright sunny Sunday February afternoon.

A bountiful and delicious buffet brunch was ready for the attendees upon arrival. Tables arranged on the protected terrace gave a breathtaking view of Gulfstream’s beautiful manicured grounds. A visit to the paddock area provided an opportunity to see those magnificent beasts being

“saddled up” and made ready to do battle for first place.

On the bandstand the veteran rock & roll group, “Survivor” belted out their classic music as fans settled in the seats and spread out on the surrounding grassy area to enjoy Sunday in the park.

As usual some of the South Florida Section members had winners, and some had losers! By the time

the 8th race came we were all on our feet as this was the race dedicated to the Mercedes-Benz Club of America, South Florida Section.

The real benefit was not only the beautiful day, delicious buffet, or the money won. The best part of the event was the spirit, camaraderie and good time had by our members.



# StarNews

SOUTH FLORIDA SECTION  
Mercedes-Benz Club of America

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