



# SOONER STAR NEWS



## President's Message

*Then followed that beautiful season...  
Summer....  
Filled was the air with a dreamy and  
magical light;  
and the landscape lay as if new created in  
all the freshness of childhood.  
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Your Section greets summer with the Members Picnic on Saturday, June 18, at Hafer Park in Edmond. After a recess of several

years, this annual event returned last year to an enthusiastic response - and a terrific time. Your Section is providing the food and drink for this event, so do these four things (1) mark your calendar; (2) email or call Ed Hoag to let him know you are coming. It is important we know a good headcount so we have food for everyone; (3) give your Mercedes-Benz a wash, as the circular drive around the pavilion is a great backdrop to display our cars; and (4) prepare to enjoy yourself!

Did you know your Section has over 150 members? While several live outside the metro OKC area, including as far away as Utah, the majority are nearby, but a minority of Members enjoy the activities their Section provides?

The monthly dinner meetings are not only an occasion to meet fellow Members but also a wonderful opportunity to develop long-lasting friendships. Ask me how I know. Section events, several of which are described in this newsletter, offer a range of activities and are great always-great fun. If you are not taking part in your Section's dinners/events, give them a try. You'll be glad you did!

Don't forget, we're on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mercedes-Benz-Club-of-America-Central-Oklahoma-Section/116487505215294> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/MBcaCOK> So check us out on both for great Mercedes-Benz photography, ranging from the rare to the unusual. People from around the world log onto our page daily to check out these photos, so I encourage you to not only go to the site regularly to see these great photos but to be sure to "Like" our pages and photos.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2 & 3: Interview with Todd Bondy, GM, MB of OKC.

Page 5: Interesting Journey.

Page 6: Saturday Doubleheader.

Page 9: Allgaeu Orient Rally.

Page 10: She's Mercedes.

Page 15: Calendar of Events



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Questions/information call Section President at 405 359-2821 or National Business Office at 1-800-637-2360

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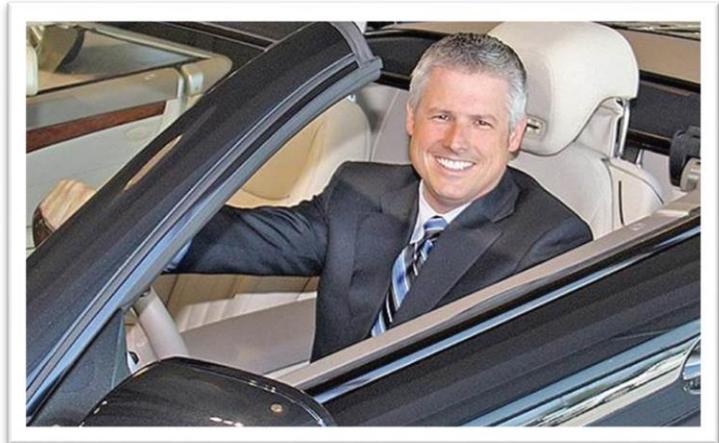
## Interview with Mr. Todd Bondy, GM, Mercedes-Benz of Oklahoma City

By Masood Khan

*On April 19<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting, we had the good fortune of having Mr. Todd Bondy, General Manager of Mercedes-Benz of Oklahoma City as our guest speaker. Along with a very informative talk and slide show, Todd introduced Scott Dunn, the new Director of Service & Parts and Bryon Hudgins the new Service Manager to all who were present. Thinking a large group of our Members would not be able to benefit from that, I asked Todd if he would do a brief interview for the Newsletter. Todd was kind enough to oblige.*

Masood: You have been the GM/operating partner of MBOKC for almost fifteen months, what are the challenges and triumphs so far?

Todd: I always like to start with the positive. I am most pleased with the progress we have made on new vehicle market share and pre-owned sales. We have moved from being below national market share in the luxury segment to being 1 point ahead for 2015. In addition, we more than doubled pre-owned sales during 2015. The biggest challenge has been keeping up with our growth of internal service business related to our higher retail volumes combined with the subsequent increase in retail customer pay and warranty business in our service department. With a nationwide shortage of qualified technicians, and the loss of some key service advisors, we have had a difficult time keeping up with our increased service volume and service experience, particularly in the 2nd half of 2015. We have added a service and parts director, changed the structure of our shop, trained 5 new service advisors, and have added 5 new technicians to help combat these shortcomings. I feel confident that we are back up to the level we were in 2014 in customer care and look forward to improving further as the year continues.



Masood: When is the dealership moving to Edmond? What can you tell us about the new facilities?

Todd: We are in the midst of negotiating some final design elements with Mercedes-Benz and hope to break ground this year. The location will be in the old Ford Retail Network building across the street from BMW where we will build a new showroom in front of the existing service department. We hope to expand from 30 service bays now to 46 at the new location and will feature a luxurious and expansive new showroom with amazing guest amenities including a planned workout room for our employees and customers. It will be quite spectacular and will be the nicest dealership in the city.

3. The new C Coupe, Cabriolet and the 2017 E class are on the way, how do you feel about the model lineup and the prospects it brings?

The competition in the coupe segment has been very strong with the BMW 4 series dominating in the past two years. We believe the new C Coupe and convertible will bring new buyers to the brand and propel Mercedes-Benz to the #1 spot in the segment. The car is stunning and we can't wait to reveal it to the public. The new E Class will be the most sophisticated vehicle on the road bringing us one step closer to autonomous driving and will be reminiscent of the S Class on the inside and out with a sportier driving experience at a very compelling pricing point.

## Continued from page 2...

4. What is your vision for the future of MBOKC and the Mercedes-Benz brand?

We hope to continue to build on our sales success and fine-tune our customer experience to win the Best of the Best award from Mercedes-Benz in 2016.

5. As you may know, Mercedes-Benz Club of America with around thirty thousand Members is a great force behind the Mercedes-Benz brand, Daimler AG recognizes that fact too, how do you think, our Section of the Club can help you at the local level?

Continue to spread the word about our amazing and exciting vehicles, as your enthusiasm is contagious.



A springtime Saturday Picnic Meeting in lieu of the regular Tuesday evening dinner Meeting is fast becoming a tradition.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am, we'll gather at Edmond's Hafer Park for lunch. We have again reserved Pavilion 1, a covered area with many tables and good surrounding parking, the better to show off our cars.

The entrances to Hafer Park are located on Edmond's 9<sup>th</sup> Street, just east of Bryant Avenue. After passing the large parking lot on the left, take the second right into the Park. Our Pavilion is located at end of the cul-de-sac.

Lunch and soft drinks will be catered for a modest charge of \$15 per person. Therefore, we must know if you plan to attend.

Please commit now to joining this early summer Club activity and send your check to: Ed Hoag, at the Club's P.O. Box 1518, Edmond, OK 73083-1518. Or reserve your spot via Email ([edhoag@cox.net](mailto:edhoag@cox.net)) and pay at the event. To enjoy the Picnic lunch, you must let Ed know by no later than June 12th.



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## Interesting Journey

By Bill Nash

Our guest speaker, Robert Murray of Edmond, is a “car guy” and frequents Coffee and Cars. President Charles Woods is also a regular and he met Robert at a recent first Saturday event where Robert was proudly displaying his

1939 Plymouth Deluxe rumble seat coupe. While Charles was admiring the coupe Robert shared the story of how he acquired the car.

When Robert was a young boy he lived in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, and like all you boys he admired cars. It turned out that his neighbor, school teacher Mildred Firth, owned a 1939 Plymouth Deluxe rumble seat coupe which she frequently drove around town. Miss Firth was well-known in town and she was recognized by the car she loved and drove daily. When Robert was around 11 years old he had saved money from his paper route and told Miss Firth that he wanted to buy her car when he got his driver’s license. Well, he didn’t get to buy the car, but he did get to ride in the rumble seat.



The car was unique as it was purchased new by Miss Firth from the local dealer. The car had to be ordered from the factory in Detroit and she chose Amphibian Green paint with cloth seats, a deluxe heater and the radio delete option. What is remarkable is that Miss Firth went on to teach 42 years and would not buy another car in her lifetime. In 2005, when she was 94 years old, she decided to stop driving and reluctantly chose to part with her car. She offered the car to her cousin Bill Firth, and he accepted without hesitation. Over the next several years Bill and his son Mark painstakingly restored the coupe to its original condition. When the car was finished Bill drove it to Pennsylvania where Miss Firth was living in an assisted living facility. They went for a quiet ride around the block for old time’s sake.

After many years Bill Firth decided the time was right for the car to go to a new owner, and he placed an ad in *Hemmings*. One day, the phone rang with a caller from Oklahoma who said he had been a paperboy in Phillipsburg as a youth and remembered the ride he had taken in the in the famous rumble seat ... this was Robert.

As Robert grew older he moved on to a new career, married and started a family. But the car always remained a distant memory. One day he decided to look for cars in *Hemmings*, and, much to his surprise, he found a 1939 Plymouth Coupe that sounded very familiar; the owner was Bill Firth. Could it be Miss Firth’s coupe? As noted above it was Miss Firth’s car, but to his disappointment it had been sold.

Robert decided that he would continue his search in *Hemmings* for another old car and settled on a 1937 Chevrolet. He decided to look at the car in conjunction with an upcoming trip to visit family in New Jersey. Before he left, his wife convinced him to call Bill Firth to find out the name of the new owner. That phone call led him to a couple living in Northern Maine. Robert contacted the owners and arranged a visit. After hearing this amazing story, the man’s wife told him to give the car to Robert. So Miss Firth’s Plymouth acquired its new owner and was transported to Oklahoma. Robert drives the car frequently and you may spot it if you are in Edmond.

Miss Firth reached the age of 107 before she passed, but her Plymouth is still running strong.

Robert will bring the car to our annual picnic at Hafer Park in Edmond.

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## Saturday Doubleheader

By Ed & Peggy Hoag

In terms of Member participation, our Section's recent two-day road trip to Hutchinson and McPherson Kansas was the most successful in my memory. Seven Mercedes took fourteen of us through rain to visit the Strataca Underground Salt Museum in Hutchinson on Friday. After "overnighting" in McPherson, on Saturday morning we went to McPherson College to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> annual C.A.R.S. Club Show.



The rainless day found hundreds of cars displayed on the grass in the center of the Campus. While attending the Show, we were offered student conducted tours of the Restoration classroom facilities in Templeton Hall. Thereafter, Members took advantage of their weekend in Kansas to pursue other interests in our neighboring State. This is one of my favorite car shows and we hope more Members, unfamiliar with this great nearby auto restoration asset, will be able to join us on next year's trip. Our thanks to all who represented Central Oklahoma Section at McPherson College on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Two Saturday's later:

Through the planning skills of Ken Hoffman, Bill Nash and John Kushnerick (EOK Section), a statewide Club Member "mixer" was organized for May 14<sup>th</sup>. Eleven from the Tulsa Section and eighteen from Central Oklahoma met for lunch at the new Museum Grill at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

The afternoon featured a visit to Don Boulton's very special "brass-era" classic car collection. The cars all feature brass headlights and fixtures, while the chassis incorporate fine leathers and exotic woods. For those interested in the true history of the automobile, it was a special treat to see one of America's finest collections and enjoy Mr. Boulton's detailed stories on the car's origins.



The turnout from both Sections was impressive. Many thanks to all who participated.

*Continued on next page...*

Saturday Doubleheader continued...



# Welcome New Members

John Baier, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Sheri Stubblefield, Norman, Oklahoma

Houston Henkes  
Owner



Phyllis Henkes  
Owner

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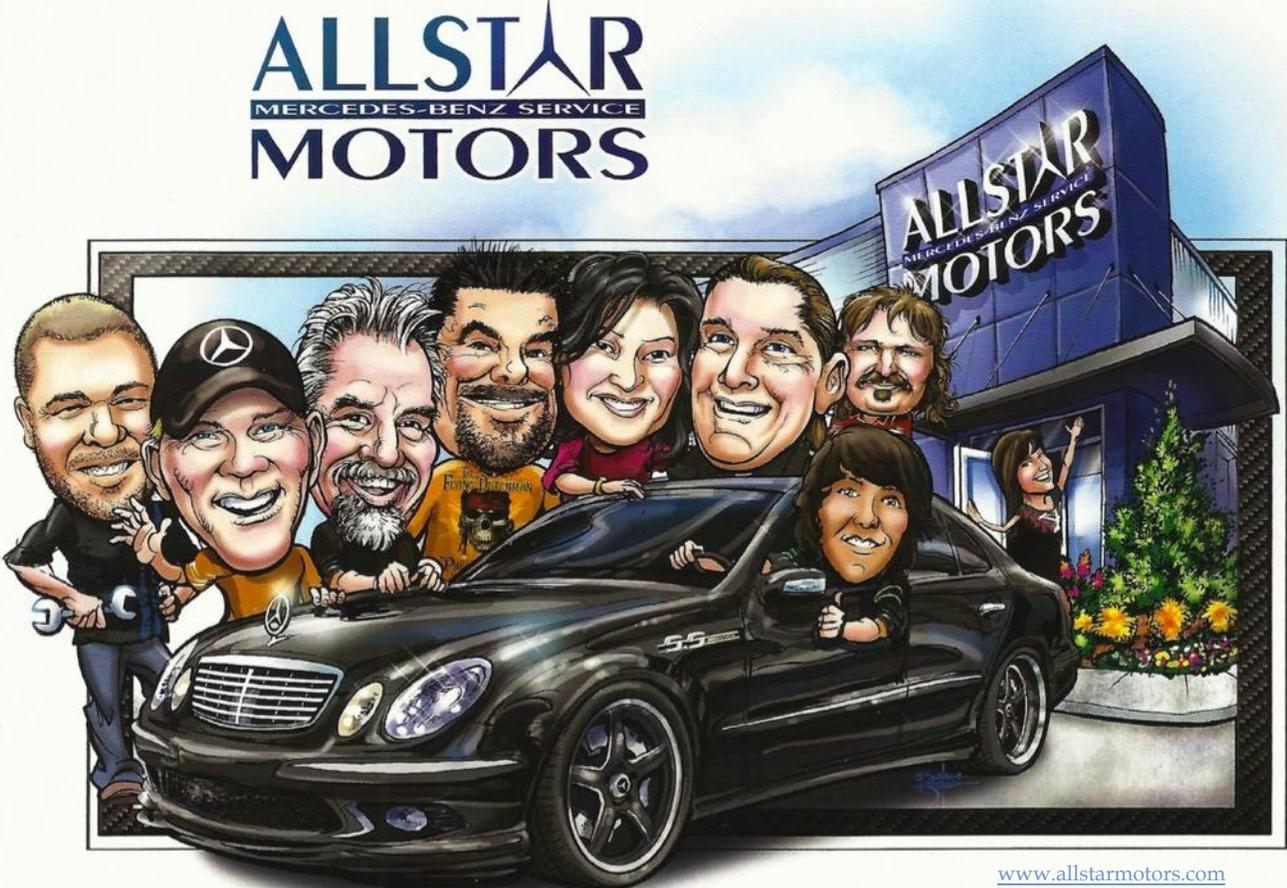


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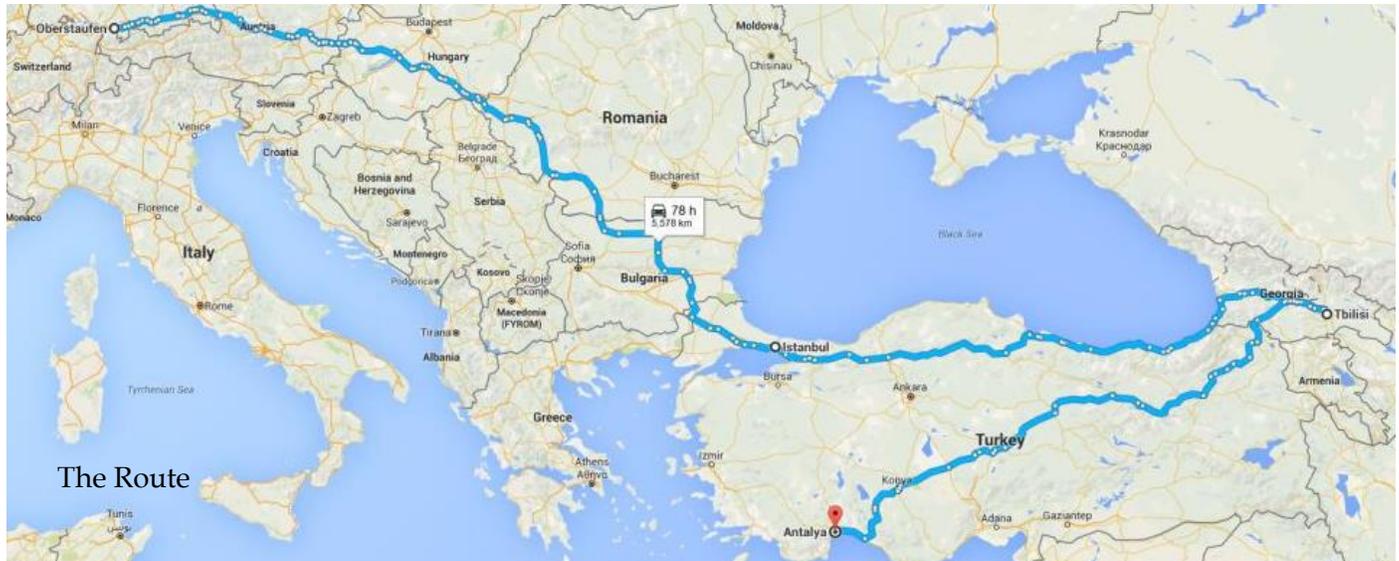
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# THE ALLGAEU ORIENT RALLY, TEAM MADCAPS

By Masood Khan

The Allgaeu Orient Rally is a budget rally from Oberstaufen to Turkey in an overall time of three weeks. All the cars have to be either twenty years or older or if newer, should be worth less than €1111.11. At the end of the rally, all the cars are donated to raise funds for charity. € 1.4 million has been raised so far for various charities and donated for education, healthcare and social projects. This year **“Team Madcaps”** (six friends) sponsored by Mercedes-Benz drove three 124 wagons and achieved 4<sup>th</sup> position in the rally.



The Route

Interesting to note; use of GPS systems and highways/autobahns is not allowed. Participants can only stay in a hotel costing no more than € 11.11/night or sleep in the car or a tent. It is important for all the team to arrive at the destination in at least one of the cars. By the way the winner gets a real camel.



## She's Mercedes Susie Wolff, Mercedes-Benz Brand Ambassador

*By Mercedes-Benz, editing Masood Khan*

Since May 2016 Susie Wolff has been the official brand ambassador for She's Mercedes. The former racer discovered her passion for speed when she was just 14 years old. In those days, Scottish-born Susie was still tearing around the track in a kart - and winning pretty much every race for her age group. Her tremendous success in the field of racing led to her being voted British Woman Kart Racing Driver every year between 1996 and 2000. Susie began her career working in formula racing before driving for Mercedes-Benz in the DTM from 2006 until 2012. Afterwards she became a test-driver for Formula 1's world-renowned Williams team.



The luxury motor yacht "Arrow460-Granturismo" designed by Mercedes-Benz Style



# Mercedes-Benz opens Mercedes me store in Beijing

Mercedes-Benz has opened its first **Mercedes me** store in China; it's biggest market since 2015. It is a place where you can enjoy Mercedes cars, lifestyle products, café, restaurant and much more. The store has been a huge success.



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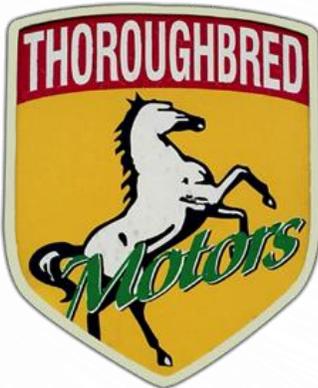
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## Editor's Note

By Masood Khan

I started working on this issue of the Newsletter earlier in May. Middle of the month we went to New York City to attend my daughter's graduation at NYU and then we went to Boston to see the Yankee side of my family. Once back I was happy I had done most of the work and just needed to insert two articles by Bill and Ed along with President's message. Then the inevitable happened, my Microsoft Office crashed and both my Newsletter files were corrupted. It is May 31<sup>st</sup>, 8:35 in the evening and I am just finishing the Editor's Note after starting the Newsletter from scratch, I hope once I save the file, there will be no surprises. My other hope is; the Members will open the Newsletter and take a look at it as I have spent a few days of my precious life in creating it.



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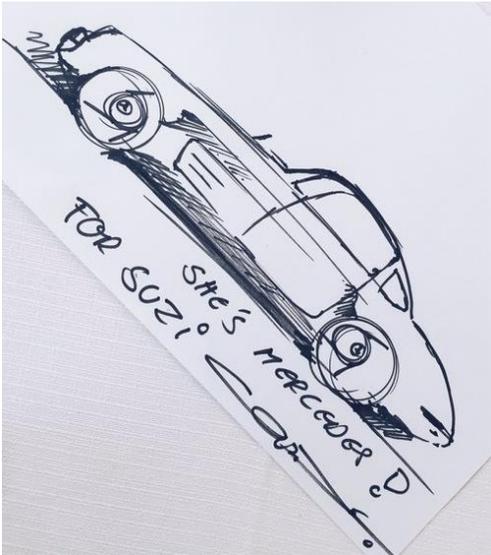
FREE ESTIMATES

## Mercedes Spotting...



Spotted in OKC by Owen Grimes

Sketch by G. Wagoner, MB Head of Design



## Calendar of Events 2016

- June 4<sup>th</sup>; Coffee & Cars @ 122<sup>nd</sup> & May, OKC
- June 18<sup>th</sup>; Member's Annual Picnic  
Hafer Park - Edmond
- July 2<sup>nd</sup>; Coffee & Cars @ 122<sup>nd</sup> & May, OKC
- July 9<sup>th</sup>; Board of Directors Meeting
- July 19<sup>th</sup>; Monthly Dinner Meeting @ Grand  
House Asian Bistro, OKC
- August 6<sup>th</sup>; Coffee & Cars @ 122<sup>nd</sup> & May, OKC
- August 16<sup>th</sup>; Monthly Dinner Meeting @ Bellini's,  
Waterford, OKC
- September 3<sup>rd</sup>; Coffee & Cars @ 122<sup>nd</sup> & May, OKC
- September 20<sup>th</sup>; Monthly Dinner Meeting

### Sooner Star News June/July 2016

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## STARFEST 2016

Join us in New England on August 3-6, 2016 for StarFest 2016. StarFest will take place in Connecticut's "Quiet Corner" with lush Green Valleys and picturesque Hilltop Farms, it's also known as the Antique Capital of Connecticut. From the seashore near the host hotel, Mohegan Sun, to the lush greenery near the host track, the two linked by a short trip on I-395. Spectacular scenery and iconic New England towns await your discovery.

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