



The Three Rivers Road Report

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The Planning Begins



New president Julie Bruggner (left) starts the process of planning another year of fun events, with the help of Event Coordinator Suzanne Noblett (right)



Janice Derek, Jason Bogart, Suzanne Noblett and Lisa and Ken Long (left to right) all show off their Mercedes Club attire.

New Feature

Starting with this issue, we are going to try a new feature in the newsletter. Look for the "Who's Who in the Club" article every month to read about some of your fellow club members. You might be called upon to be the feature some month. A picture of you, your car(s), and a short article is all we need. If you're not comfortable writing, a short meeting or phone call with the editor will suffice. Lisa Long started the ball rolling this month with a very descriptive article detailing her and Ken's cars. (See pages 3 & 4) Of course, working for the News-Sentinel gives her a slight advantage in the writing department.

Coming This Year

We've got lots of great things planned for this year and you'll be getting more details as each event gets closer. But the next event is a wine tasting on February 23 at Two EE's Winery. We'll meet and caravan there and I'll send more details in an e-mail soon.

March 16th we'll be having dinner at Flannigan's to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. (Even the Germans in us can be Irish for one day.)

Bob Derek Sr. is working on another trip to North Carolina in May. For those of you who missed the last one, you really should try to make this one.

We've got some great plans for this summer. Our annual EuroFest will be June 8th, at IPFW this year. July 5th we'll be having an autocross back at IPFW, assisted by our National president, Terry Kiwala, and of course the TRF Parade on July 12th.

There's going to be much, much more so watch your newsletters and e-mails for details and instructions.



Janice Derek took this fun picture showing bubbles frozen in the extreme cold.



Be careful out there. The weather is not exactly friendly this year for driving our nice cars. This picture (left) was taken by Jason Boggart during one of the recent snowy nights.



Who's Who in the Club

Ken & Lisa's Cars



By Lisa Esquivel Long

Growing up in the '80s, I used to watch the nightly news and see Princess Diana flitting about unguarded in a Mercedes-Benz. I associated the vehicle with prestige and glamour. One day I would have a Mercedes; then I'd know I had arrived. I didn't know it would come so soon when I met my husband, Ken Long.

We met at an Easter get-together. I had to get up early for work, so I needed to dash. The hosts said Ken's car was blocking me in. So he hurriedly thought up a line to get a little more attention from me, not realizing I'd be leaving so soon.

"Esquivel. That's Greek isn't it," philosopher Ken said.

"Uh, no," I explained.

I knew it was meant to be when he got into his gold Mercedes so I could get on my way.

Now we are a Mercedes family with three MBs.

Here's our family:

Grand Dame: That's the name of the champagne gold 1980 300SD Ken had when I met him. That year the Federal government required chrome bumpers on cars. The diesel engine gave it a puh-puh sound, and it needed babying by being plugged in overnight when the temperatures dropped. She was a die-hard vehicle who, I swear, got Ken out of a speeding ticket one time. His excuse for going over the speed limit when we got pulled over. "I'm sorry. I was listening to the (Bill) Clinton hearings." The officer's response? "What color is this, gold?" Ken corrected him, "*Champagne* gold." Did that end up on a ticket? No. I should have known from the way the officer looked up and down the exterior.



Ken was driving a Buick Skylark that had been owned by his father when he saw a notice up in the IPFW athletic center. A maintenance man in the athletic center owned it and was selling it. It was sitting in the IPFW parking lot. It appeared solid and had good mileage, so that appealed to Ken, he said. Its regal bearing made us name it Grand Dame.

Mercy: My Pontiac Grand Am, my first car, was giving me nothing but trouble with its timing issues. By the time I'd fixed so much, the company determined there were issues in that year and you could get them fixed for free - but if you'd already fixed them like I had you were out of luck. Ken was worried that I needed a solid car. So we stopped at Derek Motorcar when it was on US30 and picked out a burgundy 190E. I had a Mercedes of my own! It wasn't a touchy diesel or large like Grand Dame, but just my size. It was a great car, and responsible for my first speeding ticket. After getting it back from the body shop, where it had lived for about a month after someone rammed into the driver's side of it while it was parked, I decided to try to make the light on Lima Road late at night - right in front of

that Allen County sheriff's officer. Well, so much for being 90 years old and saying I've never gotten so much as a speeding ticket. I should have tried that Clinton excuse. My only grievance with the little squirt was that it didn't do well in the snow. We park behind our house in a dead end alley. So every day before and after work I'd have to hope that no one else was coming down the alley because I needed to keep up the momentum to keep going. The final straw came when two neighbors pushed me out after I got stuck and remarked, "You need to get yourself a Toyota Corolla." Hmmph. I went to a nonMercedes dealership to look at SUVs and took a test drive. I liked one and told the guy I'd be back the next day, a Saturday, with my husband to buy it. The guy was off but another guy was there. He acknowledged us but seemed to be the only one working and he was busy giving a test drive to a couple ahead of us. Two young guys who worked there just stood around. Finally, after 20 minutes we left. We ended up going to a Mercedes dealership on a holiday to look at a used SUV. Not thinking anyone would be there, the finance guy came out and we bought Mel.

Mel: Mel was an ML320 that looked and felt like a tank to me. I didn't want to test drive it. I wanted a wagon, but the finance guy said it would be so difficult to get one because no one wanted to give up their wagons. I wanted a trade-in Land Rover they had, but it wasn't practical with the closest dealership being in Indianapolis if we had mechanical issues. So I got the tank, at about the same price as the other SUV I'd tried to buy at the other dealership that was too busy to sell me. It was bigger. Mel served me well with doing some remodeling work, hauling concrete and toting furniture with ease. Then I finally got my wagon, even if Ken thought it was his.

Dragon Wagon: About two years ago Ken's daughter needed a car, so he thought he'd buy himself another car and give Grand Dame to her. He looked through the dealership online ads and spotted a sedan. We went to the dealership, but it was closed for New Year's. So we looked over the car and made an online request to test drive it the next day. Then as Ken was still looking at the site, a white 2003 C240 wagon appeared for sale. I was so excited and wanted to make sure he put in the request to test drive it as early as possible the next day before it could be snapped up. We test drove the sedan, meh, and then tried the wagon. WAGON!! So we bought it, and Ken has rarely gotten to drive it again. Not that he wants to since he got me the Carlashes for its headlights that draw finger pointing and smiles. It got its name because I had gone to China and "long" in Mandarin means "dragon." I like dragons. I forced him to take over Mel. Well, driving Mel wasn't so glamorous, especially with rising gas prices. Then Ken's great love appeared: the Duke.



The Duke: The Duke is a shiny silver 1979 450SLC that comes with history. It was owned by Alfred W. Kettler Sr., aka Mr. Purdue of IPFW Kettler Hall fame, where Ken lectured for his classes. It was sitting in a dealership like a Chanel purse at a garage sale. OK, overstatement, but it was a magnet for Ken. Kettler hadn't driven it much and then it was put away in a garage after he died. Now the son was moving to Alaska and decided to sell it. Ken, as he does in many things, researched the model. He wanted to return it to its original condition - eliminating the added wind screen, black striping and custom made hood ornament for a badge. Ken waits excitedly for sunny warm days to take it out. It can never have a drop of rain fall on it. It spends the winter in our one-car garage. It's covered but I can't set my purse on the trunk while I haul in groceries, it might cause some horrible damage. With it being so precious, Ken needed a winter car, so he finally saw the light of driving a wagon.



Secretariat Chariot: Ken found a 1998 E320 series that is his all-purpose workhorse. It gets him around, has plenty of room and provides transportation for Toby, our beagle, when he runs with Ken on Saturdays in the park in good weather. It got its name from Ken's interest in the 1973 Triple Crown champion.



Maybe some day there'll be an SLK convertible that needs adopting.

THREE RIVERS SECTION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — 2014

Feb. 23: Wine Tasting, Two EE's Winery (6808 N US 24 E) will host us for a wine tasting at 2:00pm. Appetizers will be provided by the Club. Details on meeting time & place for a caravan there will be e-mailed soon.

Mar. 16: Dinner, Flannigan's (6525 Covington Rd.) will have some great St. Patrick's Day Specials for us to enjoy. Join us at 6:00 pm. for a fun evening.

June 8: EuroFest, Our European Car Show will be held at IPFW (2101 E Coliseum Blvd) this year.

July 5: Autocross, A driving event not to be missed. This will also take place at IPFW.

July 12: Three Rivers Festival Parade, A favorite event returns for another year.

More events will be added as they are scheduled and details for each event will be forwarded as needed. Ideas for events are always welcomed and encouraged. Contact any Board member from the list below.

Be sure to check The Star Magazine or www.mbca.org for information on Regional or National Events.

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