

# M-100 Group Meets, and Meets Again

by Karl Middelhaue, Delaware Valley Section



A grand total (pun intended) of 35 600s gathered on Karl Middelhaue's back lawn in Woxall, Pennsylvania, in mid-June.

The promising premiere of a meet for enthusiasts of the 300SEL 6.3, 450SEL 6.9, and 600 models.

The M-100 Group held an unusual two-location national meet in June, and it proved very popular. Star Motors, Hudson-Mohawk Section member Neil Dubey's business in Endicott, New York, opened its doors on Thursday and Friday, June 18-19th, and 28 300SEL 6.3s were present. Their owners could walk through the shop and watch mechanics installing a fuel injection pump. They had some serious tech sessions, the final one lasting until 2 A.M. when air bags and shock absorbers were installed in a customer's car.

On Saturday morning a caravan of 19 300SEL 6.3s drove 150 miles south to Classic Car Restoration, Karl Middelhaue's place in Woxall, Pennsylvania. On a three-acre park-like lawn behind the restoration shop were lined up 35 600s, 19 300SEL 6.3s, 5 450SEL 6.9s, a 350SLC with 6.9 conversion, and a 300SE Convertible with an AMG 6.3 Stage II treatment. OK, five of those 600s were actually laid to rest behind the shop (600 enthusiasts don't like the term "junked") with two more in line to join their famous ancestors.

The select club's largest-ever meet drew owners from far and wide. M-

100 Group President Hyatt Cheek, Jr., North Texas Section, drove his 6.3 all the way from Dallas; Daryl Hemken, Iowa Hawkeye Section, came with his 600 from Williams, Iowa; and Leroy Johnson, International Stars Section, drove his 600 from Flint, Michigan. Fritz Adelsperger, 500 Section, drove in from Richmond, Indiana, while Joe Patten and Larry DeGive, both from Peachtree Section, drove their 600s from Atlanta, Georgia. Richard Johnson took delivery of a restored 600 at the meet and later drove it home to Columbus, Indiana.

Overseas attendees included Arthur Love, who came from Australia. From Germany we had Dr. Ulrich Speicher, Heiko Stave, Felix Thiede, and Franz Spies, builder of Karl's new 600 Coupe. Others came from California, Oregon, Maryland, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. German journalists Michael Wiedmaier and Wulf Knetsch photographed the meet (and stayed four days later shooting 600 cars and details) for their forthcoming book, *Grand Mercedes-Benz 600*. This will be the first book devoted strictly to the 600. This limited edition book will be published in 2,766 copies, the same as the number of 600s built during 16 years of production, and each copy will be numbered. (For more information, see page 28. Ed.)

## Toys & Food

Total attendance was about 150 people, and everybody just loved the meeting! Karl's shop was open, and entrants were especially interested in the hydraulic test bench with an accumulator, hydraulic pump, four-way hydraulic valve (operating four window pistons), and gauges to measure the system's 2,500-psi operating pressure. They could also inspect three assembled M-100 engines, one with tuned exhaust headers to go in a 300SE Coupe, a real heart transplant.

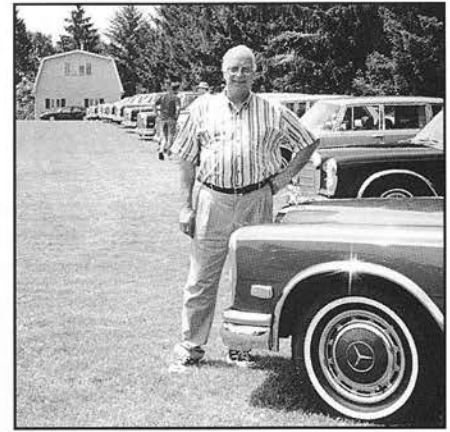
We also ate well. At Neil's shop, Heiko and Felix were responsible for a gourmet German lunch, a special treat was *Rote Grütze*, a fruit desert from Hamburg. At Karl's place a whole pig was roasted and served for lunch with salads. For dessert, Ruth, Karl's wife, baked 11 German cakes; out of her garden came fresh-picked raspberries to be topped with whipped cream or ice cream.

## Impressive Display

Sunday morning we unveiled a 600 parts car with real spider webs inside, mildewed seats, and a trunk like a garbage can. In contrast, you could walk down the line of 600 cars, each one better than the next. A good



Judging by Francis Ford Coppola's 1972 600 Pullman, the famous movie director must have required a door for each of his names.



With the help of Neil Dubey at Star Motors in Endicott, New York, Karl Middelhaue (above) pulled off this remarkable feat.



Lunch awaits Ruth Middelhaue, Linda Tibcken of Triangle Section, and Heinz Gietz of San Diego Section.



Darryl Hemken, Iowa Hawkeye Section, discusses his 600 with spectators.

range of colors was represented, 040 black with tan, red, cognac, and velour interiors; 172 anthracite metallic with black; and 180 silver and black leather. In 387 blue metallic was Francis Ford Coppola's 600 with its original window sticker (\$43,051 in 1972). A short wheelbase 600 in the same color had burlwood and rear

writing tables. Other color combinations included 423 tobacco brown with cognac and burl, 396 silver-blue metallic with tan leather, 571 red metallic with tan leather and burl, and the red metallic coupe with macassar ebony and black leather that Franz Spies built for Karl last year. Joe Patten's 600 was a gem for

originality, with the original battery and correct Fulda Diadem tires, perfect to the last hose clamp.

The oldest 600 was number 000.008, originally used by DBAG director Walter Hitzinger. Its engine, number 8, and transmission, number 9, have been rebuilt, and the car is being restored by Karl. Its factory computer card (build record) shows two-tone paint, 172 anthracite metallic on the body and 040 black on the roof, with black hubcaps. The original 1964 service book, still with the car, shows all entries from the factory. The lowest-mileage 600 cars were a 1966 SWB with 25,678 miles and Stephen Sordoni's with 33,124 miles. An excellent original family car with 43,582 miles was driven to the meet by Lyle Himebaugh.

## Next Year

An early thunderstorm at 5 P.M. brought things to a close with a few loose ends uncompleted, but the next day Craig Pittman called from Calgary, Alberta, to ask when next year's meet will be. Mark your calendars: June 2nd-3rd for the 300SEL 6.3 and 450SEL 6.9 cars, probably at Star Motors in Endicott, and June 4th-5th for 600s at Classic Car Restoration in Woxall.

Next year's meet will include a judged concours d'elegance. This year we had only people's choice awards. The 600 prize went to Richard Rose, Northern New Jersey, for his 1968 SWB; the 300SEL 6.3 prize went to William Stewart, and the 6.9 prize was won by Doug Mohler, Greater Washington Section, for his 350SLC with a 6.9 engine.