



Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section
Mercedes-Benz Club of America
2014 Printed Newsletter of the Year

June • 2016

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Sternblick

(View through the Star)

Mason Beale
President, Alabama Section MBCA

The Alabama Section has been busy during the Spring. Summer events are planned to continue the momentum as we celebrate our 10 year anniversary.

In April we enjoyed a Car Corral at Barber's during the Indy Race. In May we participated in the Historics Race weekend at Barber's. In June we co-sponsored the Euro-Brit Car Show in Huntsville, and the European Auto Show at the Pensacola Naval Air Museum.

Summer events include a Tech Session at Mercedes-Benz of Birmingham (July 9) and Heimatfest at Barber's (Aug 20-21). Other events are being considered and E-mail "blasts" will be sent as friendly reminders.

If you interested in assisting with any event, please let your interest be known to any officer or board member.

It is an honor to serve as your section President. I look forward to visiting with you at our next event.

Upcoming Event Spotlight

"Ask Klink" Tech session

When: July 9th

Time: 9:30am

Where: Mercedes-Benz of Birmingham

More information on page 3

ALABAMA & FLORIDA PANHANDLE

Schedule Of EVENTS

June

28 Huntsville Stammtisch - Biergarten

July

9 "Ask Klink" - M-B of Birmingham
More info on page 3

19 Birmingham Stammtisch - Hickory Tavern

30 Fahren zum Essen (Drive to Eat)-
Biergarten- Huntsville

August

3-6 StarFest © 2016 - Uncasville/Thompson, CT

16 Birmingham Stammtisch - Hickory Tavern

19-20 Heimatfest 2016- More info on page 3

20-21 Performace Driving Skills- Barber

23 Huntsville Stammtisch - Biergarten

27 Shelton Vinyards, NC Concours
(Tarheel Section)

28 Eastern Region Leadership Conference
Shelton Vinyards, NC

September

17 Concours - Destin, FL

9-11 Mercedes & Muskets, Williamsburg, VA
(Carolinas Section)

10 Atlanta concours (Peachtree Section)

20 Birmingham Stammtisch - Hickory Tavern

Monthly Membership Meeting

Where: Hickory Tavern at Brookwood Village

When: 3rd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6:30pm dinner, 7pm meeting

From 280: Take Exit Ala 149 (Homewood/ Mt Brook).
Turn left onto Lakeshore Pkwy/ Shades Creek Pkwy.
Hickory Tavernis located in the perimeter of Brookwood Mall

Huntsville Membership Meeting

Where: Biergarten - 1010 Heathland Drive
(just off University Drive)

When: 4th Tuesday of even numbered months

Time: 6:30pm

Directions: From I 565: Take exit 15 Sparkman Dr/ Bob
Wallace; Continue on Sparkman Dr NW to University Drive;
Turn left to merge onto US 72/ University Dr.; Heathland
Dr will be on your left. Biergarten will be on your left.

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Coming events

"Ask Klink"

July 9

Mercedes-Benz of Birmingham with technical diagnostician David "Klink" Kalinkiewicz (Kah-len-kev-ich).

This very popular quarterly event continues a tradition started by David and General Manager, Randy Powell in Tampa several years ago.

The program begins with an informal discussion of interesting new features followed by a guided tour of vehicles on the showroom floors illustrating this.

We then retire to the conference room where MBCA members can ask David about their individual concerns. This can range from very generic questions (eg how long will a --- last.) to specific car issues. Sometimes David wants to check over your car after lunch.

About noontime we will have lunch at Jim n' Nicks next door. David will usually join us.

Parking at M-B Birmingham is very limited, so park next door at Jim N' Nicks. They will be expecting us for lunch.

Please be sure to let us know how many to expect for "Ask Klink" and for lunch, so we can reserve a spot for you. RSVP to jertoosaver@bellsouth.net

Heimatfest 2016

August 19-21

This year's Heimatfest (Home Festival) will be a "preview" for StarFest 2018 with a visit to the MBUSI Factory on Friday, 19 August, and two days on the widely acclaimed Barber Motorsports Park track.

MBCA will partner with Tracks Unlimited and Lotus, Ltd for a wonderful experience. It is difficult to fully appreciate the engineering that has gone into the design of your Mercedes-Benz until you drive it in a place where there is no oncoming or side traffic, and you have an experienced instructor riding with you as a personal coach.

Fortunately we have four in the Alabama Section as well as several others including national instructors Frank and Mary Alice Cozza as well as National President Terry Kiwala. Go to motorsportreg.com to register for the Tracks Unlimited Barber event. Be sure to let them know in the comments section that you are with MBCA. We will have a "Mercedes-Benz parking only" area, so we need to know how large to make it.

No Heimatfest is complete without a visit to Mercedes-Benz US International. Friday is the best time for this, and they like for us to be there by 8:15am. If you have not visited the factory in the last 18 months, you will be surprised at the new Brand Immersion Center where the previous visitor center was. The displays are larger and in much more depth. An AMG engine assembly line and many more race cars have been installed.

We will be able to visit the new C-class assembly area and possibly the GLE/GLS lines for those more

Coming events

interested in them.

Be sure to register for this as soon as possible (jertoosaver@gmail.com), as these popular tours fill to capacity rapidly. We will send details and rules when you register.

Remember we need a U.S. drivers license state and number or a passport country and number to register you, and you must bring this with you to get in.

We will also get a good rate of \$89/night at the host hotel, the Hilton Perimeter Park 205-967-2700 and plan evening activities Friday and Saturday details will follow.

Advanced Driving Skills at the Proving Grounds (AKA "The Mercedes Track") at Barber

October 15

By: Alan Thacker, Thomas Bonatz,
and Jim Roberts, Event Planners

Alan Thacker has been organizing enthusiast's auto events in Central Alabama for over 20 years. He has finally purchased an SL 550 and joined MBCA. In recent years you have seen Alan and perhaps his lovely wife, Linda at events at Barber Motorsports Park where he works for the promoter, ZOOM Motorsports at weekend events. Alan has organized the car corral for over 10 years.

About two years ago the new Barber "proving grounds" track was constructed beside the perimeter road around the main track. Mercedes-Benz incorporates this in the Brand Immersion Experience for all the American dealership employees. They are effectively trying to give them the enthusiasm for the brand that we have as MBCA members. The result is that they all rave about the amazing performance and handling built in to every Mercedes-Benz.

Alan has arranged for us to experience this track on 15 Oct in a relaxed low pressure setting. If you would like to experience some of the potential that your Mercedes-Benz has, but you are intimidated by talking on the full 2.38-mile Barber road course, this is your chance.

The proving ground course has a cool banked turn similar to the one at Stuttgart with several alternate configurations of road course type turns as well as a massive 5 acres of asphalt that we may configure as we wish. Race car drivers Jim Roberts and Thomas Bonaz will lay out an approximately one-mile course. This pavement is very easy on tires but allows you to have the sensations of performance driving in very safe conditions. There is so much run off area that there are no barriers to hit. We will have experienced instructors for everyone. Our format is to space a small number of cars at intervals for a few minutes of each run session, so you will not have to worry about passing or being passed.

We will have the new hospitality suites overlooking the entire course for your edification or amusement. These are equipped with food service and tv that can be tuned to everything from weather to Formula One to the omnipresent football. Auburn is not playing and Alabama plays UT in Knoxville.

Alan is arranging for lunch to be catered by 5-Star. Contact Alan Thacker athackers3@aol.com for details.

We should be able to have factory tours at MBUSI on Friday, 14 October.

Club Events

Welcome, New Member(s)		Thank You, Loyal Member(s)		
Robert Bowers Orange Beach, AL	Anthony Leach Huntsville, AL	Warren Aldrich Pine Mountain, GA	John Fishman Huntsville, AL	Ray Osborne Alebertville, AL
Elizabeth Dunlap Chipley, FL	Robin Losh Slocomb, AL	Charles Bagget Talladega, AL	Frank Frantzen Kingsport, TN	Heidi Petrikat Miramar Beach, FL
Thomas Hamner Homewood, AL	Stephan Mihacevich Destin, FL	Otis Baldwin Webb, AL	Rhiannon Gage Birmingham, AL	Margaret Petrikat Miramar Beach, FL
Randy Hanner Panama City Beach, FL	Marie Nelson Pensacola, FL	William Binder Daphne, AL	Eugene Hill Wetumpka, AL	Donald Sandalal Noiceville, FL
Oliver Harris Huntsville, AL	Nathan Patterson Gulf Breeze, FL	Darrell Bittle Ft Walton Beach, FL	James Horne Sylacauga, AL	Bob Schneider Decatur, AL
Steve Horn Pelham, AL	Krysyta Porter Gulf Preeze, FL	Dan Bodiford Defuniak Springs, FL	Jack Kalin Wilsonville, AL	Jim Sparacio Birmingham, AL
Weldon Humphreys Cantonment, FL	George Ragazzo Mobile, AL	Frederick Bryan Milton, FL	Jomes Kotis Mobile, AL	
John Hyatt Cedar Bluff, AL		Charles Burke Huntsville, AL	Ira Laney Huntsville, AL	
		Jeff Davis Birmingham, AL	Robert Melton Maylene, AL	

Cruise-ins and Gatherings

If you are close enough to Birmingham for a Saturday morning visit. The 3 events listed welcome Mercedes-Benz cars. Even if you don't see one already there, chances are that many participants own a car with the three pointed star. In order of seniority.

Krispy Kreme, Hoover US 31

1st Saturday year round

Older cars start to gather about 7:30 and dissipate by 11:30 -12 noon. You will get a free cup of coffee and a donut, if your car is at least 25 years old. This event is staged by the Dixie Vintage Car Club which was founded back in the 1950's. This will be about 75-80% domestics as well as a few street rods. Euros are mostly British with 2-4 Mercedes-Benz's.

Logan's on US 280

11:30- 1pm Most Saturdays

This is organized by M.O.B., INC, so you will see mostly newer European exotics. Most of them own and occasionally bring a Mercedes-Benz SL, SLR, or SLS. Don't be put off by them, as they love cars and greatly respect Mercedes-Benz. They will almost certainly invite you to have lunch with them.

Cars & Coffee, Tactical Arms, Hoover

Every Saturday 8:30-10:30am

Yes, the name is the same and the ambiance is similar to the event in Los Angeles that you have seen on T.V., because a recent California transplant was not satisfied with the existing car club scene.

The location us US 31 in Hoover just south of exit from I-65 to US 31 south. Lok on the left as you drive south on US 31. The location was previously a Bruno's store. This attracts both Asian and European cars including exotics.

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you need filled, we have a
champion suited up and ready to go.



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Event Recap

Car Corral at Indy Car Grand Prix of Alabama

By Jim Roberts, Event Planner

As usual we had more cars than Zoom Motorsports had told car coral coordinator (and now MBCA member) Alan Thacker to plan for. Their car count always seems to trail real time. We were able to accommodate everyone. It is always nice to see both our local members and the many who come from other states year after year. Each year there are new faces and cars as well.

Also gratifying are the admiring looks and comments from other spectators. Many of them are surprised at how competitive Mercedes-Benz is on pricing compared to other brands.

MBUSI engineer and MBCA member Scott Maloy always brings a tempting development model from the nearby Alabama factory. This year it was the latest iteration of new GLE 63 AMG coupe complete with 22 x 11.5 inch wheels and 570+ hp. These are the largest wheels that Mercedes-Benz offers on any car.

We always display these cars at the front of the car corral where they draw massive interest. This year there was a motorcycle and bicycle stunt show that would have been better suited to the fan zone. Scott obligingly drove the GLE down the steep drop into the draining area. Of course he drove it back out after the race with no drama but a lot of applause.

EuroBrit Show

Members traveled to Dublin Park in Madison on June 4 to participate in the annual car show. The event was co-sponsored by Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville. The show featured major European companies and highlighted the diversity of automotive engineering and technology.

As co-sponsor, Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville displayed two new GLEs and provided refreshments for all attendees. Many thanks to Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville for co-sponsoring the event for a second year!

Awards were presented to class winning members. Our newest member from Huntsville, Craig Shaw, won first place in the SL class with his 1978 White 450SL. The Sedan class was won by a 1957 Black 220S (Ponton). Second place was awarded to Marie Keirstead with a 2011 Blue E550. Third place went to Clarissa Lewis with a 2016 Black S550 Coupe. Congratulations to all participants and winners!



1957 220S at EuroBrit show in Madison



EuroBrit show in Madison

Event Recap

Naval Air Station (NAS) Museum European Car Show

By Bill Vickery

Rain stayed away until the close of car show at the NAS Museum Pensacola, Florida. All things considered, it was a very good show. We met lots of interesting folks and saw some beautiful vehicles..

We have two MBCA members there that were born in Holland in days of old. Both live in Pensacola area. Both drive 550 SLs. They first met at the 4 June car show.

We also have a father and son team both driving their Mercedes vehicles to the show. The son had his first Mercedes (280 SE 4.5) at age 15. The vehicle had been neglected and the father and son team got it road worthy.

We had nine Mercedes vehicles at the show. Oldest was a 1972 280 4.5 and newest a 2016 550SL. Entire show had a little over 100 vehicles. 100 registered and paid a \$5.00 each vehicle fee which assured almost all registering receiving good door prizes. Some folks from other car clubs did not register and were not eligible for door prizes.

Vehicles were parked on the grass under many large live oak trees. Nice setting and lots of shade. Very friendly atmosphere. Lots of non Mercedes owners looking at our vehicles.

The Pensacola Porsche Club will have the lead on the NAS Museum 2017 European Car Show.

*What are the odds of two men born in Holland in days of old, owning Mercedes SLs, living not far from each other, and meeting for the first time at the NAS European Car Show, Pensacola, Florida on 4 June 2016? It happened and here they are.
Yet another advantage of being a member of Mercedes Benz Club of America.*



Our Dutchmen. Bob Sweibel sitting and Leo terHaar in front of Wanda Reetz's 1987 560 SL



Howard Hudson's white 1986 560 SL



David Shepard's black 1999 S 600



Robin And Lauren Losh's 2013 550SL



Left to right: David Shepard, Leo and Beth Terhaar



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