



Das Heimatblatt

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

Sternblick (Star View)

December 2019

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Our NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR 2020

MY DEAR FELLOW MBCA MEMBERS,

My attraction to German cars began in my teen years in Milwaukee. Being a child of the Midwest in the 50's , most of my family and friend's families' drove big American cars with lots of cylinders. Who cared about fuel economy? Premium(better known as ethyl) was 36.9 and regular was 32.9 cents per gallon. And those were the name brand gasolines. Ease of maintenance was straight forward. Most gas stations had a mechanic . Often, the owner himself who was almost like extended family and many times lived in the neighborhood. Visibility, too, had a lot to do with ease of maintenance. When you opened the hood, there EVERYTHING WAS....you could actually see the spark plugs!

My first car was a good example of this; a 1951 Plymouth 4 door sedan with a 6 cylinder engine and a standard transmission. It was also a rolling oil processer using 2 quarts of re-refined 40wt oil a week, similar to an oil furnace . In fact my cousin named it the Lennox.

What did any of this have to do with my interest in German cars you ask? Simple . A pretty girl was involved. She drove a 47 Pontiac , a real beast. As things go in Milwaukee , it snowed like mad and caused her to abandon the tank in ditch not far from her suburban home. Her dad had a long commute each morning. So he made the un-Milwaukee like decision to buy one of those funny looking VW beetle like cars. In return , he enjoyed great gas mileage and reliable transportation on his long commute even in the worst weather Milwaukee could dish out. Of course we all snickered behind his back. But, guess how my pretty friend's car was rescued? Yup! The VW gallantly pulled the porky Pontiac out of the ditch. My skepticism regarding the little German waned and I began to read and take notice of other German cars

Once out of school and following the work and family route of adulthood, a used (abused would be a better description) 1961 VW became my family's second car. This guy was miles ahead of the beetle that pulled my girlfriends car out of the ditch. Wow! It had a full size rear window and of all remarkable techie things , a GAS GUAGE.

With a rear engine I no longer needed sand bags for extra traction in the snow. Of course not having a trunk kind of eliminated that .

The little, light weight a rear engined car with 15 inch wheels helped a lot. In those days many big American cars only had 14 inch wheels and weighed twice as much."Let it snow , let it snow , let it snow!"

As time marched on, other German cars mingled with the nine Mercedes vehicles I owned. A real milestone was the ordering of a 1997 ML320 from the first batch of Alabama produced SUV's. When my number came up , the color was not my wife's favorite. We decided to wait for a Black on Black beauty. With uncharacteristic patience , our choice was rewarded a month later. In the meantime, I helped the Peachtree section develop a program to celebrate the grand opening of the plant in Vance, Alabama. At that point in time, we belonged to Atlanta's Peachtree section. The new Alabama Section would come along little later.

ALABAMA & FLORIDA PANHANDLE

Presidents Message (cont.)

To it's credit , MBUSA let out all the stops and staged a spectacular grand introduction at the new plant for this fabulous vehicle with fireworks, music and an unforgettable laser light show. The 1997 ML320 turned out to be the longest lasting Mercedes I ever owned rolling out over 120,000 miles on the odometer. I've never been known to keep a car that long. It was a tribute to Mercedes qualities long regarded by the rest of the world.

As your new president of the Alabama section, our board will provide many opportunities to enjoy your wise ownership of a Mercedes. Driving events, both at the track and touring will be featured this coming year. Technical events at local Mercedes dealerships will enhance your knowledge of the engineering marvel you are driving along fast breaking details on the newest mind blowing technology on the launch pad. We will continue to hold our monthly social meetings in Birmingham at the Hickory Tavern, also in Huntsville and a soon to be announced Gulf Coast location. These monthly events will give you heads up activity info and the opportunity to meet some of the nicest , brightest people , your fellow Mercedes owners

Be ready to check your emails regularly and oh yes, check your junk mailbox occasionally. I hate when I end up there!

Also: The Alabama Section website has been resurrected, check it out for events, newsletters and The Presidents Message,

<https://alabama.mbca.org>

Hope to see you soon at our next events .Very truly yours for a healthy and happy 2020,

Jim Sparacio
President Alabama Section,
Mercedes Club of America
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What's New

I am New to editing this newsletter I have much to learn. One such NEW newsletter feature is clickable Web Links. Such as the one above in **RED**.

Go ahead try it.

Clicking the link will open a window to the Alabama's web page, hosted by MBCA. On the web page you can search and click on newsletters, old and new. The Presidents message. Events upcoming and reports. Section Leadership contacts, even classified ads.

BUT: All this needs input. Send your photos, written articles, suggestions to:

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