



Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section
Mercedes-Benz Club of America

JUNE • 2014

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Sternblick (View through the Star)

Robert Hinds
President, Alabama Section MBCA

Welcome to spring- it's time to wash the winter from our cars and get ready for some Alabama Section driving activities.

In addition to our monthly membership meetings in Birmingham, we have been having bi-monthly membership meetings in Huntsville, which are well attended. The gulf coast is next; Jim Roberts and members from the gulf coast will have the first membership meeting on June 12th. With our section covering a large geographic area we hope these meetings will encourage our members to become more active and help to recruit new members.

The car corral at the Indy car race at the Barber Motorsports Park was well attended. About 20 Mercedes-Benz cars participated, and we gave out many membership applications. Put it on your calendar for next year! Several Alabama Section members volunteered at this race in the car corral to help park the large number of cars (over 250) that attended from the various car clubs.

The year 2014 is going to be an active and fun year for our members and their star cars. Do try to participate in as many meetings and activities as you can.

Upcoming Event Spotlight

Gulf Shores Stammtisch

June 12

Nolan's-- 1140 Gulf Shores Pkwy (Alabama 59), Gulf Shores, AL 36542
6:30-8:30pm

Alabama Section board members Pierce Williams and Brenda Brown have arranged a room for us at Nolan's on Highway 59 in Gulf Shores on Thursday, 12 June at 6:30-8:30pm. This is a great way for our members on the Emerald Coast, Eastern Shore, and Mobile to gather to get to know each other as well about upcoming Alabama Section activities while enjoying great food.

Please let Pierce Williams know that you will be attending 256-399-1181, 256-399-0022(H) or phnj15@juno.com

ALABAMA & FLORIDA PANHANDLE

Schedule Of Events

June

- 12th Gulf Coast Stammtisch--
See back page
- 17th Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page
- 14th Tag Appreciation Day
at Barber Motorsports Park--11:30am
- 14-15th High Performance Driver
Education with PCA-- Pg. 3

July

- 2nd Advanced Driving Skills, Watkins Glen, NY
Contact: Jim Roberts for more info-
jertoosaver@bellsouth.net
- 12th Alabama Weinstrasse-- Pg. 3
- 15th Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page
- 23rd Huntsville Stammtisch--
See back page

August

- 9th Chattahoochee Tal Reise-- Pg. 3
- 19th Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page

September

- 16th Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page
- 20th Tag Appreciation Day
at Barber Motorsports Park--11:30am
- 24th Huntsville Stammtisch--
See back page

October

- 3-5th Heimatfest-- Factory tour, Advanced Driving
Skills at Barber Motorsports Park,
and tour of restoration facility -- pg. 3
- 21st Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page

November

- 18th Birmingham Stammtisch--
See back page
- 14-15th National Board Meeting-- Pg. 3

MERCEDES-BENZ CLUB OF AMERICA ALABAMA SECTION www.mbca.org/alabama

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das Heimatblatt

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Coming events

High Performance D.E. at Barber Motorsports Park

June 14-15th

Barber Motorsports Park is one of the most challenging road courses in the world and without challenge the most beautiful. Our friends with the Porsche Club tell us they still have a few openings for this event. We usually have 4-6 MBCA members participating. While AMG drivers live for these events all Mercedes-Benz vehicles are competent.

To register go to: clubregistration.net

Be sure to download your tech sheets before hand.

**Be sure to visit our section website:
alabama.mbca.org
for updates on coming events, event recaps
and to view current and past newsletters**

Alabama Weinstrasse (Wine Road)

July 12th

We will make the popular drive down Alabama 25 (The Copperhead) to the Morgan Creek Winery at Harpersville for a tour of their modern facility.

Then it's on to lunch at Vizzini Winery near Calera that makes out Heimatfest Riesling where we will enjoy lunch and sample their wines as well.

More info to come!

Chattahoochee Tal Reise (Chattahoochee Valley Drive)

August 9th

We are working on a lovely drive from Dothan to Eufala for lunch where we can also visit the Antebellum and 19th century homes before continuing on to the surprising Providence Canyon across the river in Georgia.

Details coming soon!

EUROPEAN CLASSICS EAST™ is EXPANDING formerly known as "Legends of the Autobahn"

More Vehicles, More Awards Than Ever Before!

MBCA's New York City-Long Island & Connecticut-Westchester Sections invite you to join us:

What: EUROPEAN CLASSICS EAST™
When: Sunday, September 21, 2014* | 9:00am-3:00pm
Where: The grounds of Old Westbury Gardens in Old Westbury, New York
Why: To celebrate a multitude of Mercedes-Benz Classes and model years
Who: MBCA Members & guests are welcome! Stroll the grounds & take in the scenery of the world's most beautiful luxury vehicles
Win: Members can register their Mercedes-Benz vehicles in judging categories for a chance to win special awards:

Class	Entry Fee Per Vehicle**
Concours	\$40
Touring	\$25
Sprinter	\$25

Commemorative hat & photo
for every registered entrant



Register: By mail by 09.10.14. Pay to "MBCA."
Mail to "ECE" c/o Gullwing Motors,
100 Windsor Avenue, Mineola, NY 11501
Contact Oliver Seligman 917.763.0178
or Jerry Shapiro 718.637.7234
Find information on our website
http://sections.mbca.org/nyc-long_island/

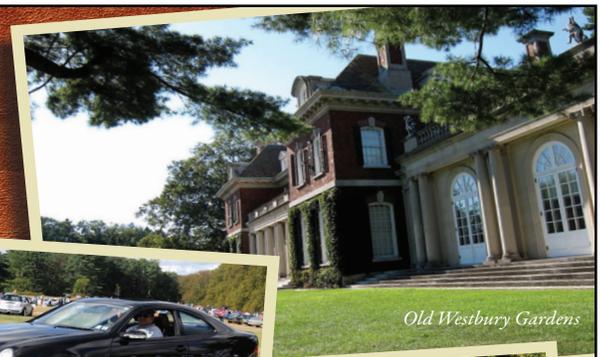
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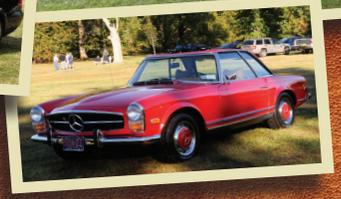


*Rain date Sunday, September 28, 2014

**Day of event fees are \$50



Old Westbury Gardens



Coming events

Heimatfest -- Special National Event

October 3-5th

On Friday, 3 Oct we will get some of the first tours of the new C-class production at MBUSI between Birmingham and Tuscaloosa.

We will enjoy lunch with the MBUSI associates and then proceed to the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum for a tour of their restoration facilities.

On 4 & 5 October we will stage an MBCA sanctioned advanced driver skills event on the beautiful and challenging Barber track. We will have MBCA instructors to help you learn to use the amazing engineering that your Mercedes-Benz was built with.

Space is limited so register at:
msreg.com/TUBarber2014

Use discounted code: MBCA

Note: You will need to register separately for the factory tours, and the Barber Museum tours, and the Saturday evening reception.

MBCA National Board Meeting Atlanta, Ga

November 14-15th

Alabama Section is competing for Section of the Year (2013), newsletter, and past Alabama Section President Jim Roberts is running for Eastern Region Director.

Even if none of these are successful, this is your chance to see how the business of MBCA is conducted. You will be able to join in discussion of policy changes and future events, since any member can address the board.

**In 1896, Walter Arnold
became the first person convicted
of speeding.
He was going 8 mph.**

Mental Floss

Accelerate Your Driving Skills at Heimatfest 2014!

October 3-5 | Birmingham, Alabama

- Helmet-up for high speed thrills and technical driving with Tracks Unlimited at Barber Motorsports Park – one of the most challenging and beautiful race courses in the world! (2.4 miles, 17-turns, Formula One-certified)*
- On Friday morning, October 3, be one of the first to see the production of the NEW C-Class at Mercedes-Benz US International – the only Mercedes-Benz production factory in North America (includes lunch in the MBUSI employee lunchroom)
- Tour the Barber Motorsports Museum – site of the world's largest collection of Motorcycles and Lotus Race Cars. Tour the Museum's (normally off-limits) vehicle restoration facilities on Friday, October 3
- Visit with old and new enthusiasts at social events Friday & Saturday nights

*Includes MBCA in-car instructors. Classroom instruction for novice and beginner drivers; tailored to driver experience. This will NOT be a timed or racing event; therefore all Mercedes-Benz makes/models are encouraged to participate

**Warning:
This Experience will
be Habit-Forming!**



Registration Fee:

Registration for October 4 & 5 Advanced Driving Skills on the Barber track \$589
Rental helmets available

Register by 09.12.14:

At www.msreg.com/TUBarber2014. Use discount code "MBCA"
Register with the Alabama Section for MBUSI Factory & Barber restoration tours plus Friday & Saturday social events

Good to Know:

\$89/night @ Hampton Inn, Leeds, AL. Breakfast included.
Mention code "MBCA" @ 205.702.4141

FMI:

Contact Jim Roberts jertoosaver@bellsouth.net
205.933.9333 | www.alabama.mbca.org



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Charlene Bittle**
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

Leslie Blumberg
Dothan, AL

**Stan Brown &
Kathy Hathcock**
Pell City, AL

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Milton, FL

Alfred Chaney
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Jeff Davis
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Heinz Neunzig
Tuscaloosa, AL

Ray Osborne
Albertville, AL

Asa Stackhouse
Fort Walton Beach, FL

Todd Underwood
Magnolia Springs, AL

Welcome, New Member(s)

Michael Brown
Pensacola, FL

John Fishman
Huntsville, AL

Boyde Harrison
Haleyville, AL

Wayne Novy
Birmingham, AL

Long Nguyen
Hoover, 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, Brookwood Mall

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 is the top floor of the parking deck of the Merrill Lynch, office building between the west end of the Brookwood Mall building and the new Target store. There is a coffee shop in the building. This attracts both Asian and European cars including exotics.

Event Recap

An Afternoon at Bud's Benz

March 29, 2014

A sizeable group of Alabama Section members were met by a large group of Peachtree Section members at Bud's Benz, the large Mercedes-Benz restoration shop near the Alabama line in Douglasville, GA. Owner David Latham participated in StarTech 2013 as a presenter and a sponsor and graciously hosts MBCA events almost every year at the world headquarters of Bud's.

Each year is different, not just because most of the project cars are different or at least at a different stage in restoration. This year they seem to have worked out a true restoration for the cracked dashboards that many of our beloved Mercedes-Benz classics suffer from.

In addition to the classics from the 50's and 60's we saw several R 107 (i.e. 1973-89) SL's and even a 1982 123 300D that was completing a nut and bolt complete mechanical, exterior and interior restoration. Of course, the owner could have simply found an excellently preserved one, but this was her father's car that she was entrusted with when she went to college. We are seeing these cars now being treasured by multiple generations.

Everyone knows that an MBCA event always turns into a social occasion with dinner. This time it was enhanced when David surprised us with a well-known local magician who was quite entertaining. Alabama residents must have been appealing to him, as he featured both Nancy Jones and Bruce Webster to "assist" him. He was so pleased with Bruce that he offered him the 190 SL on the lift beside the stage. He didn't believe Bruce when he said, "Thanks, I'll even pay for its work" until David Latham said, "That is his car!"

They all swore that it was not planned.



Grand Prix of Alabama

April 26-27th

The enthusiast car corral at the Indycar Grand Prix of Alabama grows every year at Barber Motorsports Park. Alabama Section MBCA participation increases as well. This year Bob Hinds, his grandson Ryan Hinds, Ken Champlin, and others joined me to help set up the site and greet our many other MBCA friends as well as to encourage other Mercedes-Benz owners to join the club.

It was especially gratifying to see MBCA members again that we had recruited who lived in other states and were now active and enjoying MBCA events their home sections. With our own separate canopy, we seemed to attract even more interest than usual.

This year we had a special treat with Tim Pappas racing an SLS AMG GT-3 in the World Challenge races. He managed to finish third in his class against factory teams from Porsche, Aston Martin, Lamborghini, McLaren, Ferrari, Chevrolet, and Ford.

It was thrilling to see and hear the distinctive sound of the large AMG engine all the way around the track.



Above: A visitor at the Indy Car Corral admires Dodie Roberts Smart car at the MBCA tent.

Left: David Latham, owner of Bud's Benz just before "giving away" the 190 SL on the lift to Bruce Webster (it was already his car).

Articles and pictures by: Jim Roberts

Event Recap

A Trade We Can Fall Back On

May 21, 2014

As you know, Alabama Section has been including tours of the Mercedes-Benz US International Factory in annual events since the section's founding in 2006 culminating in almost 300 participants at StarTech 2013 held at the factory and its training center last May.

Imagine then how gratifying it was to have the factory that has so graciously hosted MBCA so many times to ask if we could help them host the almost 800 U.S. dealers in a preview of the new C-class that was undergoing the final phase of pilot production in the third week May.

The challenge was there was less than a month to gather an unknown number of guides for a date that was yet to be determined.

When I presented the request to our section's 10 Board members, 6 immediately responded that they would be able to do this. The others had physical limitations that prevented participation.

As it turned out only 5 were required, but the time commitment was for 3 full days. One was not physically able to do this much and could only help one day. We still had the required number from a very small group of dedicated leaders.

We were naïve enough to think that with our vast experience plus our enthusiasm that this would be an enjoyable way to express our gratitude to MBUSI for being such a gracious host to us in the past and most recently overwhelming our members at StarTech 2013.



Alabama Section tour guides in front of temporary building housing new C-class, prototype MLC and Mercedes GT replacement for SLS. From left: Jack Schilleci, Mason Beale, Jim Roberts, Ken Champlin, Chad Stevens.



Entrance to MBUSI

We were sent multipage scripts and maps of the factory only 5 days before the event. We would be expected to know this verbatim as well as to lead groups through what seemed to be an intricate maze of people learning new procedures, cars being assembled, moving lines, and moving supplies, while talking over a headset. This was looking like work.

We arrived to find a new building larger than the visitor center on an adjacent lawn with an army of construction workers finishing something that dwarfed the pavilions they set up at Pebble Beach and Amelia Island. This was air conditioned and equipped with translucent- not transparent-walls.

We met our event planners and went over the outlines as well as revised scripts on special flip card style booklets. They had issued us the coveted black knit shirts with the 3-pointed stars and Mercedes-Benz over the heart and our first names on the right. These are worn by all the regular team members including President Jason Hoff. Temporary hires wear green, and contractors wear blue.

Perhaps our logic and enthusiasm coupled with our southern accents resulted in a total revision of the script after the first 1.3 mile practice. We continued practicing and revising for two days and close to a dozen walks of the route to satisfy the producers. Even the regular tour guides struggled with the wording

Event Recap

until we were all allowed to put the major points in our own words. Interestingly the regular employees knew the factory terminology (e.g. W.S.A = "Werk Schluß Abnehmen" or "factory end turnover" to signify final release of the cars). The German word "supermarket" refers to an Aldi© type store with goods stacked in pallets rather than a typical American supermarket.

On the other hand, our MBCA tour guides were all over the twin turbo direct injection engines that have a 2 liter four out pulling a 3 liter V-6 and the biturbo 3 liter V-6 out pulling a 4 liter V-8 while getting better mileage. The car is lighter, larger, faster, and more fuel efficient with huge cross drilled rotors and nice cast calipers like previous S-classes. "What's not to like?" as Jerry Seinfeld's mother said.

We were told that initially only the C300 4-matic and C400 4-matic four doors would be produced in Alabama followed by the C250, C350, AMG, and a hybrid, but we saw an AMG at the "marriage" station.

Ultimately seven tour guides led 730 dealers through the newest Mercedes-Benz operation in four waves with no glitches and multiple expressions of appreciation. MBUSI and promotional company GO! seemed pleased and told us of another project for dealers that would involve more of this sort of thing. They are delighted with our enthusiasm, so it looks like we have learned a trade we can fall back on which even though it is challenging is great fun. They might even allow Alabama Section to be the tour guides for the special national "Heimatfest" on 3 October.

Many thanks to MBUSI, GO!, and Alabama Section Board members Mason Beale, Ken Champlin, Chad Stevens, Jack Schilleci, Bob Hinds, and Jim Roberts.

Articles by: Jim Roberts



The five Alabama Section official tour guides from left: Ken Champlin (Sec), Jack Schellaci (Dir.), Mason Beale (V.P.), Jim Roberts (Membership), Chad Stevens (Dir.)

Safe Drivers-Safe Families Toronto, Ontario

May 31, 2014

As driving Director of the MBCA Education Foundation, I was intensely interested in Toronto Section's Safe Drivers-Safe Families event that the Education Foundation staged.

Led by E-F president and former Northeast Region Director, Doug Dees and assisted by Great Lakes Region Director and MBCA Performance Driving Director Frank Cozza, former Director at Large Mary Alice Cozza, current Northeast Region Director Ernie Fancy, Star columnist Bonnie Fancy, Toronto Section President Harald von Langsdorf, Peter Spitzer, Michael Högel, movie producer, Christopher Dew, Miss Teen Canada 2011 and 2nd alt Miss Canada Universe, Lauren Howe, a host of Toronto Section members and yr obt svt we were tasked with helping new drivers learn some basic driving skills.

After, Doug Dees presented some of the basic ideas in one of the hockey stadium's press rooms we adjourned to the enormous



Students learn basic techniques before moving on to hands-on skills.

Event Recap



Jim Roberts demonstrating checking oil level with Simone Dew in her CLA

parking area for the teens to learn about sitting positions, mirror adjustments, checking tire pressures, and checking fluids under the hood.

I was assigned Christopher Dew's 16 year old daughter, Simone, who had only driven a very few hours and none in his 2000km old CLA. She was initially extremely fearful, but paid very close attention to what was said.

Thanks to massive immigration of rather affluent people from all over the world, Toronto is now about the size of Chicago but infinitely cleaner and far more polite. This must stem from the fact that almost everyone was born in another country: of the Canadian adults, Doug was one of the few born there. Both his father and his wife came from Germany. In fact, a significant number of the participating adults were German, Swiss, or Austrian with a few British.

The teens, on the other hand, were mostly born in Canada. None had ever been to Alabama. Hockey and motorsports rather than football were what they followed the most.

The Greater Toronto area as it is known extends from almost the middle of the north shore of Lake Ontario all the way around the Western end and up the south shore to the Niagara River—the U.S. Border. This is how it has a population of 10 million. In fact, a friend in Buffalo, NY (50 miles away) tells me that Buffalo has fortunately become a suburb of Toronto.

While this could be the traffic nightmare that Chicago, Dallas-Ft. Worth or Los Angeles is: the major streets are laid out on 1 mile squares north-south and east-west. They are 6-8 lanes wide and have 80km/h (50mph) speed limits with very few traffic lights—just every mile. There are also larger grids of limited access roads with

100 km/h (62.5 mph) limits that are typically exceeded by 20-30 km/h by most cars. Everyone drives right except to pass. Trucks can't pass going uphill. This and the billiard table smoothness of the roads remind me of Germany. The slow pace does not, but the surface streets move very well.

There are flowers everywhere and no trash or homeless people. The temperature Saturday was 20°C (68°F), so they wore shorts.

Interestingly, our first stumble was on tyre (tire) pressures: the gauges were in PSI and BAR—not the KG/cm² printed in the door. Fortunately the door also stated 39 PSI which translated to 2.75 bar by my calculations. The adults knew pounds and miles but their children had no concept of this. Simone did note that 40 PSI was easier to see and remember than 2.75 BAR.

While these teens were not quite as aggressive as the Alabama ones I dealt with 3 weeks earlier at a PCA Street Survival© course, they learned quickly. Interestingly only one of the Canadians drove an SUV (a Mercedes-Benz diesel powered Jeep) while about half the Alabama students drove SUV's or pickup trucks.

In fact there were very few pickups in general and many more minivans. The most popular car make is Honda. Regular gasoline is \$5.30/gallon and diesel is about the same. In Ohio, regular and diesel were both \$3.99 while I paid \$3.29 for regular and \$3.69 for diesel in Alabama that week.

It was challenging to get a teen who had never driven over 40 kph (25 mph) to get up enough speed to get the CLA's antilock brakes to activate, but we were able to



Coaching Simone in the driving exercises

Event Recap

get them to activate. It is truly amazing how refined the current Mercedes-Benz antilock and stability control systems simply assist the driver without being intrusive as the domestic, Asian, and even BMW system are.

We moved on to slalom to feel weight transfer, swerving around the obstacle, and driving what seemed like a tight driveway.

Finally we addressed a figure eight to illustrate understeer. There is certainly a technique to this. I was asked to have my student (clearly the least experienced) demonstrate. She deferred to the boy who thought he was the best driver. Of course, he attacked it vigorously and illustrated grinding understeer with his Infinity. When he said he was getting nowhere, he asked me for advice and learned that a wide late apex would allow the cars neatly clip close to one pylon while allowing the required late apex for the other end with far less understeer.



This very tight enclosure had to be approached at 60kph with an emergency stop to feel the antilock system.

Simone and her CLA managed with virtually no understeer until her confidence produced too much speed.

After lunch we let everyone drive the autocross course. The teens improved dramatically in car placement and car control. Some of the adults drove their kids around at 10/10 with everyone smiling. I was thanked publically and profusely by Simone and her dad, but all the teens said they learned a lot from someone else's parent. Most of these had grown up riding in MBCA events and were elated to actually drive in one. The lucky ones were able to do this in a Mercedes-Benz.

I was delighted to see the progress of every teen. None of them quit in spite of a few tears and expletives. I'm just afraid we have created another generation of auto junkies—just like we are.

And I'm in love with the CLA. It is a sports car with spacious rear seats and doors to reach them.

Das Beste oder Nichts (The best or nothing)

-- Gottlieb Daimler.

Article by: Jim Roberts
Photos from MBCA Toronto Section

EuroBrit Car Show

June 7, 2014

Articles and pictures by: Jim Roberts

Alabama Section was well represented on 7 June at the EuroBrit car show in Huntsville. There were actually more Mercedes-Benz entries than either BMW or Porsche. MBCA participants came from as far away as Birmingham and Nashville for this traditional event. Our members had a great time visiting with each other and the hosting North Alabama British Motoring Club.

The weather cooperated after a stormy week and we saw several first time participants from the growing number of North Alabama MBCA members. Virtually all the non MBCA participants elected to join MBCA.



Top: Best of Class winner John Somsel and his 450SL.

Left: Runner-Up in Class Jeff Alexander and granddaughter with his 600SL



Huntsville Membership Meeting

Where: Hildegard's German Cuisine
2357 Whitesburg Dr.
256-512-9776

When: 4th Wednesday of every other month

Time: 6:30pm

Directions from I-565 towards Huntsville: Take S. Memorial Parkway (exit 19A), turn left on Governors Drive, turn right on Whitesburg Drive.

Hildegard's is approximately 1/2 mile on left at the corner of Bob Wallace and Whitesburg Dr.

Birmingham Membership Meeting

Where: Dale's Southern Grill, Hoover
1843 Montgomery Hwy S. #107
205-987-4757

When: 3rd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6pm dinner, 7pm meeting

Dale's Southern Grill in Hoover is south of I-459 and 1/4 mile south of the AL 150-US 31 intersection on the left.



Mercedes-Benz Club of America
Alabama Section
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