



# Das Heimatblatt

Newsletter for the Alabama Section  
Mercedes-Benz Club America

March • 2014

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## STERNBLICK

(View through the Star)

*Robert Hinds*  
*President, Alabama Section MBCA*

The Alabama Section is off to a good start for 2014.

Many members attended the Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance in early March. For those who have never attended you need to put this on your list of "must do" things. This Concours is the closest and best in the eastern part of the country.

Jim Roberts has worked hard to visit the dealers in our section and submitted information to the national club office. As a result of his hard work our section is one of the first to provide this information, congratulations Jim on your hard work.

Our new Webmaster is Chad Stevens, Chad lives in Huntsville and is an active member who also enjoys driving his AMG cars on the Barber Motorsports Track.

Because of his background in racing, Jim has taken on the responsibly as Chairman of Heimatfest 2014 on the 4-5th of October at Barber Motorsports Park. Our section has reserved 25 slots for those MBCA members interested in driving this track at speed (instructors will be provided). More information will be published as the details are worked out.

The Indy Car Race at Barber Motorsports Park (25-27th of April) Sports Car Corral is open to all Mercedes-Benz models of any year so plan to attend (you need to purchase race tickets and to register for the car corral at [barbermotorsports.com](http://barbermotorsports.com)). Several members are planning to volunteer as workers in the car corral.

Please to plan to attend our monthly meetings and the interesting activities that are available throughout the year.

### Welcome New Members

George Acker  
Brandon Ashley  
Andreas Bergmann  
Earnest Colin  
George Edgar  
Shea Goodwin  
Charles Henderson  
Paul Jones

Hank & Mason Lavallet  
Phillip McArdle  
Steven & Laura McVay  
Daniel Poset  
Eric Ramesh  
Christopher Robin  
Patricia Seitz  
Bill Vickery

ALABAMA & FLORIDA PANHANDLE

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### March

- 26 - Huntsville Stammtisch  
(dinner/meeting)-- Back page
- 29 - Saturday at Bud's Benz  
Duluth, GA

### April

- 11-13 - Warm Springs Spring Fling  
Columbus/Warm Springs, GA -- Page 3
- 15 - Birmingham Stammtisch  
(monthly meeting)-- Back page
- 25-27 - Car corral at Indy Car Race  
Barber Motorsports Park -- Page 4

### May

- 10 - Tire Rack Teen Street Survival with PCA  
Hoover, Al -- Page 4
- 20 - Birmingham Stammtisch  
(monthly meeting)-- Back page
- 28 - Huntsville Stammtisch  
(dinner/meeting)-- Back page

### June

- 7 - EuroBrit Autofest Car Show  
Madison, AL
- 14 - Barber tag appreciation day
- 14-15 - Driver's Ed with PCA  
Barber Motorsports Park
- 17 - Birmingham Stammtisch  
(monthly meeting)-- Back page

### July

- 15 - Birmingham Stammtisch  
(dinner/meeting)-- Back page
- 23 - Huntsville Stammtisch  
(dinner/meeting)-- Back page

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William Hopper

### das Heimatblatt

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**das Heimatblatt** is published bi-monthly by the Alabama Section, Mercedes-Benz Club of America, Inc. Copy deadline: 10th of the month preceding the month of issue. Please type and double space copy.

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# Coming events

## Warm Springs Spring Fling

**When:** 11-13 April

**Where:** Columbus & Warm Springs, GA

Two years ago we joined with Peachtree and Central Georgia Sections for a tour of the new Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. This featured dioramas of the Spanish American War through Vietnam with those of the earlier and later wars to follow. Interestingly these are all called "The American War" by the countries they were fought in. At any rate, if you or a relative participated in any of these, it will be a great service to your younger relatives to let them experience this history.

The visit begins with lunch and a guided tour of the only remaining example of a 1940's era company part of a military training base.

On Friday evening, rooms have been reserved in a nearby historic hotel near Warm Springs. This was Franklin Roosevelt's Presidential retreat, as he felt that the healing waters gave him some relief from the damage due to polio.

### Lodging

A group of rooms are being held at the Meriwether County Inn. <http://www.meriwethercountryinn.com> as an event titled Mercedes-Benz Club. If you are planning to attend you should make your reservations directly with the Inn. Tel: 706.655.9099. The rate is \$65 per night plus tax, which includes breakfast.

### Registration

Registration fee for the weekend is \$12.00 per attendee. Register on-line at [motorsportreg.com](http://motorsportreg.com) and search for Warm Springs Spring Fling, or use the registration form below to register by mail. Questions? Contact Doug Geganto [dgeganto@comcast.net](mailto:dgeganto@comcast.net) 404.754.9955. Registration closes April 5, 2014.

## Schedule

### Saturday

*There will be several options:*

- A visit to Roosevelt's Little White House <http://gastateparks.org/LittleWhiteHouse/>
- A winery tour and tasting at Warm Springs Winery located just outside Warm Springs. Set your GPS to 7227 Roosevelt Hwy, Warm Springs. Tours run as soon as enough people are at the winery and ready to tour. There is no charge for the winery and tasting tour.
- Explore downtown Warm Springs <http://warmspringsga.com/index.html>
- Drive to Callaway Gardens and tour the gardens. <http://www.callawaygardens.com>
- For those interested in playing golf you can head over to Callaway Gardens and play 18 on one of their beautiful courses. (If you are planning to attend and want to play golf please indicate so when you sign up so I can schedule a tee time for you.)
- We'll have dinner Saturday night at the historic Bulloch House in Warm Springs, [www.bulloch.com](http://www.bulloch.com). Participants will be able to order from the menu.
- We have scheduled a performance by the Mayor of Warm Springs, Bob Prater, who for years has done a program, "An Evening with FDR." Mr. Prater, although retired from performing, has agreed to do his performance for us at the Bulloch House after our dinner. This should be an exciting evening.

### Sunday

Breakfast Sunday morning, continue to explore the areas and the drive home on your own.

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## Warm Springs Spring Fling

April 11,12 and 13, 2014

Name(s) of Member(s) Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Guest(s) Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first event that you have attended with the Peachtree Sesection? \_\_\_\_\_

Number for attending Museum Tour \_\_\_\_\_ x @\$12 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number for lunch at Infantry Museum \_\_\_\_\_ Number for Dinner at Farm House \_\_\_\_\_

Number for dinner ar Bulloch House \_\_\_\_\_ Number for Golf \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Deadline:** April 5, 2014 Make checks out to MBCA Peachtree Section and mail to Doug Geganto 1051 Windsor Creek Dr, Grayson GA 30017. For more information contact Doug Geganto 404-754-9955 or by e-mail at [dgeganto@comcast.com](mailto:dgeganto@comcast.com)

# Coming events

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## Car Corral at Indy Grand Prix of Alabama

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**When:** 26-27 April

**Where:** Barber Motorsports Park , Leeds, AL

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**B**arber will again host the Indy car race as well as multiple support races for sports cars, sedans, and open wheel single seaters on 25-27 April.

The car corral offers discounted onsite parking in the ideal location adjacent to the shaded viewing area at the end of the back straight and the "fan zone" with its food court, reserved boxes, and other attractions. There is a tram stop there with complimentary transportation to all locations.

You will need to purchase your passes ahead and, of course drive your Mercedes-Benz, as this area is reserved for the car clubs. If you already have tickets, you will still need to purchase onsite parking which is normally \$50. If you already have this onsite parking, you may exchange the general parking passes for car corral passes at only \$35: you will be credited the \$15 difference.

Be sure to scroll to "Mercedes-Benz", so we can have enough space for all MBCA members to park together.

Be sure to stop by the large tent to learn about scheduled activities and prize drawings during the weekend.

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## Street Survival for Teens

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**When:** 10 May

**Where:** Hoover Met, Birmingham, AL

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**A**s you know automobile crashes are the leading cause of death among people 15-25 years of age. Many, if not all automobile crashes are not "accidents" and are preventable.

Tire Rack© has worked out a course to help teenagers avoid accidents with a combination of didactic and hands on driving exercises to help make these less experienced drivers know how to check their cars, pay better attention to driving (i.e. avoid distraction), look for potentially dangerous situations, and learn to control their cars better.

You may have to do some arm twisting to get them there, but they will enjoy the experience and thank you afterwards.

This event is being co-sponsored by our friends in the Porsche Club, but you do not have to drive a Porsche to participate.

Details are still being worked out. I can tell you that it will be at the Hoover Met from 8am till 4pm. The \$75 fee will include lunch, instructional materials, and a T-shirt, and knowledge that can save your teen child's or grandchild's life.

For more information contact Jim Roberts at [jertoosaver@bellsouth.net](mailto:jertoosaver@bellsouth.net)

FYI—The MBCA Education Foundation is working on a similar program that will include the parents and grandparents as well as the teens. The E.F. will continue the testing phase this year with a full roll out next year.



## Sports Car Corral

April 25 - 27, 2014



**Park with your fellow sports car enthusiasts!**

- Showcase your favorite vehicle with other Sports Car Clubs in the new Firestone Complete Auto Care Sports Car Corral
- Convenient to hillside seating, Fan Zone attractions, merchandise and concessions
- Only \$35 for the weekend! Click [HERE](#) to order yours today!

**PLEASE NOTE**

- **You must drive your special interest/club vehicle to the event to park in the Car Corral. No exceptions.**
- **This offer applies to advance ticket purchase only. Offer will not be available at the gate.**



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## Cruise-ins and Gatherings

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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.

GREAT CARS MAKE US APPRECIATE  
THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE DESTINATION.



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# Event Recap

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## Winterfahrt by Jim Roberts

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**I**n spite of torrential rains the night before a large group gathered at the Barber Museum on a January morning. The rain stopped by 8am, and as we departed at 9am we could see blue sky.

Our Schlang (snake) of 30 cars was challenging to manage, but everyone kept up except for one Austin-Healey from the British club. It's hard to understand this, as these cars cruise easily at 70+mph with their two overdrive gears.

After that brief autobahn run we turned off onto county roads for cornische ascent of Blount Mountain and a challenging scenic drive along the brow of this mesa.

After passing through Oneonta we crossed the newly reopened Horton Mill Bridge which at 70 feet above the stream below is the highest covered bridge in the US. Since only one car at a time is allowed on the bridge (if you look at its tall slender piers you can understand why), it took about 20 minutes to get everyone across.

The beautiful Palisades Park at the edge of Sand Mountain yielded beautiful views of the pastoral valley below and provided welcome relief for those who had consumed too much coffee. At least everyone heeded our admonition to start with a full tank of fuel: not a single car needed to stop for fuel or repairs.

Easley Bridge is very short, so there was minimal delay getting everyone across. Just past it, though we saw herds of zebra and llama behind the pristine white fences of nearby farms.

Swann Bridge near the picturesque village of Cleveland is the longest covered bridge in the U.S. so it took quite some time for all to get across.

More neat roads brought us to the 13th century Tuscan style Church of the Blessed Sacrament. This is a great photo-op, since the landscape around it looks very much like Tuscany.

The church features magnificent deep bas relief bronze doors, brilliant German stained glass windows, wonderful Italian inlaid stone floors, and a finely carved and gilded altar.

From Tuscany we turned north to the Austrian settled village of Welti. At Berlin we turned west to Alabama's German town of Cullman for a great lunch at their "All Steak" restaurant.



MBCA members stop for a visit at Church of the Blessed Sacrament



MBCA members brave the cold weather for the annual Winterfahrt

# Event Recap

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## For the Love of Lotus

By: Ken Champlin

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**W**e attended Love of Lotus at Barbers Sports museum. They had the person who bought the car in 1956, brought it to the U.S., and raced it for a few years. He talked about the car and people he raced with. This was the first time he had seen it since he sold it. They also had Barber restorer, John Viviani who spent four years restoring it. He showed pictures from part of a frame and a few parts to completion. It is hard to believe all the parts they had to make to restore.

John is a McPherson college grad. The MBCA Education Foundation and MBUSA support McPherson's restoration degree program with scholarships. John is a classic example of the value of this background in restoring significant cars.



Ken Champlin

Lotus MK X

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## Amelia Island

By: Jim Roberts

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**I**t is most gratifying to see what started as a nice intimate gathering of my friend, Bill Warner's wide circle of car people has evolved in to a world class concours d' elegance that is being compared to Pebble Beach. The fact that Bill's contacts are worldwide in scope, that he has a passion for bringing a world class event to his hometown, that he has the means and the organizational skills, and that Mercedes-Benz was the first and continues to be the leading sponsor for all 19 years insures success. It doesn't hurt that Bill Warner is a genuinely nice car guy.

The result is that Amelia Island is far more than the famous concours d' elegance and the very luxurious and exclusive Ritz Carlton: the high end auction companies of RM and Gooding have been a prelim for 8 & 5 years now, and others are starting down the street.

Bill is a racer as well as a collector, so there are many world famous race car drivers, designers, crew chiefs, and their cars in attendance. The seminars for them to tell what it was like out there, inflate their own achievements, depreciate their colleagues generally entertain everyone while doing so.

If you like rubbing shoulders with celebrities the Mercedes-Benz gala on Saturday night is the place to be. If you are not willing to dress in formal attire the rich and famous will talk cars with you most any time: This year I spoke with honoree Grand Prix and Le-Mans winner (in a Mercedes-Benz) Jochen Mass at length after he finished a stint of signing autographs about capricious ticket writing by the American police to a cheapskate who had him sign an Indy car poster. "Shall I sign as Al Unser: at least his name looks German. He has the family name of Our" he said in German.

Many people think these guys will talk with me because I can speak German, or because I'm a fellow racecar driver, but this is not the case. As long as you are not trying to get an "autogramm"



1914 Mercedes (Daimler) that won the 1914 Indy 500

# Event Recap

(autograph) or a photo with them, they love to talk cars and racing. Indy Winner Dario Franchitti, and world champion Sebastian Vettel are avid auto and racing historians and will go on for hours, if they have the time. Dario is usually at Amelia as are David Hobbs, Johnny Rutherford, and Sam Posey.

Likewise I've spoken with Barry Meguiar (just be sure you don't address him as "McGuire"), Wayne Carinni (very approachable), Ray Evrenham, Keith Martin, and Don Osborne, all of whom you see on tv.

Of course, the cars are the stars, and they are those without equal. There are a dozen or more examples of Bugatti, Deussenberg, prewar Mercedes-Benz S, SSK, 500K, 540K, Maserati, and double that number of Ferrari, Packard, Bentley, Porsche, and post war Mercedes-Benz SL, SE, cabriolets, coupes. All of these are coach built cars.

The last few years have featured models in the haute couture fashions of the era complete with the historically correct hair and makeup. This year featured the 1920's led by a Greta Garbo double in the 1927 Mercedes-Benz 680S coupe. Only 2 or 3 were made – of each.

One of this year's features was "120 Years of Mercedes-Benz Racing". Somehow they managed to get not only the 1909 (21 liter!) "Blitzen Benz" 1912 Vanderbilt Cup winner driven by none other than Jochen Mass, but also the 1914 Indianapolis winning Mercedes. Remember in those days Daimler (Mercedes) and Benz competed against each other.

The first official automobile race ran across France in 1894. Seven of the 12 finishers including the winning Daimler and Peugeots were powered by Daimler engines.

New last year was "Cars and Coffee". Bill Warner didn't think about anyone but Porsche and Corvette then, but after reminding him that there is a Mercedes-Benz Club, invitations were issued to MBCA, BMWCCA, PCA, and others.

On Saturday morning our MBCA members staged the largest of the marque club shows directly in front of the huge Mercedes-Benz pavilion. Our regional directors Bill Hopper (Eastern), Scott Suits (Southeastern), Cliff Reyle (Central), Steve Ross (Southwestern), Directors at Large Josie Lesler and Jim Luikens, and Past President Pete Lesler along with MBCA Treasurer Bill Denton and his lovely wife, Jeanie and many others helped MBCA Marketing Di-

rector Lisa Juhl hand out hundreds of membership application and The Star magazines. Beautiful cars were brought as far as Washington, DC for Cars and Coffee, and I never saw a cup of coffee.

For a true Mercedes-Benz enthusiast, this display of enthusiasm for the brand and the club was most gratifying.

Peachtree Section hosts an informal dinner at the historic Crab Trap restaurant in the historic area of Ferdinando Beach. This year event planner Darryl Williams had his hands full entertaining all 119 guests from 22 sections with all those directors, for over an hour as the staff struggled to feed the multitude. The food was great and the company was even better as so many members and section leaders got to know each other and present and future directors.

This made a grand concours d' elegance an added bonus. What a treat this is: overlooking the field you could barely see the cars for the masses of people. Up close, of course you could see them, talk with the owners, get the models in period clothing to pose, see the winners actually drive the cars including the racers to get their awards. How many times have you seen a 100+ year old major race winner actually be driven by a Formula One driver or another 1920's Mercedes-Benz seem to be driving Greta Garbo in it? It was almost like a car enthusiast's "Midnight in Paris".

Don't miss the next one, and be sure to drive your Mercedes-Benz to join the other Alabama Section members.



Owners and models dressed up in period correct clothing to show off the cars.

# Event Recap

## Amelia Island Cont.



190 SL and 300 SL Gullwing at concours d'elegance



1909 Blitzen Benz at Cars & Coffee



SLS race car-- will be at the Barber Indy race



MBCA members' cars on show at Cars & Coffee

## For Sale

Several members have expressed interest in purchasing a jacket similar to the one presented to former section President Jim Roberts. For those unable to attend the Holiday Party, the jacket is black, has the MBCA logo and Alabama Section on the right side, and the left side has a MB 190E 2.3-16 replica with your first name stitched below the car. The Jacket has Mercedes Benz Performance Driving stitched across the back of the jacket. This is optional. The jacket is of excellent quality and will provide many years of enjoyable wear. The price is \$85. Current plan is to place an order in the next few weeks.

If interested, contact Mason Beale (masonbeale@msn.com) or 205-837-7003.



# In Der Presse (In The Press)

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## E250 Bluetec vs. Toyota Prius

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Toyota and those pious “environmentalists” try their best to convince school kids to retirees that the Prius Hybrid and by generalization all hybrids are the best cars for the environment, because they use the least fuel.



The March/April 2014 issue of Road & Track noted that EPA testing is biased toward hybrids and against diesel power (Prius MPG 51 city 48 hwy vs. E250 28 city 45 hwy), so they laid out a real world route through urban, suburban, small towns and open roads placing a 2014 Mercedes-Benz E250 Bluetec diesel against a Toyota Prius hybrid.

In this real world test the E250 Bluetec achieved 40.4 MPG vs. the Prius' 40.2 MPG. After 390 miles the Prius was out of electric charge and fuel, but the Mercedes-Benz had another 534 miles worth of fuel in the tank!

It was also 2.7 seconds quicker from 0-60mph!

Most important to the Road and Track editor, “The Prius was created solely for efficiency and that shows in its road manners. The E250 is a luxury car that just happens to get unbelievable mileage.” “ Its engine is almost silent while the Prius 4 banger was a screaming stress case”.

There was no closeness in the driving experience. Of course, all this is not news to Mercedes-Benz diesel drivers, but it's nice to have a neutral journal agree with us.

## C-Class Shown at Detroit Autoshow

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The new 2015 C-class was shown at the Detroit Auto Show after journalists visited the MBUSI factory where they will be built in Alabama and drove a few laps at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham. They then drove the cars to Detroit according to our sources.

The new C-class will be 1.6 inches wider and 4 inches longer than the present car as it moves up from being the entry level Mercedes-Benz in North America. Many options that had been available only on the E and S class will now be available on the C-class including the air/hydraulic suspension, distronic plus that can steer and brake automatically, park assist, and lane assist.

Engines get more power but use 20% less fuel due to a 220 pound weight reduction, direct injection, and automatic stop –start when stationary.

## Mercedes-Benz Considers Plans for a Second Plant

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Bloomberg reports that M-B is considering an additional manufacturing plant in North America that would produce compact vehicles according to Andreas Renschler, head of Daimler automobile production and another MBUSI alumnus. A decision is expected by the end of next year to meet growing demand.

## Mercedes-Benz Ranks High in J.D. Power Dependability Survey

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J.D. Power's study of dependability of 3 year old cars ranked Mercedes-Benz second only to Lexus while in individual models the Alabama built ML and GL were at the top of their segments.

The least dependable included two Chrysler lines: Dodge and Jeep as well as two British makes: Mini and Land Rover. One wonders why anyone would consider off-road capable vehicles that have been notoriously the least dependable vehicles for so many years. It has to be like fast food advertising slogans trump reality.

### Huntsville Membership Meeting

Where: Hildegard's German Cuisine  
256-512-9776

When: 4th Wednesday of every other month

Time: 6:30pm

Hildegard's is located on the corner of Bob Wallace and Whitesburg Dr. at 2357 Whitesburg Dr.

From I-565 towards Huntsville; take South Memorial Parkway (exit 19A), turn Left on Governors Drive; turn Right on Whitesburg Drive.

Hildegards is approximately 1/2 mile on left.

### Monthly Membership Meeting

Where: Dale's Southern Grill, Hoover  
208-987-4757

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 Alabama 150-US 31 intersection on the left



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